ANNEX 9

Transnational Report – Study No. 1

-

”Attitudes&beliefs of organizations towards Wellbeing&Resilience of practitioners in Youth Work”

Activity A2.2

Developed by

COCEMFE Sevilla

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

Introduction 5
Section I: Executive summary (1–2 pages) 5
a. Purpose of study no. 1 at transnational level 5
b. Methodology in brief (who, how, when) 7
c. Main findings (2–4 key messages) 8
d. Major implications for youth work/organisations 11
e. Key recommendations 12
Section II: Context and rationale of transnational study 14
Section III: Objectives and research questions of transnational Study no. 1 17
a. Specific objectives 17
b. Research questions/working hypotheses/targeted indicators for the main theme of the study 19
Section IV: Specific legislation in partner countries related to the study topic (synthesis based on national reports) 25
IV.2. Legal recognition and governance of youth organisations 31
IV.3. Labour law, working conditions and occupational health & safety 33
IV.4. Psychosocial risks, mental health and burnout prevention 37
IV.5. Volunteering frameworks and protection of non-employed practitioners 39
IV.6. Equality, anti-discrimination, safeguarding and psychological safety 40
IV.7. Youth policy and national strategies relevant to practitioner support 41
IV.8. Comparative synthesis: common patterns, gaps and implications for youth work organisations 42
Section V: Description of how the transnational study no. 1 was carried out (synthesis based on national reports) 45
a. Research design (quantitative/qualitative/mixed) 45
b. Implementation stages 46
c. Methods & instruments used 48
d. Data collection 49
e. Ethical considerations (voluntariness, anonymity, consent) 51
f. Difficulties and limitations encountered 52
Section VI: Description of organisations involved in study no. 1 (synthesis based on national reports): 55

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

a. Typology of participating organisations 55

b. Field(s) in which organisations operate 57

c. Their stage of development 59

Section VII: Description of respondents (synthesis based on national reports) 62

VII. 1 Target group no. 1 -Youth workers and practitioners 62

a. Position within the organisation 63

b. Current role when working with young people 65

c. Years of experience in working with youth 67

d. Level of education 68

e. Age 70

VII. 2 Target group no. 2 – Leaders and managers 72

a. Position within the organisation 74

b. Current leadership or management role in organisation 75

c. Years of experience in a management/coordination position 77

d. Level of education 78

e. Age 80

Section VIII: Key findings – quantitative results and qualitative insights (synthesis based on national reports) 83

VIII.1. Synthesis based on national reports 83

VIII.2. Cross-indicator overview 84

VIII.3. Indicator 1: Organisational Awareness and Strategic Recognition of Wellbeing 85

VIII.4. Indicator 2: Organisational Responsibility for Practitioner Wellbeing 87

VIII.5. Indicator 3: Leadership Attitudes towards Wellbeing and Emotional Labour 88

VIII.6. Indicator 4: Organisational Culture and Psychological Safety 89

VIII.7. Indicator 5: Organisational Learning and Openness to Improvement 90

VIII.8. Indicator 6: Systemic Understanding of Wellbeing and Resilience 92

VIII.9. Integrated synthesis of Section VIII 94

Section IX: General conclusions and recommendations – synthesis based on national reports 97

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change

Co-funded by the European Union

a. Conclusions (what we learned) *98*

b. Recommendations (what should be done) *102*

Section X: Limitations and lessons learned **108**

X.1 Limitations *108*

X.2 Lessons learned *110*

X.3 Closing reflection *112*

MAIN SOURCES OF THE TRANSNATIONAL REPORT **114**

a. Project Documents of the POSITIVE Project – Activity A2.2 ..... *114*

b. National Reports analysed for the Transnational Report – Study No. 1 ..... *114*

c. Empirical data sources used for the Transnational Report *115*

d. Legislative, policy and European-level sources *115*

e. Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools *116*

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

Transnational Report of Study No. 1

"The attitudes & beliefs of organisations towards well-being & resilience of practitioners in Youth Work"

Partner organisation: COCEMFE Sevilla
Country: Spain
Responsible researcher(s): **Encarnación Barrera & Álvaro Walls** (COCEMFE Sevilla), **Carmen-Ana Budisteanu** (Asociatia Consultantilor si Expertilor in Economie Sociala Romania – Filiala Novadori)
Date:10/07/2026

Introduction

This report presents the **transnational analysis of Study No. 1**, conducted within the Erasmus+ project *POSITIVE – Well-being and Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change*.

The objective of the study is to explore **organisational attitudes and beliefs regarding practitioner well-being and resilience in youth work organisations** across the partner countries.

- The study seeks to understand:
- how organisations conceptualise practitioner well-being and resilience;
- how these issues are prioritised within organisational cultures and leadership practices;
- how organisational attitudes influence the development of supportive working environments.

The transnational report synthesises national findings and identifies **common patterns, differences and emerging insights across countries**.

Section I: Executive summary (1–2 pages)

a. Purpose of study no. 1 at transnational level

Study No. 1 was conducted within the Erasmus+ project POSITIVE – Well-being and Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change to examine how youth work organisations across

Positive Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

Romania, Poland, the Netherlands and Spain understand, value and assume responsibility for the wellbeing and resilience of the practitioners who sustain youth work.

The strategic question guiding this transnational study is:

How do youth work organisations understand, value and assume responsibility for the wellbeing and resilience of the practitioners who sustain youth work?

At transnational level, Study No. 1 does not aim merely to describe national perceptions. Nor is it a readiness assessment. That is the specific role of Study No. 2. Instead, Study No. 1 focuses on the attitudes, beliefs and organisational assumptions that shape whether practitioner wellbeing is treated as an individual responsibility, an informal relational concern, a leadership issue, an organisational responsibility or a systemic condition for sustainable and high-quality youth work.

In this sense, Study No. 1 constitutes the first diagnostic layer of WP2. It provides an "x-ray" of how organisations working with young people conceptualise the wellbeing and mental health of their own human resources: professionals, staff members, volunteers and practitioners working with young people, especially young people in situations of vulnerability.

The study is directly connected to the wider logic of the POSITIVE project: supportive organisations are more likely to sustain healthy and positive practitioners; healthy and positive practitioners are better able to support vulnerable young people; and higher-quality support contributes to inclusion, participation, social change and sustainable youth work.

The central analytical lens of this report is the recognition–operationalisation gap. This refers to the distance between organisations' declared recognition of practitioner wellbeing as important and the extent to which this recognition is translated into organisational responsibility, leadership practice, psychological safety, reflective learning, support routines

and systemic organisational understanding.

The main transnational message is clear:

Youth work organisations across the partnership are rich in recognition but uneven in operationalisation.

Across the four countries, practitioner wellbeing is widely recognised as important for the quality, continuity and ethical integrity of youth work. However, this recognition is not yet consistently embedded in stable organisational systems. Wellbeing often remains dependent on informal care, personal commitment, supportive individuals or ad hoc responses, rather than being systematically integrated into organisational culture, leadership development, supervision, internal procedures, feedback mechanisms or long-term planning.

b. Methodology in brief (who, how, when)

Study No. 1 was implemented through a shared mixed-methods framework adapted to each national context. Across the four countries, the research combined online questionnaires for two target groups — practitioners/youth workers and leaders/managers — with qualitative interviews and focus groups.

This design enabled triangulation between quantitative patterns, practitioner experiences, leadership perspectives and collective organisational reflection. The study was implemented mainly between March and June 2026 through questionnaires distributed via partner networks, professional contacts, institutional outreach and youth-sector organisations.

The evidence base is composed of **194 questionnaire responses**, **13 semi-structured interviews**, **4 focus groups** and **36 focus group participants**.

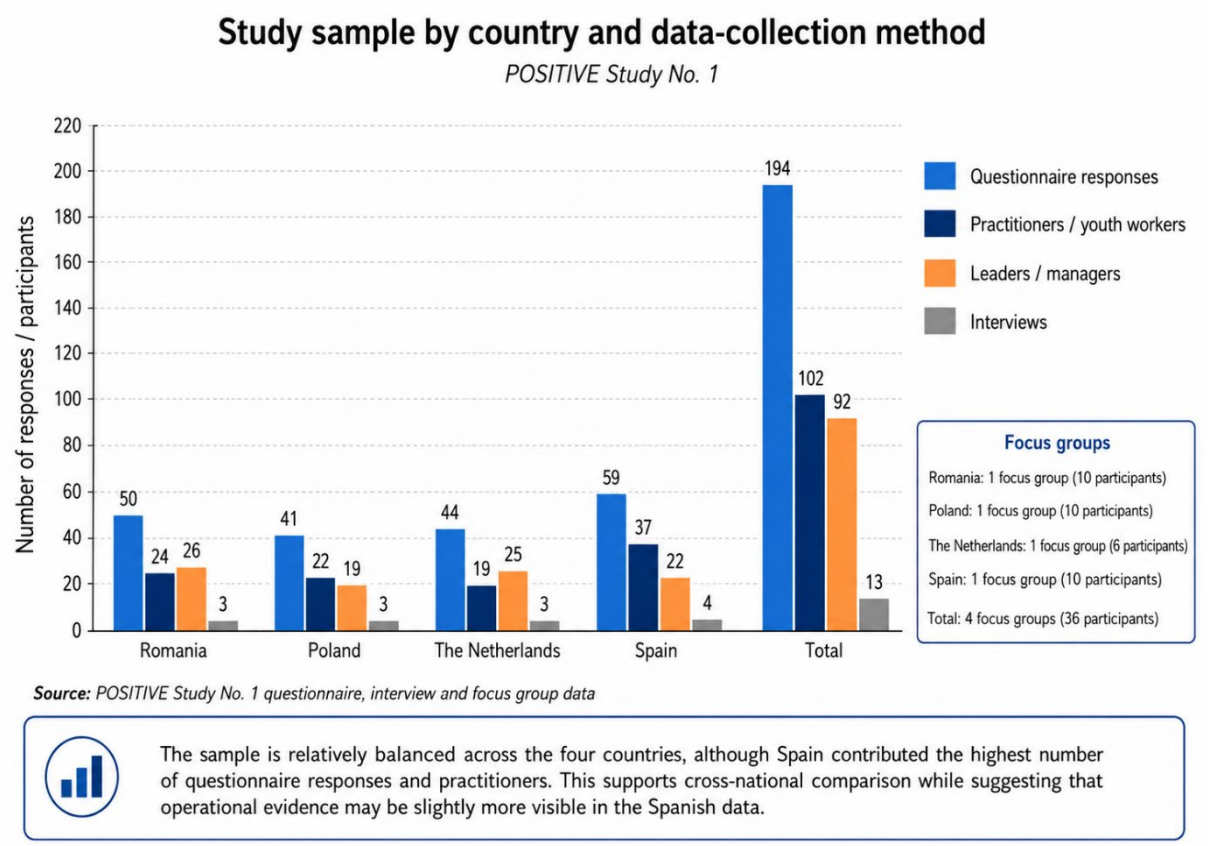
Table 1. Study sample by country and data-collection method

Country	Questionnaire responses	Practitioners / youth workers	Leaders / managers	Interviews	Focus group
Romania	50	24	26	3	1 focus group with 10 participants
Poland	41	22	19	3	1 focus group with

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

					10 participants
The Netherlands	44	19	25	3	1 focus group with 6 participants
Spain	59	37	22	4	1 focus group with 10 participants
Total	**194**	**102**	**92**	**13**	**4 focus groups with 36 participants**

Figure 1. Study sample by country and data-collection method



The study should be read as an exploratory and comparative analysis, not as a statistically representative survey of the whole European youth work sector. Its value lies in identifying shared organisational patterns, meaningful contextual variations and recurring mechanisms that influence how wellbeing and resilience are recognised, interpreted and operationalised within youth work organisations.

Ethical procedures across the four national studies were based on voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity or confidentiality, and responsible data management.

c. Main findings (2–4 key messages)

1. Practitioner wellbeing is strongly recognised, but unevenly embedded in organisational priorities

The first transnational finding is that practitioner wellbeing is widely recognised as relevant to the quality and sustainability of youth work. Across the four countries, respondents generally acknowledge that practitioners' emotional and psychological wellbeing affects the quality of support provided to young people.

However, the evidence also shows that this recognition is not always translated into strategic organisational prioritisation. Wellbeing can easily be displaced by urgent delivery pressures, administrative requirements, funding insecurity, staff shortages and limited organisational capacity.

This is the core expression of the recognition–operationalisation gap: organisations know that practitioner wellbeing matters, but they do not always have the structures, routines or leadership practices required to make it part of everyday organisational functioning.

2. Organisations are moving from individual resilience towards shared organisational responsibility

The second finding is that the dominant understanding of wellbeing is gradually shifting. Across the partnership, practitioner wellbeing is increasingly understood as more than an individual matter. There is growing awareness that practitioners should not simply be expected to cope alone with stress, emotional labour, workload or exposure to vulnerability.

Nevertheless, this cultural transition remains incomplete. Individualised resilience narratives continue to coexist with more systemic understandings of wellbeing. In practice, many organisations still rely heavily on practitioners' personal coping capacities, informal peer support or goodwill, especially where formal wellbeing systems are weak or resources are limited.

The transnational pattern therefore suggests a sector in transition: organisations increasingly recognise wellbeing as a shared responsibility, but this recognition has not yet been fully operationalised through organisational systems.

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

3. Leadership is the key mechanism between recognition and practice

The third finding is that leadership plays a decisive role in determining whether wellbeing becomes visible, legitimate and discussable within organisations.

Supportive, relational, participatory and emotionally responsive leadership can help transform wellbeing from a general value into a practical organisational concern. Leaders influence whether emotional labour is acknowledged, whether stress can be discussed openly, whether feedback is taken seriously and whether practitioners feel supported rather than judged.

Conversely, where leadership is overburdened, unavailable, informal or insufficiently prepared to address psychosocial demands, wellbeing remains dependent on goodwill rather than organisational design. This is especially relevant in small, project-funded or volunteer-based organisations, where leadership often carries multiple responsibilities and formal support structures may be limited.

4. Psychological safety is essential for making wellbeing visible

The fourth finding is that organisations cannot respond to stress, burnout risk or emotional overload if practitioners do not feel safe enough to name these experiences.

Across the national reports, trust, open communication, non-judgemental dialogue and peer support appear as essential conditions for practitioner wellbeing. Psychological safety allows practitioners to express concerns, recognise limits, discuss emotional difficulties and ask for support without fear of being perceived as weak, unprofessional or insufficiently committed.

However, psychological safety is still more often described as a relational climate than as a deliberately cultivated organisational practice. This means that it may depend on specific individuals, team cultures or informal relationships, rather than being embedded in organisational routines, leadership expectations or structured reflection spaces.

5. Organisational learning is emerging as a bridge between awareness and change

The fifth finding is that many organisations show openness to reflection, feedback and improvement, but fewer have systematic mechanisms for translating this openness into

organisational change.

Across the four countries, organisations often value dialogue and recognise the need to improve. However, formal feedback-to-action systems remain limited. Mechanisms for monitoring practitioner wellbeing, reviewing psychosocial risks, adapting workloads, learning from staff experience or assessing organisational support are still unevenly developed.

This suggests that organisational learning is one of the most important bridges between recognition and operationalisation. Without learning systems, wellbeing remains a recognised concern but does not become a sustained organisational practice.

6. A systemic understanding of wellbeing is emerging, but remains fragile

The final finding is that the evidence increasingly supports a systemic understanding of practitioner wellbeing and resilience. Wellbeing is shaped not only by individual coping strategies, but also by funding stability, workload, staffing, organisational maturity, leadership, supervision, communication, team culture, volunteer involvement and professional recognition.

This systemic understanding is essential for the POSITIVE project. If wellbeing is treated only as self-care, interventions will focus mainly on individual coping. If wellbeing is understood as a systemic organisational outcome, then organisations must examine their cultures, structures, leadership practices, communication norms and internal support mechanisms.

The study shows that this systemic understanding is emerging across the partnership, but it is not yet fully consolidated. Many organisations still need practical tools, shared language and realistic routines to convert systemic awareness into organisational practice.

d. Major implications for youth work/organisations

The transnational evidence suggests that practitioner wellbeing should not be treated as a secondary human resources issue or as an optional matter of individual self-care. In youth work, wellbeing is directly connected to service quality, ethical practice, safeguarding, inclusion and organisational sustainability.

Youth work often involves sustained emotional labour: listening to young people in

difficulty, responding to vulnerability, managing uncertainty, supporting participation, addressing exclusion and maintaining trust in complex relational environments. When practitioners are unsupported, overloaded or emotionally exhausted, the quality and continuity of youth work are at risk.

The wellbeing of practitioners is therefore not separate from the wellbeing of young people. It is one of the conditions that makes meaningful youth support possible.

The findings also show that informal support, while valuable, is insufficient on its own. Many organisations rely on goodwill, peer solidarity, personal relationships and flexible leadership. These are important strengths, especially in small or volunteer-based organisations. However, they become fragile when they are not supported by routines, supervision, reflective spaces, role clarity, workload awareness and feedback mechanisms.

For youth work organisations, the key implication is that wellbeing must become part of organisational quality. It should be considered alongside programme delivery, safeguarding, inclusion, participation and impact. Organisations that care for young people also need to care for the people who provide that support.

For the POSITIVE project, the implication is equally clear. Later outputs should not merely raise awareness of practitioner wellbeing. They should help organisations move from recognition to operationalisation. The Digital Toolkit, Resilience Cards, Storybook, Handbook, National Training and Transnational Training should provide practical, adaptable and realistic resources that organisations of different sizes and capacities can use to strengthen leadership, psychological safety, organisational learning and systemic wellbeing support.

e. Key recommendations

The first recommendation is to help organisations **move from declared recognition to structured organisational responsibility**. Wellbeing should be treated as part of organisational quality, not as an informal extra. This requires simple routines such as regular wellbeing check-ins, reflective team spaces, psychosocial risk conversations, workload review and clear internal responsibilities.

The second recommendation is to **develop leadership capacity for wellbeing and**

emotional labour. Leaders and coordinators need practical tools to recognise signs of overload, facilitate safe conversations, respond to emotional pressure, support volunteers and staff, and model a culture in which wellbeing can be discussed without stigma or fear.

The third recommendation is to **normalise psychological safety as an organisational practice**. Organisations should be supported to create environments where practitioners can express concerns, stress, mistakes or emotional difficulties without being judged as weak, unprofessional or insufficiently committed.

The fourth recommendation is to **embed organisational learning and feedback-to-action mechanisms**. Organisations need accessible ways to listen to practitioners, interpret feedback, review internal practices and make visible changes. Reflection alone is not enough unless it leads to organisational adaptation.

The fifth recommendation is to **design POSITIVE resources for different organisational capacities**. Mature organisations may be able to formalise policies, supervision and quality systems. Smaller or volunteer-led organisations may need lighter, more flexible tools that can be integrated into everyday practice without excessive administrative burden.

The sixth recommendation is to **connect Study No. 1 directly with Study No. 2 and later work packages**. Study No. 1 identifies the beliefs, attitudes and cultural assumptions that shape wellbeing. Study No. 2 examines organisational readiness and self-analysis. WP3 and WP4 should build on both layers by developing resources that help organisations become not only more aware, but more capable of acting.

Overall, Study No. 1 demonstrates that European youth work organisations increasingly recognise practitioner wellbeing and resilience as essential to sustainable youth work. The decisive challenge is now organisational: to transform recognition into routines, leadership practices, learning systems and cultures that protect and sustain the people who make youth work possible.

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience
in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by
the European Union

Section II: Context and rationale of transnational study

The transnational rationale of Study No. 1 emerges from a shared European concern: youth work organisations are increasingly expected to support young people facing complex social, emotional and psychological challenges, while comparatively less attention has been paid to the wellbeing and resilience of the practitioners who sustain this work.

Across Romania, Poland, the Netherlands and Spain, youth work is strongly associated with inclusion, participation, empowerment, community development and care. However, the internal organisational conditions required to sustain those who deliver youth work remain uneven, under-formalised and, in many cases, insufficiently embedded in organisational systems. This creates a central tension for the POSITIVE project: organisations may be highly committed to young people's wellbeing, but less structurally prepared to protect the wellbeing of their own professionals, staff members and volunteers.

Practitioner wellbeing matters because youth work is not only technical or administrative work. It is relational, emotionally demanding and often carried out in contexts of vulnerability. Practitioners support young people experiencing exclusion, uncertainty, mental-health difficulties, disability, socio-economic disadvantage, loneliness, family difficulties or barriers to participation. This work requires empathy, emotional regulation, trust-building, flexibility and sustained interpersonal engagement. When practitioners are unsupported, overloaded or emotionally exhausted, the quality, continuity and ethical integrity of youth work are directly affected.

The four national contexts show that these pressures are not isolated. They are intensified by project-based funding, limited staffing, administrative overload, volunteer dependence, organisational fragility and increasing expectations placed on youth-serving organisations. In such environments, practitioner wellbeing can easily be recognised as important while still being displaced by urgent delivery tasks, reporting requirements, funding uncertainty or lack of time. This is one of the core reasons why Study No. 1 focuses on attitudes and beliefs before assessing organisational readiness.

Attitudes and beliefs matter because organisations are unlikely to build support systems for something they do not first recognise as legitimate, important and shared. If wellbeing is

understood mainly as an individual coping issue, organisational responses will tend to remain limited to self-care advice, informal encouragement or personal resilience. If wellbeing is understood as an organisational responsibility, then leadership, communication, supervision, workload, psychological safety and reflective learning become part of the organisational agenda. Study No. 1 therefore examines the cultural and conceptual foundations that determine whether wellbeing can move from recognition to operationalisation.

This is why Study No. 1 constitutes the first diagnostic layer of WP2. The WP2 logic is not simply to collect data, but to generate a clear understanding of how organisations working with young people perceive the wellbeing and mental health of their own human resources. Study No. 1 analyses attitudes and beliefs; Study No. 2 examines organisational readiness, strengths, weaknesses and self-analysis; and later POSITIVE outputs should translate this evidence into practical tools, training resources and organisational capacity-building materials.

The contextual comparison across the four partner countries can be summarised as follows:

Table 2. Contextual emphasis for Study nº. 1

Country	Contextual emphasis for Study No. 1
Romania	An active and diverse youth sector, strongly supported by volunteers and short-term collaborators, but often affected by project dependence, limited budgets and few formal routines for practitioner support. The key contextual issue is recognition of wellbeing without stable organisational systems.
Poland	A youth work sector undergoing professionalisation, with growing public concern about young people's mental health, but comparatively limited attention to the wellbeing of those delivering youth work. The key contextual issue is the need to connect professional standards with practitioner support.
The Netherlands	A relatively developed welfare and youth-support environment where policy discourse on wellbeing does not always translate into everyday organisational practice. The key contextual issue is the gap between declared values and internal support structures, especially in relation to psychosocial workload.
Spain	A third-sector ecosystem strongly involved in disability, mental health, social inclusion and youth support, but affected by funding instability, administrative pressure and high emotional labour. The key contextual issue is the difficulty of consolidating long-term wellbeing systems under structural pressure.

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

Taken together, these contexts reveal that the challenge is not simply national. It is organisational and systemic. The same pattern appears across different welfare systems, professional traditions and organisational ecosystems: practitioner wellbeing is increasingly recognised, but the capacity to operationalise it remains uneven. This confirms the relevance of the recognition–operationalisation gap as the guiding lens of the report.

The recognition–operationalisation gap is particularly important because it avoids a superficial reading of the evidence. The issue is not whether organisations "care" about wellbeing in a general sense. Most do. The deeper question is whether this concern becomes visible in leadership behaviour, psychological safety, supervision, workload management, reflective practice, feedback mechanisms and organisational learning. In other words, the study asks whether wellbeing is treated as a declared value or as an organising principle.

The rationale of the transnational study is therefore both analytical and practical. Analytically, it responds to a gap in evidence about the wellbeing of those who support young people. Public debate, research and organisational attention often focus on young people as beneficiaries, while the wellbeing of practitioners, staff and volunteers remains less systematically examined. Practically, the study provides the evidence base required for the next phases of POSITIVE: the Digital Toolkit, Resilience Cards, Storybook, Handbook, National Training, Transnational Training and other capacity-building resources.

For POSITIVE, this section establishes the foundation of the whole report. If youth work organisations are to become supportive environments, they first need to understand how their own beliefs shape their practices. Study No. 1 therefore does not begin with tools or readiness scores. It begins with the organisational meanings attached to wellbeing and resilience. These meanings determine whether practitioner wellbeing is treated as an individual burden, an informal concern, a leadership responsibility or a systemic condition for sustainable youth work.

In this sense, the transnational rationale of Study No. 1 can be summarised in one central argument: European youth work organisations increasingly recognise that practitioner wellbeing matters, but they still need clearer organisational language, stronger leadership practices and more consistent support routines to make this recognition operational. The

purpose of the following sections is to examine how this gap appears across the evidence base and what it means for the future development of positive and supportive youth work organisations.

Section III: Objectives and research questions of transnational Study no. 1

a. Specific objectives

The overall objective of Transnational Study No. 1 is to examine how youth work organisations across Romania, Poland, the Netherlands and Spain understand, value, prioritise and assume responsibility for the wellbeing and resilience of practitioners, staff members and volunteers working with young people.

Unlike Study No. 2, which focuses on organisational readiness, Study No. 1 explores the cultural, conceptual and attitudinal foundations that shape organisational responses to practitioner wellbeing. Its purpose is to identify how wellbeing is recognised, how responsibility is interpreted, and why recognition is not always translated into consistent organisational practice.

At transnational level, the study was designed not as a simple aggregation of four national reports, but as a comparative inquiry into the organisational beliefs and mechanisms that influence practitioner wellbeing across different European youth work contexts. It aims to generate a shared evidence base for the POSITIVE project, particularly for later activities related to organisational capacity-building, leadership development, reflective practice, resilience-oriented resources and training.

More specifically, Transnational Study No. 1 aims to:

1. **Explore how youth work organisations conceptualise practitioner wellbeing and resilience.**

   This objective examines whether wellbeing and resilience are understood mainly as individual capacities, relational concerns, leadership issues, organisational responsibilities or systemic conditions for sustainable youth work.

2. **Assess the extent to which practitioner wellbeing is recognised as a legitimate organisational concern.**

The study investigates whether wellbeing is only acknowledged as a desirable value, or whether it is perceived as a strategic condition for service quality, ethical practice, staff retention and organisational sustainability.

3. **Analyse how organisations interpret responsibility for practitioner wellbeing.**
   This objective focuses on the balance between individual responsibility and organisational responsibility, particularly in relation to emotional labour, psychosocial risks, workload, stress and burnout prevention.
4. **Examine the role of leadership attitudes in shaping organisational responses to wellbeing and emotional labour.**
   The study explores how leaders, managers and coordinators influence whether wellbeing is made visible, discussed openly and supported through organisational decisions and practices.
5. **Investigate the relationship between organisational culture, psychological safety and practitioner wellbeing.**
   This objective analyses whether practitioners feel able to express concerns, stress, limits or emotional difficulties without fear of judgement, stigma or negative consequences.
6. **Identify the extent to which organisations are open to learning and improvement in relation to practitioner wellbeing.**
   The study examines whether organisations create spaces for reflection, feedback and adaptation, and whether practitioner experiences are used to improve organisational practices.
7. **Assess whether wellbeing and resilience are understood systemically.**
   This objective explores whether organisations recognise the interaction between leadership, workload, funding stability, communication, team culture, supervision, volunteer involvement and organisational support.
8. **Identify the organisational mechanisms that explain the recognition–operationalisation gap.**
   The study seeks to understand why organisations may recognise practitioner wellbeing as important while still lacking the routines, structures, leadership

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

practices or learning systems required to make this recognition operational.

9. **Generate evidence-based recommendations for the next stages of the POSITIVE project.**

   The findings are intended to inform Study No. 2, the Digital Toolkit, Resilience Cards, Storybook, Handbook, National Training, Transnational Training and other organisational capacity-building resources.

The central transnational pattern explored through these objectives is not whether organisations care about wellbeing in a general sense. The deeper issue is whether such concern becomes embedded in organisational responsibility, leadership practice, psychological safety, reflective learning and support routines.

b. Research questions/working hypotheses/targeted indicators for the main theme of the study

Central research question

The central research question of Transnational Study No. 1 is:

How do youth work organisations across the partner countries understand, value and assume responsibility for the wellbeing and resilience of the practitioners who sustain youth work, and where does a recognition–operationalisation gap appear between declared concern and organisational practice?

This question positions practitioner wellbeing as both an organisational belief issue and a practical organisational challenge. It recognises that attitudes and beliefs are not abstract: they influence whether wellbeing is treated as a private matter, a relational concern, a leadership responsibility or a systemic condition for quality youth work.

Operational research questions

The transnational study is guided by the following operational research questions:

1. To what extent do youth work organisations recognise the emotional, psychological and relational demands inherent in youth work?
2. How do organisations understand practitioner wellbeing and resilience: as

individual capacities, collective responsibilities or systemic organisational outcomes?

3. To what extent is practitioner wellbeing treated as a strategic organisational concern rather than as an informal or secondary issue?
4. How do organisations interpret their responsibility for addressing psychosocial risks, emotional labour, workload, stress and burnout prevention?
5. How do leadership attitudes, management practices and coordination styles influence the visibility and prioritisation of practitioner wellbeing?
6. To what extent do organisational cultures foster psychological safety, trust and open communication about stress, emotional demands and professional limits?
7. How do organisations use reflection, feedback and learning processes to improve their internal approaches to practitioner wellbeing?
8. What organisational mechanisms explain the distance between recognising wellbeing as important and operationalising it through routines, support structures and leadership practices?
9. How can the findings of Study No. 1 inform later POSITIVE outputs aimed at strengthening positive, supportive and resilient youth work organisations?

Working hypotheses

The study is based on six interconnected working hypotheses. These hypotheses do not function as narrow statistical predictions. Instead, they guide the interpretation of organisational attitudes and beliefs across the four national contexts.

H1. Recognition of wellbeing is high, but strategic embedding is uneven. Youth work organisations are expected to recognise practitioner wellbeing as important, but this recognition may not always be translated into strategic priorities, internal routines or visible organisational practices.

H2. Organisational responsibility is emerging, but individualised resilience narratives persist.

Organisations are expected to show growing awareness that wellbeing is a shared organisational responsibility, while still relying in practice on practitioners' personal coping

capacities, informal support and individual resilience.

H3. Leadership is a decisive mechanism between values and practice. Leadership attitudes are expected to shape whether wellbeing and emotional labour become legitimate organisational concerns or remain informal, private or reactive issues.

H4. Psychological safety determines whether wellbeing can be made visible. Organisations with higher levels of trust, open communication and non-judgemental dialogue are expected to be better able to identify and respond to practitioner stress, emotional overload and psychosocial risks.

H5. Organisational learning influences the movement from recognition to change. Organisations that create spaces for reflection, practitioner feedback and adaptive improvement are expected to be more capable of converting wellbeing concerns into practical organisational responses.

H6. Systemic understanding remains uneven across the sector. Organisations are expected to vary in the extent to which they understand wellbeing and resilience as outcomes shaped by organisational structures, leadership, workload, resources, team culture and wider sector conditions.

Together, these hypotheses provide the analytical bridge between the descriptive evidence collected in the national reports and the transnational interpretation developed in this report.

Targeted indicators

The study is structured around six targeted indicators. These indicators are not merely thematic categories. They are organisational mechanisms through which practitioner wellbeing may or may not move from recognition to operationalisation.

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

Table 3. Targeted indicators

Indicator	Research question	Working hypothesis	Analytical focus
1. Organisational Awareness and Strategic Recognition of Wellbeing	To what extent do organisations recognise practitioner wellbeing as a meaningful and strategic organisational concern?	Organisations generally recognise wellbeing as important, but this recognition is unevenly embedded in organisational priorities.	This indicator examines whether wellbeing is treated as a declared value, an operational priority or a condition for quality youth work.
2. Organisational Responsibility for Practitioner Wellbeing	How do organisations interpret their responsibility for supporting practitioner wellbeing and preventing psychosocial risks?	Organisational responsibility is increasingly recognised, but individualised understandings of resilience continue to shape practice.	This indicator analyses the balance between individual coping, informal support and structured organisational responsibility.
3. Leadership Attitudes towards Wellbeing and Emotional Labour	How do leadership attitudes and management practices influence organisational responses to stress, emotional labour and burnout risk?	Leadership is a decisive mechanism for translating wellbeing values into visible organisational practice.	This indicator examines how leaders make wellbeing legitimate, discussable and actionable within the organisation.
4. Organisational Culture and Psychological Safety	To what extent do organisational cultures allow practitioners to express concerns, emotional difficulties and professional limits safely?	Psychological safety determines whether wellbeing-related needs can be openly identified and addressed.	This indicator analyses trust, openness, non-judgemental communication and the conditions that allow stress and overload to become visible.
5. Organisational Learning and Openness to Improvement	How do organisations reflect on practitioner experiences and adapt internal practices to improve wellbeing?	Organisations with stronger learning cultures are more able to move from recognition to practical change.	This indicator examines feedback mechanisms, reflective practice, organisational adaptation and the conversion of dialogue into action.
6. Systemic Understanding of	Do organisations understand wellbeing and resilience as systemic	Systemic understanding is emerging, but remains uneven and sometimes	This indicator examines whether organisations move beyond personal coping

Wellbeing and Resilience	outcomes shaped by leadership, workload, resources, culture and sector conditions?	coexists with individualised resilience narratives.	and recognise wellbeing as a product of organisational and contextual conditions.

These six indicators provide the conceptual architecture of the transnational analysis. They allow the report to move beyond a general statement that “wellbeing is important” and to examine the organisational pathways through which wellbeing becomes recognised, assumed, discussed, supported and operationalised.

The implication for POSITIVE is clear. Study No. 1 does not simply identify attitudes; it identifies the belief systems and organisational mechanisms that later project outputs must address. If the Digital Toolkit, Resilience Cards, Storybook, Handbook and training activities are to be effective, they must help organisations transform recognition into structured responsibility, leadership practice, psychological safety, reflective learning and systemic support.

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience
in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by
the European Union

Section IV: Specific legislation in partner countries related to the study topic (synthesis based on national reports)

IV.1. Scope and limits of the legislative synthesis

Section IV provides a thematic synthesis of the national legal and policy frameworks identified by partner organisations as relevant to Study No. 1, "Attitudes and beliefs of organisations towards well-being and resilience of practitioners in youth work". The synthesis is based exclusively on the information included in the national reports prepared by the partner countries. It does not aim to provide an exhaustive legal analysis of each national system, nor to assess the full scope of legislation applicable in each country. Instead, it organises the legislative and policy elements explicitly mentioned by national partners in order to clarify how they relate to the study topic.

This methodological limitation is important because the national reports do not develop the same legal areas with the same level of detail. This is not a weakness of the synthesis, but a reflection of the fact that each country has its own legislative architecture, institutional traditions and policy priorities regarding youth work, occupational health and safety, mental health, volunteering, equality and third-sector governance. Therefore, the synthesis does not impose a uniform comparative grid in which all countries must be covered equally under each sub-theme. Rather, each thematic area includes only those elements that were identified in the national reports as relevant to practitioner well-being, resilience and organisational responsibility.

Across the national reports, one common observation is that practitioner well-being and resilience in youth work are not usually regulated through one single, dedicated legal framework. The Romanian report notes that the field is regulated, but not strongly systematised from the point of view of practitioner support, with limited explicit reference to supervision, reflective practice, burnout prevention or the well-being of volunteers and youth-work practitioners. Similarly, the Dutch report states that there is no single piece of legislation dedicated specifically to practitioner well-being and resilience in youth work, although broader occupational health, labour and governance frameworks create obligations for healthy and supportive working environments. The Spanish report also underlines that there is no single legislative framework specifically regulating practitioner well-being and resilience

within youth work organisations, but rather a combination of constitutional principles, occupational health and safety regulations, mental health policies, anti-discrimination legislation and youth-related frameworks. In the Polish case, the national report indicates that Poland does not currently have a dedicated legal framework regulating youth work as a distinct profession, although several legal acts and policy documents are relevant to the study topic.

For this reason, the legislative synthesis should be read as a contextual and interpretative section, not as a formal legal inventory. Its role is to show how national frameworks create, directly or indirectly, conditions that may influence the capacity of youth-serving organisations to generate well-being & resilience of practitioners in their work. These conditions include employment protection, occupational health and safety, psychosocial risk prevention, volunteer protection, equality and non-discrimination, mental health promotion, safeguarding, youth policy and third-sector development.

The comparative reading also needs to distinguish between legal compliance and organisational culture. National reports show that legal frameworks may establish minimum obligations regarding safety, equality, working conditions or risk prevention, but these obligations do not automatically create supervision systems, reflective spaces, psychological safety, burnout prevention mechanisms or leadership practices that actively support practitioner well-being. This distinction is particularly relevant for Study No. 1, because the study focuses not only on formal obligations, but also on how organisations understand, prioritise and operationalise well-being and resilience in everyday practice.

Consequently, the following sub-sections organise the national information around the main legislative and policy areas identified across the reports. Where a theme is more developed in one country than in another, this reflects the content of the national reports and the specificity of each national context. Where a theme is not explicitly addressed in a national report, the synthesis does not infer or add additional information. This approach ensures methodological consistency and keeps the transnational analysis grounded in the evidence provided by the national reports.

Table 4. Comparative overview of relevant legal and policy frameworks

Legislative / policy area	Romania	Poland	The Netherlands	Spain	Comparative implication for Study No. 1
Overall scope and limits of the legislative synthesis	The field is regulated but not strongly systematised from the point of view of practitioner support. Explicit references to supervision, reflective practice, burnout prevention and the wellbeing of volunteers or youth-work practitioners remain limited.	There is no dedicated legal framework regulating youth work as a distinct profession. Relevant provisions are dispersed across labour law, occupational safety, volunteering, mental health and youth-sector standards.	There is no single piece of legislation dedicated specifically to practitioner wellbeing and resilience in youth work. Broader occupational health, labour and governance frameworks create obligations for healthy and supportive working environments.	There is no unified framework specifically regulating practitioner wellbeing and resilience within youth work organisations. Relevant elements are dispersed across constitutional principles, occupational safety, mental health, equality and youth-related frameworks.	The legislative context is fragmented and indirect rather than unified and youth-work-specific. The table should be read as a contextual synthesis, not as a complete legal inventory.
Legal recognition and governance of youth organisations	Youth Law No. 350/2006 and Government Ordinance No. 26/2000 on Associations and Foundations provide legal recognition, governance rules and institutional legitimacy for youth organisations and NGOs. They do not explicitly regulate supervision, workload management, practitioner support or burnout prevention.	The Standards of Youth Work in Poland, developed by the National Coalition for Youth Work with support from the National Institute of Freedom, promote quality, participation, inclusion, safety, professional development and ethical practice. They are relevant to professionalisation, but are not a dedicated wellbeing framework.	The national report frames youth organisations through broader occupational health and safety regulation, labour legislation and youth-sector governance principles. These frameworks influence organisational responsibility for staff and volunteers, even without a dedicated youth-work law.	The Youth Strategy 2030 identifies mental health, participation, inclusion and wellbeing as priority areas. Law 43/2015 on the Third Sector of Social Action recognises the role of non-profit organisations and highlights sustainability, professionalisation and quality in service delivery.	Legal recognition provides institutional legitimacy and sectoral orientation, but does not automatically create internal wellbeing mechanisms such as supervision, reflective spaces, emotional support or workload monitoring.
Labour law, working conditions and occupational health & safety	The Labour Code, Law No. 53/2003, guarantees dignity, working time, equal treatment and professional	The Labour Code regulates employment relationships and employers' duties to ensure safe and healthy	The Working Conditions Act, Arbowet, establishes employers' responsibility for safe and healthy working	The Spanish Constitution, Article 40.2, provides the basis for labour safety, professional training and rest. Law 31/1995 on the	Labour and occupational health frameworks are the strongest common legal entry point for practitioner wellbeing. They create

	development, and includes obligations to protect workers' physical and psychological health. Law No. 319/2006 on Occupational Safety and Health requires risk assessment and preventive measures, may extend to volunteers and other participants, and is relevant to psychosocial risks, although implementation in youth NGOs remains limited.	working conditions, protect dignity, prevent discrimination and harassment, and minimise occupational risks. Occupational health and safety regulations, BHP, require workplace risk assessment and preventive measures, with increasing attention to chronic stress, excessive workload, emotional exhaustion and workplace conflict.	conditions and explicitly addresses psychosocial workload. The Risk Inventory and Evaluation process and action plan connect legal compliance with organisational reflection. The Working Conditions Decree and Working Hours Act support risk prevention, workload management, rest and recovery.	Prevention of Occupational Risks and Royal Decree 39/1997 require employers to assess risks, implement preventive measures and monitor occupational wellbeing, including factors affecting psychological wellbeing such as workload, emotional exhaustion, stress, role ambiguity and poor organisational climate.	minimum obligations, but meaningful support depends on how organisations translate them into supervision, workload management, reflective practice and psychological safety.
Psychosocial risks, mental health and burnout prevention	Law No. 319/2006 is the main reference for psychosocial risks, including work-related stress, workload and emotional demands. However, formal psychosocial risk assessments are rare in youth NGOs. Mental health legislation is mainly clinical and patient-oriented, and volunteering law does not explicitly address psychological wellbeing or resilience-building.	Psychosocial risks are mainly linked to the Labour Code, BHP occupational safety regulations and the National Mental Health Protection Programme. Contemporary approaches increasingly recognise chronic stress, excessive workloads, emotional exhaustion and workplace conflicts, but the mental health programme addresses the general population rather than youth work practitioners specifically.	The Working Conditions Act explicitly addresses psychosocial workload, including work pressure, stress, bullying, discrimination, aggression, violence and sexual harassment. RI&E and the Working Conditions Decree require assessment and preventive measures. The Working Hours Act indirectly supports burnout prevention through rest and recovery provisions.	Psychosocial risk prevention is addressed through occupational risk prevention legislation and mental health policy. Law 31/1995 requires assessment and management of work-related factors affecting psychological wellbeing. The Mental Health Strategy and Mental Health Action Plan 2025–2027 reinforce emotional wellbeing, prevention, psychosocial support and protective environments, but are primarily health-oriented.	Psychosocial risks and mental health are increasingly recognised, but not through a dedicated practitioner-wellbeing framework for youth work. Burnout prevention depends on organisational translation into leadership practices, workload routines and supportive cultures.
Volunteering frameworks and	Law No. 78/2014 on the Regulation of	The Act of 24 April 2003 on Public Benefit Activity	The national report does not present a separate	The report frames non-employed practitioner	The protection of non-employed practitioners is

protection of non-employed practitioners	Volunteering Activity defines volunteers' rights and host organisations' obligations, including volunteer contracts, training, coordination and recognition of volunteer experience. It guarantees safe working conditions but does not explicitly address psychological wellbeing, mental-health support or resilience-building.	and Volunteer Work establishes volunteers' rights and organisations' responsibilities, including safe conditions for voluntary activities and appropriate organisational support. It does not provide specific provisions on psychological wellbeing or resilience-building for volunteers.	volunteering law in Section IV. It links volunteers mainly to broader working-conditions obligations, noting that the Working Conditions Act applies broadly where labour relationships exist and influences responsibility for staff and volunteer wellbeing.	support indirectly through Law 43/2015 on the Third Sector of Social Action, which highlights sustainability, professionalisation and quality in service delivery. It does not identify a specific volunteer-protection framework for psychological wellbeing or resilience-building in this section.	uneven. Volunteers and collaborators may receive some protection related to safe conditions, but explicit provisions on psychological support, supervision and resilience-building remain limited or indirect.
Equality, anti-discrimination, safeguarding and psychological safety	Child Rights Law No. 272/2004 strengthens safeguarding for young beneficiaries. Government Ordinance No. 137/2000 and Law No. 202/2002 on Equal Opportunities establish duties related to equal treatment and anti-harassment. However, these instruments do not automatically generate psychological safety, supervision or inclusive organisational culture.	The Labour Code establishes obligations to protect employees' dignity, prevent discrimination and workplace harassment or mobbing, and ensure safe and healthy working conditions. The Standards of Youth Work also promote inclusion, safety, ethical practice and professional development, although they are not legally binding.	Equality legislation and workplace protection measures prohibit discrimination and support inclusive and psychologically safe environments. Discrimination, bullying, aggression, violence and sexual harassment are identified as undesirable behaviours contributing to psychosocial workload.	The General Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Social Inclusion, Law 15/2022 on Equal Treatment and Non-Discrimination, and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities promote equal opportunities, accessibility, participation, reasonable accommodation and protection against discrimination, including in employment and organisational settings.	Equality and safeguarding frameworks provide an important minimum basis for respectful and inclusive organisations. Psychological safety, however, depends on daily leadership, communication, trust and internal practice.
Youth policy and national strategies relevant to practitioner support	The National Youth Strategy 2024–2027 acknowledges the importance of youth work and identifies structural challenges such as	The Standards of Youth Work in Poland promote quality, participation, inclusion, safety, professional development and ethical practice. They	The national report does not detail a specific national youth strategy. It presents the relevant framework mainly through occupational	The Youth Strategy 2030 identifies mental health, social participation, inclusion and wellbeing as priority areas and highlights the need to	Youth policy and strategies contribute to recognition, professionalisation and quality development, but they do not generally establish direct mechanisms

	insufficient professionalisation, uneven territorial coverage, weak monitoring systems and the need to strengthen youth-worker training. It does not include specific provisions for practitioner or volunteer wellbeing.	support professionalisation and quality development, but do not constitute a dedicated legal framework for practitioner wellbeing and resilience.	health and safety, labour legislation and youth-sector governance principles, which frame wellbeing as an organisational and systemic concern.	strengthen support systems and improve the quality of youth interventions. Law 43/2015 links practitioner wellbeing indirectly to sustainable organisational structures and professional working conditions.	for supervision, burnout prevention, practitioner wellbeing or resilience-building.
Comparative synthesis: common patterns, gaps and implications	Romania has relevant legal instruments for youth organisations, labour protection, occupational safety and volunteering, but support for practitioner wellbeing remains under-systematised, especially in volunteer-based youth NGOs.	Poland has labour, occupational safety, volunteering and youth-work standards that support safe conditions and professionalisation, but youth work is not regulated as a distinct profession and practitioner support remains strongly dependent on organisational culture and capacity.	The Netherlands offers one of the clearest frameworks for psychosocial workload, risk inventory and preventive measures, but practical translation into youth-serving organisations still depends on leadership, implementation and internal organisational culture.	Spain has a strong occupational risk prevention, equality, mental health, youth strategy and third-sector architecture, but the challenge remains translating legal and policy recognition into everyday wellbeing routines in third-sector and youth-serving organisations.	Across the partnership, legislation creates a minimum framework for safety, equality, risk prevention and responsibility. Study No. 1 confirms that positive youth work organisations require more than compliance: they need cultures, leadership practices and routines that operationalise wellbeing and resilience.

IV.2. Legal recognition and governance of youth organisations

The national reports show that the legal recognition and governance of youth organisations differ significantly across the partner countries. In some contexts, youth organisations and youth work are formally recognised through specific youth-related legislation or strategies, while in others they are mainly framed through broader legislation on non-profit organisations, third-sector structures, labour relations, public benefit activities or occupational health and safety. This confirms that the legal environment of youth work is not uniform across the partnership and that organisational responsibility for practitioner well-being is shaped by different institutional pathways.

In Romania, the legal recognition of youth organisations is addressed through two main instruments identified in the national report: Youth Law No. 350/2006 and Government Ordinance No. 26/2000 on Associations and Foundations. Youth Law No. 350/2006 establishes youth work as a field and frames the relationship between public authorities and youth structures, while Government Ordinance No. 26/2000 provides the legal basis for the establishment, governance and accountability of NGOs. Together, these instruments give youth organisations institutional legitimacy and allow them to participate in funding, consultation and public-policy mechanisms. However, the Romanian report also notes that these frameworks regulate organisational functioning mainly from the perspective of legal compliance and do not explicitly address internal organisational conditions such as supervision, workload management, practitioner support or burnout prevention.

The Spanish national report presents a different configuration. It states that Spain does not have a unified legal framework specifically regulating youth work professions, but several policy and organisational frameworks shape the environment in which youth-serving organisations operate. The Youth Strategy 2030 identifies mental health, social participation, inclusion and well-being as priority areas, while Law 43/2015 on the Third Sector of Social Action recognises the role of non-profit organisations in addressing social exclusion, inequality and vulnerability. This third-sector framework is relevant because many youth-serving organisations operate within this field and depend on organisational sustainability, professionalisation and quality in service delivery. In this sense, the Spanish framework indirectly connects organisational governance with practitioner well-being by highlighting the

need for sustainable organisational structures capable of supporting both service provision and professional working conditions.

In the Netherlands, the national report does not identify a single legal act dedicated specifically to youth work organisations or to practitioner well-being in youth work. Instead, it refers to a broader legal and policy framework composed mainly of occupational health and safety regulation, labour legislation and youth-sector governance principles. These frameworks create obligations and expectations for organisations regarding healthy, safe and supportive working environments. The Dutch report is important for the transnational synthesis because it explicitly frames well-being not only as an individual matter, but also as an organisational and systemic concern. Therefore, even if the governance of youth organisations is not presented through a dedicated youth-work law, the broader legal context still influences how organisations understand their responsibility towards staff and volunteers.

In Poland, the national report underlines that there is no dedicated legal framework regulating youth work as a distinct profession. However, the Polish context is marked by an ongoing process of development and professionalisation of the youth sector. The report refers to the Standards of Youth Work in Poland, developed by the National Coalition for Youth Work with the support of the National Institute of Freedom – Centre for Civil Society Development. These standards provide a common framework for organisations working with young people and promote principles related to quality, participation, inclusion, safety, professional development and ethical practice. Although these standards are not presented as a comprehensive legal framework for practitioner well-being, they are relevant because they contribute to the recognition and quality development of youth work as a field.

From a comparative perspective, the national reports indicate that legal recognition and governance frameworks primarily provide institutional legitimacy, operational rules and sectoral orientation for youth-serving organisations. They help define who can operate in the youth or third-sector field, how organisations are structured, and how they can engage with public authorities, funding systems or service delivery responsibilities. However, these frameworks do not automatically translate into concrete internal mechanisms for practitioner well-being. Across the reports, there remains a visible gap between the legal recognition of organisations and the existence of organisational practices such as supervision, reflective

spaces, emotional support, workload monitoring, psychological safety or structured burnout prevention.

For Study No. 1, this distinction is essential. Legal recognition creates the formal conditions for youth organisations to exist and operate, but the support for well-being & resilience of practitioners in their work depends on how these formal frameworks are interpreted and operationalised at organisational level. In other words, the legal and governance frameworks identified in the national reports provide the institutional foundation, but practitioner well-being and resilience require additional organisational cultures, leadership practices and support mechanisms that go beyond basic legal compliance.

IV.3. Labour law, working conditions and occupational health & safety

Across the national reports, labour law and occupational health and safety emerge as the strongest common legal entry points for addressing practitioner well-being and resilience. Even where there is no specific legislation dedicated to youth work practitioners, the national frameworks regulating employment relationships, workplace safety, working time and occupational risk prevention create a minimum legal basis for organisations' responsibilities towards the people who work within them. This is particularly relevant for Study No. 1, because youth work is an emotionally demanding field, often marked by relational intensity, exposure to complex social situations, workload pressure and project-based organisational instability.

In Romania, the Labour Code, Law No. 53/2003, is identified as the foundational framework for employment relationships. It guarantees equal treatment, dignity at work, regulated working time and access to professional development. The Romanian report also notes that, from Article 175 onwards, the Labour Code places explicit obligations on employers to protect workers' physical and psychological health. However, the same report underlines an important limitation: the Labour Code does not regulate youth-work-specific forms of support such as supervision, coaching or reflective practice, and its protections apply mainly to employees, while many people involved in Romanian youth work operate as volunteers or short-term collaborators.

Also in Romania, Law No. 319/2006 on Occupational Safety and Health, which transposes

EU Directive 89/391/EEC, is presented as particularly relevant to the study topic. According to the national report, this law requires employers to assess and manage psychosocial risks, including work-related stress, workload and emotional demands, and to implement preventive measures. Importantly, the Romanian report notes that its provisions may extend not only to employees, but also to volunteers and other participants in organisational activities. This makes it, at least in principle, one of the most relevant legal instruments for practitioner well-being in youth work. At the same time, the report stresses a gap between legal potential and organisational practice: in many volunteer-based youth NGOs, enforcement is limited and formal psychosocial risk assessments remain rare.

The Dutch national report presents a more explicit connection between occupational health and psychosocial risks. The Working Conditions Act, or Arbowet, is described as the most significant legal framework connected to practitioner well-being and resilience. It establishes employers' responsibility to provide safe and healthy working conditions and applies broadly across employment settings, including organisations working with volunteers and youth practitioners where labour relationships exist. A particularly relevant aspect of the Dutch framework is its explicit attention to psychosocial workload, understood to include work pressure, stress, bullying, discrimination, aggression, violence and sexual harassment. For youth-serving organisations, this is highly relevant because youth work often involves emotional labour, complex interpersonal situations and exposure to demanding social contexts.

The Dutch report also identifies the Risk Inventory and Evaluation process as a key organisational obligation. Organisations are required to identify occupational risks and develop an accompanying action plan. This creates a practical link between legal compliance and organisational reflection, because it encourages organisations to examine working conditions systematically and establish preventive measures. The Working Conditions Decree further operationalises these obligations by requiring organisations to assess psychosocial workload and implement evidence-informed measures to prevent or reduce such risks. The report explicitly connects this legal basis to actions such as supervision structures, workload management, safeguarding procedures, supportive leadership practices and opportunities for reflection and professional support.

The Dutch Working Hours Act is also relevant, although indirectly. It regulates working time, rest periods and recovery opportunities. The national report notes that youth work often involves flexible schedules, evening activities, events and volunteer engagement, which may increase the risk of excessive workload and long-term exhaustion. From this perspective, working-time regulation reinforces the idea that practitioner resilience is not only a personal capacity, but is also connected to organisational planning, staffing arrangements and workload distribution.

In Spain, the occupational health and safety framework is presented as one of the most important legal areas linked to practitioner well-being. The Spanish Constitution, particularly Article 40.2, is identified as the basis for public authorities' obligation to promote labour safety and hygiene, professional training and rest through limits on working time and paid holidays. This constitutional principle provides the foundation for subsequent occupational health legislation and for workers' rights to safe and healthy working conditions.

The Spanish report identifies Law 31/1995 on the Prevention of Occupational Risks as the principal legislative framework governing workplace health and safety. This law establishes employers' responsibility to guarantee workers' health and safety across all sectors, including the psychosocial dimensions of work. Its relevance to Study No. 1 is clear, because the report explicitly states that organisations have a duty not only to prevent physical risks, but also to assess and manage work-related factors that may negatively affect psychological well-being. This obligation is especially important in youth-serving organisations, where emotional labour, relational strain and psychosocial stress are common features of professional practice.

The Spanish Regulation on Prevention Services, Royal Decree 39/1997, further operationalises occupational risk prevention by requiring organisations to assess workplace risks, implement preventive measures and establish systems for monitoring occupational well-being. Although psychosocial risks are not regulated through a specific standalone category, the Spanish report notes that occupational safety frameworks increasingly recognise risks such as emotional exhaustion and burnout, excessive workload, role ambiguity, workplace stress, interpersonal conflict, emotional demands and poor organisational climates. This evolving legal and institutional context is directly aligned with the objectives of Study No. 1, particularly regarding organisational responsibility for practitioner well-being and

psychosocial risk prevention.

In Poland, the Labour Code is identified as the primary legal framework regulating employment relationships. The Polish report states that it establishes employers' obligations to ensure safe and healthy working conditions, protect employees' dignity, prevent discrimination and workplace harassment, and organise work in a way that minimises occupational risks. These provisions create an important legal basis for addressing both physical and psychosocial dimensions of employee well-being.

The Polish report also refers to occupational health and safety regulations, known as BHP, which require employers to assess workplace risks and implement preventive measures aimed at protecting employees' health and safety. The report notes that contemporary occupational safety approaches increasingly recognise psychosocial risks, including chronic stress, excessive workloads, emotional exhaustion and workplace conflicts. These risks are particularly relevant for organisations working with young people, because emotional demands often form an integral part of everyday youth work practice.

From a comparative perspective, the national reports show that labour law and occupational health and safety frameworks provide the clearest legal basis for connecting practitioner well-being with organisational responsibility. In all four countries, the relevant legislation places at least some responsibility on employers or organisations to ensure safe and healthy working conditions. However, the degree to which psychosocial risks are explicitly recognised and operationalised differs. The Dutch framework appears particularly explicit in relation to psychosocial workload and systematic risk assessment, while the Spanish report shows a progressively stronger recognition of psychosocial risks within occupational risk prevention. Romania and Poland also identify occupational health and safety as relevant, but both reports suggest that implementation in youth-serving or volunteer-based contexts may remain uneven.

At the same time, the reports show that labour and occupational health legislation alone is not sufficient to guarantee organisational cultures for well-being & resilience of practitioners in youth work. Legal frameworks may require safe working conditions, risk assessment and prevention, but they do not automatically ensure supervision, emotional support, reflective practice, psychological safety or burnout prevention mechanisms. This is

especially important in youth work, where practitioners' well-being is shaped not only by formal employment protections, but also by leadership practices, team culture, workload distribution, recognition, communication and access to support.

Therefore, for Study No. 1, labour law, working conditions and occupational health and safety should be understood as the minimum structural foundation for practitioner well-being. They create obligations and expectations, but the transition from legal compliance to meaningful support depends on how youth-serving organisations interpret these obligations and translate them into everyday organisational practice.

IV.4. Psychosocial risks, mental health and burnout prevention

Psychosocial risks, mental health and burnout prevention are directly relevant to Study No. 1 because they indicate whether national legal and policy frameworks support an organisational understanding of practitioner well-being and resilience in youth work. In this sense, the issue is not only whether stress, emotional overload or burnout are recognised as risks, but also whether organisations are encouraged or required to address them through preventive measures, safe working conditions, workload management, supportive leadership and internal organisational practices.

The national reports show that psychosocial risks are addressed unevenly across partner countries. In Romania, Law No. 319/2006 on Occupational Safety and Health is identified as the most relevant instrument, as it requires employers to assess and manage psychosocial risks, including work-related stress, workload and emotional demands. However, the Romanian report also notes that, in practice, formal psychosocial risk assessments are rare in youth NGOs. The Romanian mental health framework is mainly clinical and patient-oriented, while volunteering legislation guarantees safe working conditions but does not explicitly address psychological well-being, mental-health support or resilience-building for volunteers.

In the Netherlands, the national report provides one of the clearest references to psychosocial risks within occupational health and safety legislation. The Working Conditions Act is presented as explicitly addressing psychosocial workload, including work pressure, stress, bullying, discrimination, aggression, violence and sexual harassment. The same report also mentions the Risk Inventory and Evaluation (RI&E) and an accompanying action plan for identified occupational risks, together with the Working Conditions Decree, which requires

organisations to assess psychosocial workload and implement preventive measures. In the context of Study No. 1, these elements are relevant because they frame practitioner well-being as an organisational responsibility rather than only as an individual coping issue. The Working Hours Act is also mentioned as indirectly relevant to burnout prevention, through provisions on working time, rest periods and recovery opportunities.

In Spain, psychosocial risk prevention is addressed mainly through occupational risk prevention legislation and mental health policy. The Spanish report states that Law 31/1995 on the Prevention of Occupational Risks requires organisations to assess and manage work-related factors that may negatively affect psychological well-being. Although psychosocial risks are not regulated as a separate standalone category, Spanish occupational safety frameworks increasingly recognise emotional exhaustion and burnout, excessive workload, role ambiguity, workplace stress, interpersonal conflict, emotional demands and poor organisational climates. The Spanish Mental Health Strategy and the Mental Health Action Plan 2025–2027 reinforce the broader recognition of emotional well-being, prevention, psychosocial support and protective environments, although they are primarily health-oriented rather than specifically workplace-oriented.

In Poland, the national report links psychosocial risks mainly to the Labour Code, occupational health and safety regulations and the National Mental Health Protection Programme. Polish occupational health and safety regulations require employers to assess workplace risks and implement preventive measures, while contemporary approaches increasingly recognise chronic stress, excessive workloads, emotional exhaustion and workplace conflicts as factors affecting employee well-being. The National Mental Health Protection Programme provides a broader framework for mental health promotion and prevention, but it mainly addresses the population as a whole rather than youth work practitioners specifically.

Overall, the national reports suggest that psychosocial risks and mental health are increasingly recognised, but not through a dedicated framework for practitioner well-being and resilience in youth work. The Netherlands and Spain provide more explicit references to psychosocial risk prevention, while Romania and Poland identify relevant occupational health and mental health frameworks but also show limitations in direct applicability to youth work

practitioners, especially volunteers and non-employed contributors. For Study No. 1, the key point is that national frameworks can create a basis for organisational responsibility, but the actual prevention of stress, emotional exhaustion and burnout depends on how youth-serving organisations translate these frameworks into everyday practices, leadership attitudes and supportive organisational cultures.

IV.5. Volunteering frameworks and protection of non-employed practitioners

Volunteering frameworks are relevant to Study No. 1 because the study analyses how organisations understand and assume responsibility for the well-being and resilience of all practitioners involved in youth work, not only of formally employed staff. This is especially important where youth work relies on volunteers, short-term collaborators or other non-employed contributors.

In Romania, Law No. 78/2014 on the Regulation of Volunteering Activity defines volunteers' rights and host organisations' obligations, including volunteer contracts, training, coordination and recognition of volunteer experience. The Romanian report notes, however, that although the law guarantees safe working conditions, it does not include explicit provisions on psychological well-being, mental-health support or resilience-building. This is a relevant gap for Study No. 1, because many people involved in Romanian youth work operate as volunteers rather than employees.

In Poland, the Act of 24 April 2003 on Public Benefit Activity and Volunteer Work is identified as important for the youth sector, where organisations rely on both paid staff and volunteers. The Act establishes volunteers' rights and organisations' responsibilities, including the obligation to provide safe conditions for voluntary activities and appropriate organisational support. The Polish report does not indicate specific provisions on psychological well-being or resilience-building for volunteers, but it does frame volunteer protection as part of organisational responsibility.

In the Netherlands, the national report does not present a separate volunteering law in Section IV. However, it states that the Working Conditions Act applies broadly across employment settings, including organisations working with volunteers and youth practitioners where labour relationships exist. The report also notes that Dutch regulations influence how

youth-serving organisations understand responsibility for staff and volunteer well-being.

In Spain, the closest relevant reference is Law 43/2015 on the Third Sector of Social Action, which recognises the role of non-profit organisations and highlights sustainability, professionalisation and quality in service delivery. The report links this indirectly to practitioner well-being through the need for sustainable organisational structures and professional working conditions, not through a specific volunteer-protection framework.

Overall, the national reports show that the protection of non-employed practitioners is uneven. Romania and Poland identify specific volunteering legislation, the Netherlands connects volunteers mainly to broader working-conditions obligations, while Spain frames the issue indirectly through third-sector sustainability. For Study No. 1, this confirms that organisational attitudes towards well-being and resilience must include volunteers and non-employed contributors, especially where youth work depends on them, but the legal basis for their psychological support and resilience-building remains limited or indirect.

IV.6. Equality, anti-discrimination, safeguarding and psychological safety

Equality, anti-discrimination, safeguarding and psychological safety are relevant to Study No. 1 because they show whether national frameworks support organisational cultures in which practitioners can work in safe, respectful and inclusive environments.

In Romania, the national report refers to Child Rights Law No. 272/2004, which strengthens safeguarding for young beneficiaries, and to Government Ordinance No. 137/2000 and Law No. 202/2002 on Equal Opportunities, which establish duties on equal treatment and anti-harassment. However, the report clearly states that these instruments do not automatically generate psychological safety, supervision or inclusive organisational culture; legal compliance remains only a minimum basis for supportive practice.

In the Netherlands, the national report links equality and safe working environments to Dutch equality legislation and workplace protection measures. It states that the legal framework prohibits discrimination and supports inclusive and psychologically safe environments. It also identifies discrimination, bullying, aggression, violence and sexual harassment as undesirable behaviours that can contribute to psychosocial workload.

In Spain, the national report highlights the General Law on the Rights of Persons with

Disabilities and Social Inclusion, Law 15/2022 on Equal Treatment and Non-Discrimination, and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. These frameworks promote equal opportunities, accessibility, participation, reasonable accommodation, equal treatment and protection against discrimination, including in employment and organisational settings. The report links them directly to the need for psychologically safe and inclusive working environments.

In Poland, the national report refers mainly to the Labour Code, which establishes employers' obligations to protect employees' dignity, prevent discrimination and workplace harassment/mobbing, and ensure safe and healthy working conditions. The Standards of Youth Work also promote inclusion, safety, ethical practice and professional development, although they are not legally binding.

Overall, the national reports show that equality, anti-discrimination and safeguarding frameworks provide an important legal basis for respectful and safe organisational environments. For Study No. 1, the key point is that these frameworks can support practitioner well-being and resilience, but psychological safety depends on how organisations translate legal duties into everyday culture, leadership and internal practice.

IV.7. Youth policy and national strategies relevant to practitioner support

Youth policy and national strategies are relevant to Study No. 1 insofar as they show whether practitioner well-being and resilience are recognised as part of the broader development of youth work, organisational quality and support systems. However, the national reports show that this connection remains mostly indirect.

In Romania, the National Youth Strategy 2024–2027 acknowledges the importance of youth work and identifies structural challenges such as insufficient professionalisation, uneven territorial coverage of youth services, weak monitoring systems and the need to strengthen youth-worker training. However, the report clearly states that the Strategy does not include specific provisions for the well-being of youth practitioners or volunteers, and mental-health support for youth workers is not named as a national policy priority.

In Spain, the Youth Strategy 2030 identifies mental health, social participation, inclusion and well-being as priority areas, and highlights the need to strengthen support systems for young people and improve the quality of youth interventions. The Spanish report also links

Law 43/2015 on the Third Sector of Social Action to organisational sustainability, professionalisation and quality in service delivery. These frameworks relate indirectly to practitioner well-being by stressing the need for sustainable organisational structures and professional working conditions.

In Poland, the report mentions the Standards of Youth Work in Poland, developed by the National Coalition for Youth Work with the support of the National Institute of Freedom – Centre for Civil Society Development. These standards promote quality, participation, inclusion, safety, professional development and ethical practice. They are relevant to practitioner support because they contribute to the professionalisation and quality development of youth work, although they do not constitute a dedicated legal framework for practitioner well-being and resilience.

In the Netherlands, the national report does not detail a specific national youth strategy. It only states that the relevant framework consists mainly of occupational health and safety regulation, labour legislation and youth-sector governance principles, which together frame well-being as both an organisational and systemic concern.

Overall, the national reports show that youth policies and strategies support the broader recognition, professionalisation and quality of youth work, but they do not generally establish direct measures for practitioner well-being, supervision, burnout prevention or resilience-building. For Study No. 1, this confirms that the development of supportive youth work organisations depends not only on national policy directions, but also on how organisations themselves understand and operationalise responsibility for practitioner well-being.

IV.8. Comparative synthesis: common patterns, gaps and implications for youth work organisations

The comparative reading of the national reports shows that practitioner well-being and resilience in youth work are not regulated through a single, dedicated legal framework in the partner countries. Instead, the relevant provisions are dispersed across labour law, occupational health and safety, psychosocial risk prevention, mental health policy, volunteering legislation, equality and anti-discrimination frameworks, youth policy and third-sector governance. This means that the legal context relevant to Study No. 1 is fragmented and indirect rather than unified and specifically designed for youth work practitioners.

A first common pattern is that labour law and occupational health and safety legislation provide the clearest legal basis for organisational responsibility. Across the reports, these frameworks establish obligations related to safe and healthy working conditions, risk assessment, prevention, dignity at work and, in some cases, psychosocial risks. However, the degree of explicitness differs. The Netherlands and Spain provide clearer references to psychosocial workload, psychosocial risk prevention and organisational measures, while Romania and Poland also identify relevant occupational health and safety frameworks, but with more visible limitations in terms of implementation or direct applicability to youth work contexts.

A second common gap concerns volunteers and non-employed practitioners. Romania and Poland mention specific volunteering legislation, while the Netherlands links volunteers mainly to broader working-conditions obligations, and Spain frames the issue indirectly through third-sector sustainability. Overall, the reports suggest that volunteers may benefit from some legal protections related to safe conditions and organisational support, but explicit provisions on psychological well-being, mental-health support, supervision or resilience-building remain limited or absent. This is particularly relevant for Study No. 1 because youth work often depends on people who are not fully covered by standard employment protections.

A third pattern is the distinction between legal compliance and supportive organisational culture. Equality, anti-discrimination, safeguarding and safe working environment frameworks provide an important minimum basis for respectful and inclusive organisations. However, the national reports also indicate that such frameworks do not automatically generate psychological safety, open communication, supervision, reflective spaces or burnout prevention mechanisms. These depend on how organisations interpret legal duties and transform them into everyday leadership, management and team practices.

Youth policies and national strategies also remain mostly indirect in relation to practitioner support. They contribute to the recognition, professionalisation and quality development of youth work, but they do not generally establish concrete mechanisms for practitioner well-being and resilience. This confirms that the development of positive and supportive youth work organisations cannot rely only on national policy direction; it also depends on internal

organisational beliefs, priorities and practices.

For Study No. 1, the main implication is clear: national legislation can create a minimum framework for safety, equality, risk prevention and organisational responsibility, but it does not fully determine how youth-serving organisations understand and support practitioner well-being. The real difference is made at organisational level, through attitudes and beliefs about whether well-being is treated as an individual coping issue or as a shared organisational responsibility.

Therefore, the transnational synthesis confirms the relevance of the study focus. Youth work organisations require more than formal legal compliance. They require organisational cultures that recognise emotional labour, address psychosocial risks, include volunteers and non-employed contributors, promote psychological safety, and translate legal or policy expectations into concrete practices that support the well-being and resilience of practitioners.

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience
in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by
the European Union

Section V: Description of how the transnational study no. 1 was carried out (synthesis based on national reports)

a. Research design (quantitative/qualitative/mixed)

Transnational Study No. 1 was implemented through a coordinated mixed-methods research design across Romania, Poland, the Netherlands and Spain. The methodological approach combined quantitative and qualitative methods in order to examine organisational attitudes and beliefs towards practitioner wellbeing and resilience from complementary perspectives.

This design was particularly appropriate because the object of the study was not a single measurable variable, but a complex organisational phenomenon shaped by values, beliefs, leadership practices, emotional labour, psychosocial risks, communication patterns, professional roles, organisational cultures, funding conditions and national youth-work contexts.

The quantitative component allowed the consortium to identify comparable tendencies across countries and between the two main target groups: practitioners/youth workers and leaders/managers. It provided descriptive evidence on how respondents perceive organisational awareness, responsibility, leadership, psychological safety, learning capacity and systemic understanding of wellbeing and resilience.

The qualitative component provided interpretative depth. Interviews and focus groups enabled participants to explain how wellbeing and resilience are understood in everyday organisational practice, how emotional demands are recognised or normalised, how leadership shapes organisational culture, and how formal and informal support mechanisms operate within youth-serving organisations.

At transnational level, the study can therefore be understood as a **convergent and interpretative mixed-methods study**. Quantitative and qualitative evidence were not treated separately or hierarchically. Instead, they were used as mutually reinforcing sources: quantitative findings identified patterns of recognition, responsibility and organisational culture, while qualitative evidence helped explain how these patterns were produced, constrained or contradicted within real organisational contexts.

This methodological design was directly aligned with the analytical purpose of Study No.

1. Since the study seeks to understand the **recognition–operationalisation gap**, it was necessary to collect both measurable perceptions and contextual explanations. The questionnaires showed what respondents tended to recognise or prioritise; the interviews and focus groups helped explain why recognition does not always become organisational practice.

b. Implementation stages

Although each partner adapted the implementation process to its national context, the four studies followed a broadly comparable sequence. National adaptations were linked to language, recruitment channels, organisational networks, availability of participants and fieldwork logistics.

The implementation can be synthesised into five main stages.

Stage 1. Preparation and contextual adaptation

The first stage consisted of reviewing the common methodological framework and adapting the research tools to each national context. Partners ensured alignment between the study objectives, the six indicators and the data collection instruments.

This stage included translation or linguistic adaptation of questionnaires where needed, preparation of interview and focus group guides, identification of relevant youth-serving organisations, and review of ethical procedures. The tools were adapted to ensure that they were understandable and relevant for different types of organisations, including NGOs, youth organisations, third-sector entities, volunteer-based organisations and organisations working with young people in situations of vulnerability.

Particular attention was paid to maintaining a common transnational structure while allowing national implementation to reflect local youth-work realities.

Stage 2. Recruitment and dissemination

The second stage involved identifying and recruiting organisations and participants. Recruitment was carried out mainly through partner networks, professional contacts, direct organisational outreach, institutional communication, email invitations, social media and snowball dissemination.

This approach was appropriate for an exploratory study focused on organisational

attitudes and beliefs. It allowed partners to reach organisations with relevant experience in youth work, social inclusion, non-formal education, disability, mental health, community work, youth empowerment and support for vulnerable young people.

At the same time, this recruitment strategy introduced methodological limitations, especially convenience sampling and self-selection. Organisations and respondents already interested in wellbeing, resilience or organisational development may have been more likely to participate.

Stage 3. Quantitative data collection

The third stage consisted of administering two online questionnaires, one addressed to practitioners and youth workers, and one addressed to leaders, managers and coordinators.

The questionnaires collected data on the six core indicators of Study No. 1:

Organisational Awareness and Strategic Recognition of Wellbeing;

Organisational Responsibility for Practitioner Wellbeing;

Leadership Attitudes towards Wellbeing and Emotional Labour;

Organisational Culture and Psychological Safety;

Organisational Learning and Openness to Improvement;

Systemic Understanding of Wellbeing and Resilience.

The use of two target-group questionnaires enabled comparison between those directly experiencing organisational culture in daily practice and those responsible for shaping organisational priorities, structures and decisions. This comparison is central to the recognition–operationalisation gap, because leaders and practitioners may recognise similar values while experiencing organisational realities differently.

Stage 4. Qualitative data collection

The fourth stage involved semi-structured interviews and focus groups. These qualitative methods were used to deepen and contextualise the survey findings.

Semi-structured interviews allowed for a more detailed exploration of organisational perspectives, leadership experiences, support practices, psychosocial challenges and perceived barriers to practitioner wellbeing. Focus groups created spaces for collective reflection, enabling practitioners, leaders and organisational representatives to discuss shared experiences, tensions and possible improvements.

The qualitative component was particularly important because attitudes and beliefs are not always fully captured through survey responses. Interviews and focus groups helped identify the organisational meanings behind the data: how wellbeing is spoken about, what is considered legitimate, what remains informal, and what prevents organisations from converting concern into practice.

Stage 5. Data organisation, analysis and reporting

The final stage consisted of organising, analysing and integrating the quantitative and qualitative data. Questionnaire responses were systematised for descriptive analysis across countries, target groups and indicators. Qualitative evidence from interviews and focus groups was reviewed thematically in relation to the six study indicators.

At national level, each partner produced a national report. At transnational level, the findings were synthesised to identify shared European patterns, meaningful contextual variations and organisational mechanisms explaining the recognition–operationalisation gap.

The purpose of the transnational synthesis was not to rank countries or produce four parallel national summaries. Instead, the analysis focused on identifying common organisational dynamics relevant to the POSITIVE project and to the development of later resources, tools and training activities.

c. Methods & instruments used

Study No. 1 used three complementary research instruments across the four countries: questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus groups.

Questionnaires

Two structured online questionnaires were used. The first questionnaire targeted practitioners, youth workers, volunteers, project staff, educators, mentors, trainers, facilitators and other professionals directly involved in work with young people. The second questionnaire targeted organisational leaders, managers, coordinators and decision-makers.

The questionnaires were designed around the six indicators of the study and included closed questions, Likert-scale items and, where applicable, open-ended questions. They explored organisational attitudes towards practitioner wellbeing and resilience, perceptions

of organisational responsibility, leadership approaches, psychological safety, organisational learning and systemic understandings of wellbeing.

The use of separate but conceptually aligned questionnaires made it possible to compare practitioner and leadership perspectives while maintaining a common analytical framework.

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected organisational representatives in each country. The interview format ensured consistency around the main study themes while allowing participants to elaborate on issues particularly relevant to their organisational context.

The interviews explored how organisations understand practitioner wellbeing, how they respond to emotional labour and stress, what support mechanisms exist, how leadership influences organisational culture, and what barriers prevent wellbeing from becoming embedded in organisational practice.

Focus groups

Each country organised one focus group. The focus groups brought together representatives of the study's target groups and provided a collective space for discussion and validation of emerging findings.

The focus group method was especially useful for identifying shared organisational narratives, tensions between formal recognition and informal practice, and collective interpretations of responsibility, psychological safety and organisational learning.

Together, the three instruments allowed the study to triangulate evidence across individual perceptions, leadership perspectives and collective reflection. This strengthened the credibility and interpretative depth of the transnational analysis.

d. Data collection

Across the four countries, the quantitative phase generated a combined sample of approximately 194 questionnaire responses. Spain collected 59 responses, including 37 from practitioners and youth workers and 22 from leaders, coordinators and managers. Romania collected 50 valid questionnaire responses, comprising 24 practitioners and 26 leaders or managers. Poland collected 41 valid questionnaire responses, including 22 practitioners and

19 organisational leaders or managers. The Netherlands reported 44 questionnaire responses in its data collection section, with 19 responses from youth workers and 25 from leaders and managers.

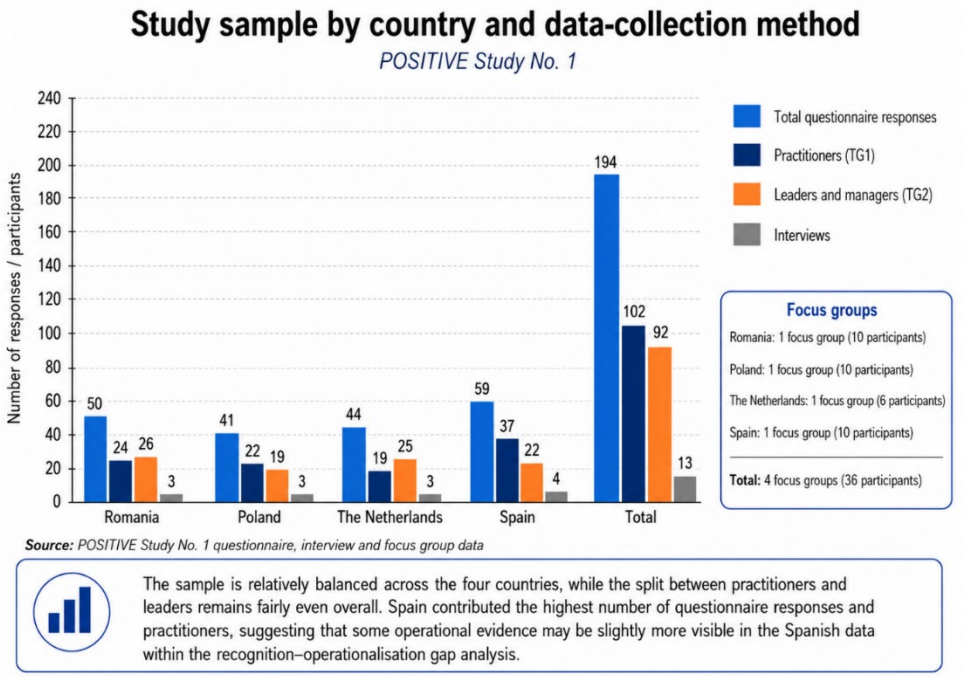
The qualitative phase comprised 13 semi-structured interviews across the partnership and four focus groups involving 36 participants in total. Spain conducted four interviews and one focus group with 10 participants. Romania conducted three interviews and one focus group with 10 participants. Poland conducted three interviews and one focus group with 10 participants. The Netherlands conducted three interviews and one focus group with six participants.

Table 5. Comparative overview of relevant legal and policy frameworks

Country	Survey responses TG1/TG2	Total questionnaire responses	Interviews	Focus group
Romania	24 practitioners / 26 leaders	50	3	1 focus group with 10 participants
Poland	22 practitioners / 19 leaders	41	3	1 focus group with 10 participants
The Netherlands	19 practitioners / 25 leaders	44	3	1 focus group with 6 participants
Spain	37 practitioners / 22 leaders	59	4	1 focus group with 10 participants
Total	**102 practitioners / 92 leaders**	**194**	**13**	**4 focus groups with 36 participants**

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

Figure 2. Study sample by country and data-collection method



The data collection took place mainly between March and June 2026, with specific timelines varying across national contexts. Romania implemented its study between February and June 2026, including preparation, data collection, analysis and reporting. The Netherlands carried out implementation mainly between March and April 2026. Spain implemented the national fieldwork between April and May 2026. Poland completed its data collection process through questionnaires, interviews and an online focus group held in June 2026.

The Dutch report contains some internal inconsistencies in later respondent-profile figures. For this transnational synthesis, the data collection figures are used as the most reliable basis: 44 questionnaire responses in total, including 19 practitioners/youth workers and 25 leaders/managers.

The overall sample provides a strong exploratory evidence base for identifying patterns of organisational recognition, responsibility and practice. However, it should not be interpreted as statistically representative of the whole youth work sector in the four countries.

e. Ethical considerations (voluntariness, anonymity, consent)

Ethical considerations were integrated into the implementation of all four national studies. Given the sensitivity of the topic — wellbeing, psychosocial risks, emotional labour,

organisational support, stress and workplace experiences — particular attention was paid to voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality and responsible data management.

Participation in questionnaires, interviews and focus groups was voluntary. Respondents and participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the objectives of the POSITIVE project, the intended use of the data and their right to withdraw from participation without negative consequences.

Questionnaire responses were collected anonymously or without unnecessary identifying information. Where participants provided contact details for follow-up activities or future involvement in the project, these were treated separately from survey responses.

Interview and focus group participants were informed in advance about the nature of the research, the topics to be discussed and the way in which their contributions would be used. Consent was obtained prior to participation. Where recordings or quotations were used, national teams applied appropriate confidentiality, anonymisation or pseudonymisation procedures.

Data were handled in accordance with applicable data protection principles and used exclusively for the purposes of the POSITIVE project, national reporting and transnational analysis.

From a methodological perspective, these ethical safeguards were essential. The study asked participants to reflect on potentially sensitive organisational realities, including stress, emotional overload, leadership, psychological safety and support gaps. Protecting confidentiality helped create the conditions for more honest and meaningful responses.

f. Difficulties and limitations encountered

The study was successfully implemented across all four partner countries and generated a valuable comparative evidence base. However, several limitations must be acknowledged in order to interpret the findings appropriately.

The first limitation concerns the sampling strategy. The study relied mainly on partner networks, professional contacts, organisational outreach and voluntary participation. This means that the sample was based on convenience and purposive recruitment rather than random or stratified sampling. As a result, the findings cannot be generalised statistically to

the whole youth work sector in Romania, Poland, the Netherlands or Spain.

The second limitation concerns self-selection. Organisations and individuals already interested in wellbeing, resilience, organisational development or youth work quality may have been more likely to participate. This may have increased the level of reported awareness or positive attitudes towards practitioner wellbeing.

The third limitation concerns self-reported data. The questionnaires, interviews and focus groups capture perceptions, experiences and interpretations. These are central to the purpose of Study No. 1, because the study focuses on attitudes and beliefs. However, self-reported data may be influenced by social desirability, role position, organisational loyalty or respondents' expectations about what a supportive organisation should be.

The fourth limitation concerns differences between national samples. The four countries differ in sample size, organisational ecosystems, professionalisation levels, reliance on volunteers, recruitment pathways and timing of data collection. These differences do not invalidate the comparative analysis, but they require caution when interpreting national contrasts.

The fifth limitation concerns the availability of leaders and managers. In several contexts, organisational leaders and coordinators faced high workloads and limited availability, which made recruitment more difficult. This is itself analytically relevant, because it reflects the organisational pressure under which many youth-serving organisations operate.

The sixth limitation concerns the Dutch respondent-profile data. While the Dutch data collection section reports 44 questionnaire responses, including 19 practitioners and 25 leaders/managers, later profile figures in the Dutch report contain some internal inconsistencies. For this reason, the transnational report uses the data collection figures as the most reliable basis.

The seventh limitation concerns the scale of the qualitative evidence. The 13 interviews and 4 focus groups provide rich interpretative insight, but they should be understood as contextual and exploratory rather than exhaustive. They deepen the interpretation of survey findings, but they do not represent all possible organisational experiences within the youth work sector.

These limitations do not weaken the value of the study. Rather, they clarify the level of

inference that can be drawn. Study No. 1 should be read as an exploratory, comparative and organisational analysis. Its purpose is not statistical generalisation, but the identification of patterns, tensions and mechanisms that help explain how practitioner wellbeing is recognised and why this recognition is not always operationalised.

The methodological lesson for POSITIVE is clear: the recognition–operationalisation gap cannot be understood through numbers alone. It requires attention to organisational context, leadership, culture, language, emotional labour and everyday practice. The mixed-methods design made it possible to capture this complexity and to generate a solid foundation for Study No. 2 and later POSITIVE outputs.

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience
in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by
the European Union

Section VI: Description of organisations involved in study no. 1 (synthesis based on national reports):

Synthesis based on national reports

The organisations involved in Study No. 1 form a diverse but coherent youth-work and youth-support ecosystem across Romania, Poland, the Netherlands and Spain. They are not identical in size, maturity, legal form or field of intervention, but they share a common feature: they work with young people, often including young people experiencing vulnerability, exclusion, psychosocial difficulties, disability, barriers to participation or limited access to opportunities.

This organisational diversity is important for the interpretation of the study. Practitioner wellbeing and resilience are not shaped only by individual attitudes; they are also shaped by organisational type, field of activity, available resources, degree of formalisation, reliance on volunteers, leadership capacity and stage of organisational development. Mature organisations may have stronger governance structures and more established routines, while smaller or younger organisations may rely more heavily on proximity, flexibility, relational trust and informal support. Neither model automatically guarantees practitioner wellbeing. The decisive issue is whether recognition of wellbeing becomes operationalised through concrete organisational practices.

a. Typology of participating organisations

Across the four partner countries, the sample is dominated by non-governmental organisations that provide programmes, services or activities for young people. These are complemented by youth NGOs or youth organisations more specifically focused on youth participation, empowerment, representation or community engagement.

This pattern is analytically relevant. Programme-delivering NGOs are often involved in direct service provision, social intervention, educational activities, psychosocial support, inclusion programmes or community-based work. These forms of work tend to expose practitioners to high relational and emotional demands. Youth NGOs, by contrast, may place stronger emphasis on participation, peer engagement, empowerment and youth-led approaches, although they too may operate under resource constraints and rely heavily on

voluntary or semi-formal contributions.

The national reports confirm this shared pattern, while also showing contextual variation. In Romania, the sample is strongly concentrated in NGOs offering programmes or activities for young people, with both practitioners and leaders reporting similar organisational profiles. In Poland, NGOs providing programmes or activities for young people also form the dominant organisational group, although the leadership sample includes a more substantial presence of youth NGOs. In the Netherlands, the report identifies the same two broad categories — youth NGOs and NGOs providing programmes or activities for young people — but does not provide detailed percentages for this typology. In Spain, the sample is clearly rooted in the third sector, with most participants coming from NGOs implementing programmes or activities for young people, while also including youth organisations and organisations with specialised roles in disability, mental health, employability, youth empowerment and community inclusion.

Table 6. Comparative overview of organisational typology

Country	Dominant organisational typology	Analytical relevance for Study No. 1
Romania	Mainly NGOs offering programmes or activities for young people, complemented by youth NGOs.	The predominance of programme-delivering organisations highlights the importance of examining how direct service delivery, volunteer involvement and project-based work affect practitioner wellbeing.
Poland	NGOs providing programmes or activities for young people, with a relevant presence of youth NGOs, especially among leaders.	The sample reflects a youth-work sector in professionalisation, where organisational identity, standards and practitioner support are still developing.
The Netherlands	Youth NGOs and NGOs providing programmes or activities for young people.	The organisational profile points to a field where wellbeing is recognised in discourse, but where internal support structures may vary across organisations.
Spain	Predominantly third-sector NGOs implementing youth-related programmes, complemented by youth, disability, mental health, employability and community-based organisations.	The sample reflects emotionally demanding and specialised intervention contexts, where practitioner wellbeing is strongly connected to service quality and organisational sustainability.

The transnational implication is that Study No. 1 mainly captures the attitudes and beliefs of organisations that are not abstract policy bodies, but organisations directly involved in implementing activities, programmes or support processes for young people. This matters because the recognition–operationalisation gap is likely to appear precisely in these contexts: organisations may value wellbeing, but daily delivery pressures, limited resources and emotional demands can make it difficult to convert recognition into structured practice.

b. Field(s) in which organisations operate

The participating organisations operate across a wide range of fields, reflecting the multidisciplinary nature of youth work and youth support in Europe. Although the fields were measured and reported differently across the national studies, a common core emerges: youth development and empowerment, education and lifelong learning, social inclusion and equal opportunities, community development, mental health and wellbeing, employability, civic participation, disability support and non-formal learning.

This diversity should not be interpreted as a methodological weakness. On the contrary, it strengthens the study because practitioner wellbeing is relevant across different forms of youth support. The organisations involved in the study do not only deliver recreational activities or isolated youth programmes. Many work in areas where practitioners are exposed to complex human situations, including vulnerability, psychosocial distress, exclusion, disability, unemployment, family difficulties or barriers to autonomy and participation.

In Poland, the most frequently represented area was youth development and empowerment, followed by community development and civic engagement, arts and culture, social inclusion and equal opportunities, education and lifelong learning, entrepreneurship and employment, and mental health and wellbeing. In the Netherlands, most questionnaire participants belonged to organisations working in youth development and empowerment. In Spain, the participating organisations covered a particularly broad third-sector spectrum, including social inclusion, equal opportunities, entrepreneurship, employment, youth development, sports and leisure, community participation, mental health, digital skills, arts, human rights, education, disability and child protection. In Romania, the fields represented included youth development and empowerment, education and lifelong learning,

entrepreneurship, environmental education, community development, arts and culture, digital skills, social inclusion and related youth-support areas.

Table 7. Main field of activity of participating organisations

Main field of activity	Relevance for practitioner wellbeing
Youth development and empowerment	Requires sustained relational engagement, facilitation, mentoring and support for autonomy, participation and self-confidence.
Education and lifelong learning	Often involves non-formal education, guidance, training and learning support, requiring emotional availability and pedagogical flexibility.
Social inclusion and equal opportunities	Frequently involves work with vulnerable or marginalised young people, increasing emotional labour and the need for reflective support.
Mental health and psychosocial support	Exposes practitioners to complex emotional situations, requiring psychological safety, supervision and clear support structures.
Disability and independent living support	Requires personalised accompaniment, accessibility awareness, advocacy and sustained relational work.
Employability, entrepreneurship and labour-market inclusion	Connects practitioner work to young people's transitions, uncertainty, autonomy and socio-economic resilience.
Community development and civic participation	Requires practitioners to mediate between individuals, groups, institutions and communities, often under limited-resource conditions.
Arts, culture, sport, leisure and non-formal activities	Provides participatory and developmental spaces, but may still involve emotional labour, inclusion challenges and organisational pressure.

The fields of activity represented in the sample reinforce one of the central assumptions of Study No. 1: practitioner wellbeing is not a peripheral internal matter. It is directly connected to the nature of youth work itself. Organisations working with vulnerability, empowerment, mental health, disability, inclusion and participation depend on practitioners' capacity to sustain high-quality relationships. When these practitioners are unsupported, the quality and sustainability of the organisation's mission are weakened.

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

This is why the field of activity matters for the recognition–operationalisation gap. Organisations operating in emotionally demanding fields may strongly recognise the importance of wellbeing, but recognition alone is insufficient if they do not have supervision, workload awareness, leadership practices, team reflection spaces or feedback mechanisms. The more relational and demanding the field, the greater the need to move from informal concern to organisational support.

c. Their stage of development

The participating organisations also represent different stages of organisational development, from early-stage and developing organisations to established and mature organisations active for more than ten years. This developmental diversity is important because organisational maturity can influence the way wellbeing is understood, prioritised and operationalised.

The national reports show different patterns. Romania presents a polarised profile, with a substantial share of respondents coming from both growing organisations and mature organisations. The Romanian report explicitly notes that mature organisations may already possess routines and governance structures on which supportive practices can be built, while start-up and developing organisations may need external support to formalise such practices. Poland is dominated by mature organisations, with more than half of respondents affiliated with organisations operating for more than ten years, alongside developing and established organisations. The Netherlands includes early-stage, developing, established and mature organisations, although the Dutch respondent-profile figures should be interpreted cautiously because of internal inconsistencies in later sample descriptions. Spain includes highly consolidated organisations with formal structures, medium-sized organisations with stable territorial expertise, and smaller or emerging youth organisations relying more on flexible and relational support practices.

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

Table 8. Stage of organisational development

Stage of organisational development	Typical strengths	Typical risks for practitioner wellbeing
Early-stage organisations	Flexibility, proximity, motivation, strong informal commitment.	Limited procedures, weak formal support systems, dependence on a few individuals, unstable resources.
Developing organisations	Growth capacity, emerging team culture, openness to learning.	Difficulty formalising wellbeing routines while managing expansion, funding pressure and workload.
Established organisations	More stable structures, clearer roles, accumulated experience.	Risk of uneven implementation if wellbeing remains informal or dependent on leadership style.
Mature organisations	Governance structures, institutional memory, established networks and greater potential for formal systems.	Risk of inherited practices, bureaucratic inertia, workload normalisation or insufficient adaptation to new psychosocial demands.

The developmental stage of organisations should not be interpreted mechanically. A mature organisation is not automatically supportive, and a young organisation is not automatically fragile. Mature organisations may have more resources and structures, but they may also carry older organisational habits or bureaucratic routines that do not fully respond to contemporary psychosocial demands. Younger organisations may lack formal systems, but they may develop strong cultures of trust, flexibility and dialogue.

The key analytical point is that organisational development affects the form that the recognition–operationalisation gap takes. In smaller and developing organisations, the gap may appear as a lack of procedures, limited resources, insufficient role clarity or dependence on informal relationships. In mature organisations, the gap may appear as a discrepancy between formal structures and lived experience, or as a failure to translate policies into meaningful daily support.

For the POSITIVE project, this has direct implications. Later tools and training resources should not assume one single organisational model. They must be adaptable to different stages of development. Mature organisations may benefit from self-assessment tools, policy

refinement, leadership development and systematic feedback-to-action mechanisms. Smaller or volunteer-led organisations may need lighter routines, practical reflection tools, peer-support formats and simple wellbeing practices that can be implemented without excessive administrative burden.

Overall, the organisations involved in Study No. 1 represent a diverse but coherent field of youth-serving organisations. They operate in relationally demanding areas, frequently with vulnerable young people, and across different levels of organisational maturity. This diversity strengthens the transnational study because it shows that the recognition–operationalisation gap is not confined to one country, one type of organisation or one field of intervention. It is a broader organisational challenge for European youth work: how to transform concern for practitioner wellbeing into sustainable structures, routines and cultures of support.

Section VII: Description of respondents (synthesis based on national reports)

VII. 1 Target group no. 1 -Youth workers and practitioners

Target Group No. 1 brings together the practitioners, youth workers, volunteers, educators, mentors, trainers, counsellors, project staff and other professionals directly involved in work with young people across Romania, Poland, the Netherlands and Spain.

According to the consolidated data collection figures used for the transnational synthesis, this target group comprises **102 questionnaire respondents**: 24 in Romania, 22 in Poland, 19 in the Netherlands and 37 in Spain.

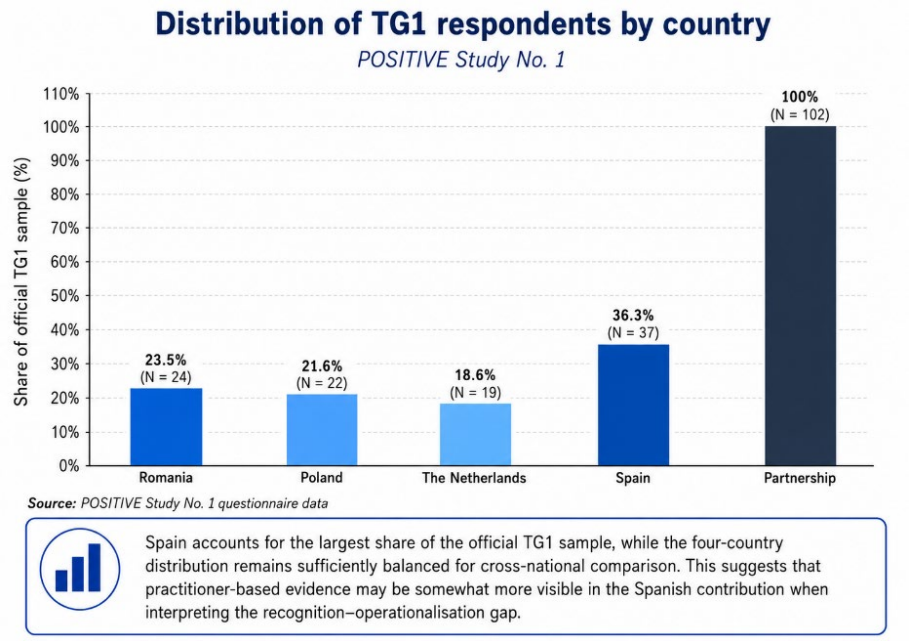
The Dutch national report contains an internal inconsistency between the data collection figures and the later respondent-profile tables. While the data collection section reports 19 youth workers/practitioners, the profile section provides disaggregated data for 26 respondents. For this reason, the official transnational total remains **N = 102**, while Dutch profile data are used descriptively and should be interpreted with caution.

Table 9. Target Group 1 questionnaire respondents by country

Country	TG1 respondents	Share of official TG1 sample
Romania	24	23.5%
Poland	22	21.6%
The Netherlands	19	18.6%
Spain	37	36.3%
Partnership	**102**	**100%**

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

Figure 3. Target Group 1 questionnaire respondents by country



Target Group No. 1 is particularly important for Study No. 1 because it represents the operational level of youth work. These are the respondents who experience organisational culture, leadership, workload, emotional labour and support practices most directly. They are the people closest to the everyday realities of youth work: accompanying young people, implementing activities, providing guidance, managing relational demands and often absorbing the emotional consequences of working with vulnerability, exclusion, disability, mental health difficulties or social disadvantage.

The profile of this group therefore matters for interpretation. The findings do not simply reflect abstract opinions about wellbeing. They reflect the perspectives of people positioned where the **recognition–operationalisation gap** is most directly experienced: practitioners may hear that wellbeing is important, but they are also the ones who know whether this recognition becomes concrete support, manageable workloads, psychological safety, supervision, feedback mechanisms or leadership practices.

a. Position within the organisation

The organisational position of practitioners varies sharply across the partnership. Spain and Poland show a more professionalised practitioner profile, dominated by employees or

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

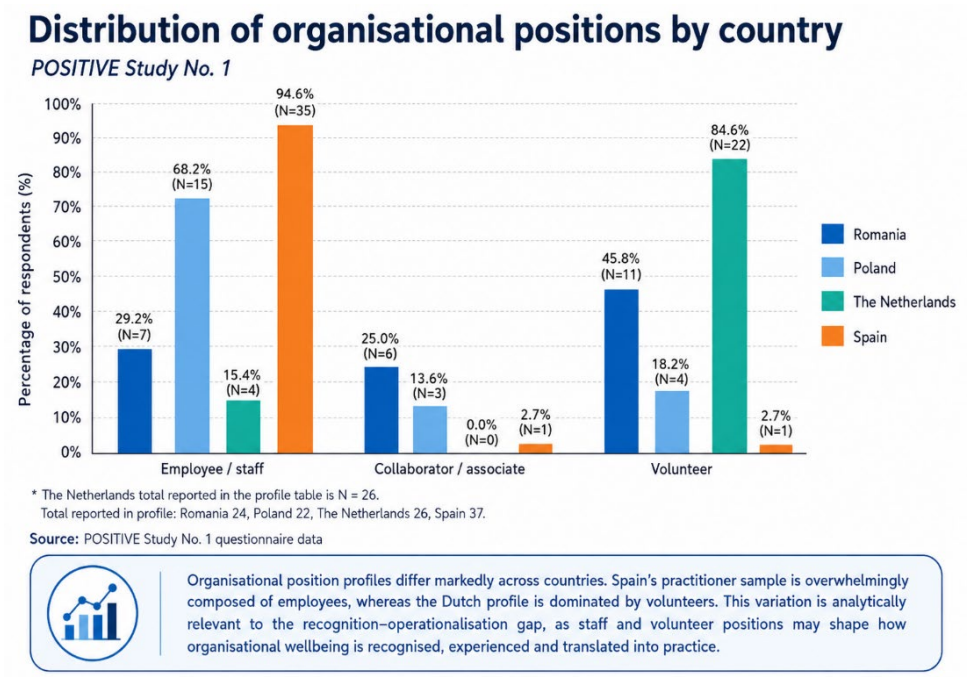
staff members. Romania presents a mixed profile, with a strong volunteer component. The Dutch respondent-profile section, although affected by internal inconsistency, points to an even more volunteer-based practitioner sample.

Table 10. Target Group 1 – position within the organisation

Position	Romania N (%)	Poland N (%)	The Netherlands N (%)*	Spain N (%)
Employee / staff	7 (29.2%)	15 (68.2%)	4 (15.4%)	35 (94.6%)
Collaborator / associate	6 (25.0%)	3 (13.6%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.7%)
Volunteer	11 (45.8%)	4 (18.2%)	22 (84.6%)	1 (2.7%)
Total reported in profile	**24**	**22**	**26***	**37**

*The Dutch profile section reports 26 TG1 cases, while the data collection section reports 19 TG1 responses. Dutch profile data should therefore be used descriptively and not to recalculate the official transnational total.

Figure 4. Target Group 1 – position within the organisation



The strongest contrast appears between Spain and the Netherlands. In Spain, almost all TG1 respondents were employees or technical staff members, whereas the Dutch profile is overwhelmingly volunteer-based. Poland is also relatively employee-based, while Romania sits closer to a mixed staff-volunteer model.

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

This difference is methodologically and analytically important. In employee-based contexts, practitioner wellbeing can be linked more directly to workload, supervision, employment conditions, occupational risk prevention and professional development. In volunteer-heavy contexts, wellbeing depends strongly on belonging, guidance, recognition, role clarity, emotional boundaries and protection from overload.

The transnational conclusion is that practitioner wellbeing cannot be framed only as an employment issue. Study No. 1 captures organisations where youth work is delivered by mixed human-resource ecosystems: paid staff, volunteers, collaborators and project-based contributors. This has a direct implication for POSITIVE: later tools and training resources should be suitable for mixed teams, not only for formal employees.

b. Current role when working with young people

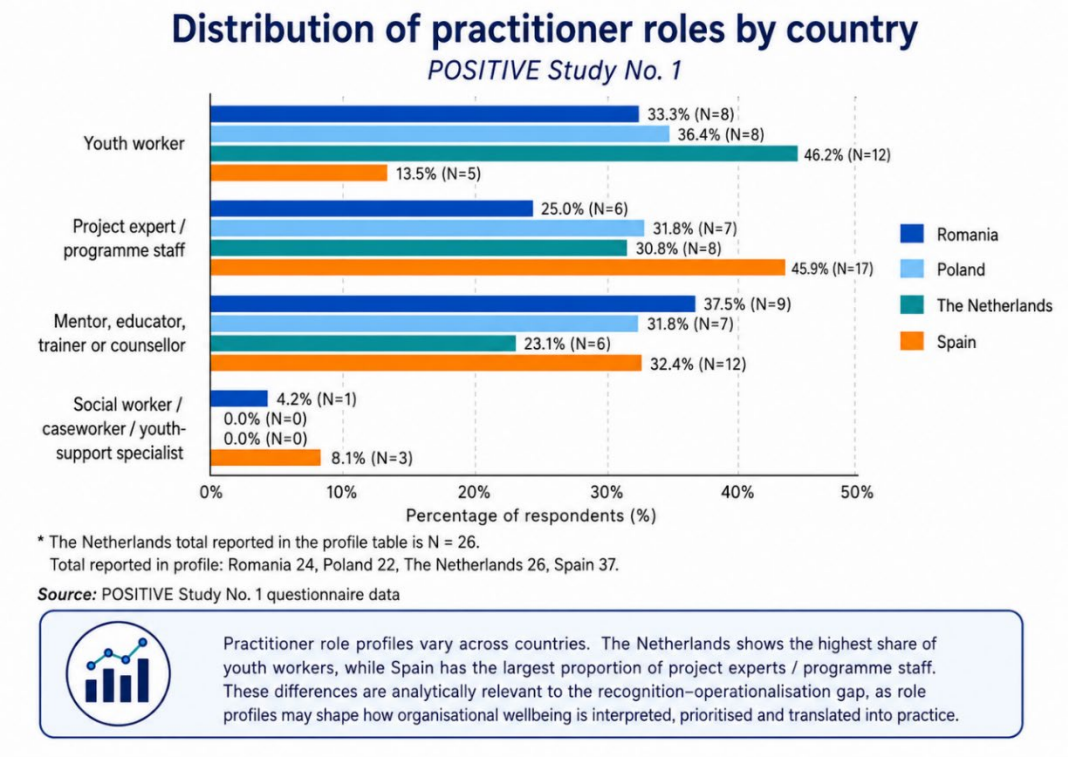
The role profile confirms the multidisciplinary nature of youth work across the partnership. Respondents were not concentrated in a single occupational category. They included youth workers, project and programme staff, mentors, educators, trainers, counsellors and youth-support specialists.

Table 11. Target Group 1 – current role when working with young people

Role	Romania N (%)	Poland N (%)	The Netherlands N (%)*	Spain N (%)
Youth worker	8 (33.3%)	8 (36.4%)	12 (46.2%)	5 (13.5%)
Project expert / programme staff	6 (25.0%)	7 (31.8%)	8 (30.8%)	17 (45.9%)
Mentor, educator, trainer or counsellor	9 (37.5%)	7 (31.8%)	6 (23.1%)	12 (32.4%)
Social worker / caseworker / youth-support specialist	1 (4.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (8.1%)
Total reported in profile	**24**	**22**	**26***	**37**

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

Figure 4. Target Group 1 – current role when working with young people



Romania, Poland and the Netherlands show relatively strong representation of direct youth-work and educational or mentoring roles. Spain presents a stronger project and programme profile, with almost half of TG1 respondents identifying as project experts or programme staff. This is consistent with the Spanish sample's strong third-sector and service-delivery orientation.

This distribution matters because wellbeing risks are not confined to one role. Youth workers and youth-support specialists may face direct emotional demands from relational work with young people. Mentors, educators, trainers and counsellors may experience relational fatigue, responsibility for guidance and emotional support. Project and programme staff may face administrative pressure, reporting demands, coordination overload and the tension between delivery targets and human support.

The recognition–operationalisation gap may therefore appear differently depending on role. Frontline practitioners may experience it as insufficient emotional support or lack of

psychological safety. Programme staff may experience it as workload pressure or insufficient time for reflection. Mentors and educators may experience it through role ambiguity, relational fatigue or absence of supervision. This means that organisational wellbeing practices must be broad enough to address different forms of youth-work labour.

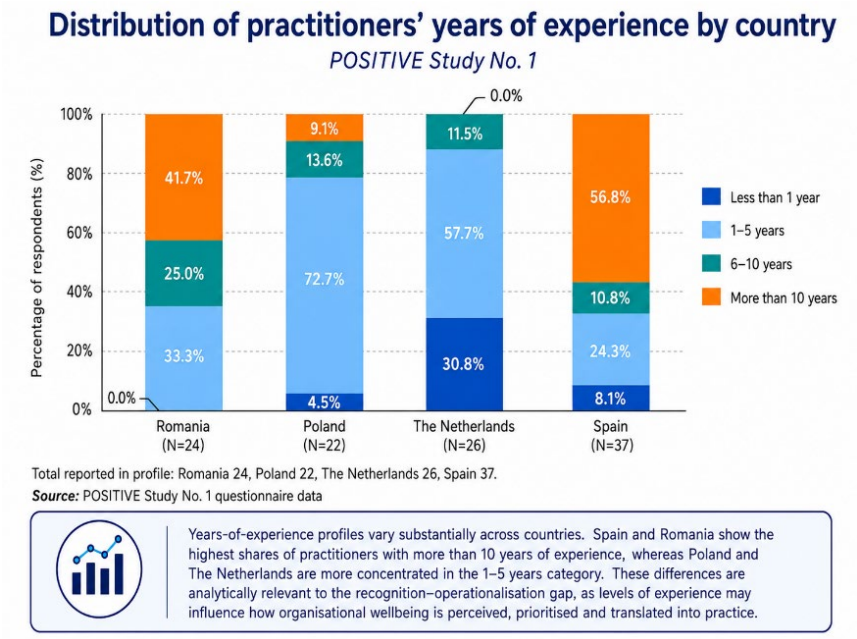
c. Years of experience in working with youth

The experience profile divides the partnership into two broad patterns. Romania and Spain show more experienced practitioner samples, with a high proportion of respondents reporting six or more years of experience. Poland is dominated by early-to-mid-career practitioners, especially those with one to five years of experience. The Dutch profile, read cautiously, also points to a predominantly early-career sample.

Table 12. Target Group 1 – years of experience in working with youth

Years of experience	Romania N (%)	Poland N (%)	The Netherlands N (%)*	Spain N (%)
Less than 1 year	0 (0.0%)	1 (4.5%)	8 (30.8%)	3 (8.1%)
1–5 years	8 (33.3%)	16 (72.7%)	15 (57.7%)	9 (24.3%)
6–10 years	6 (25.0%)	3 (13.6%)	3 (11.5%)	4 (10.8%)
More than 10 years	10 (41.7%)	2 (9.1%)	0 (0.0%)	21 (56.8%)
Total reported in profile	**24**	**22**	**26**	**37**

Figure 6. Target Group 1 – years of experience in working with youth



Romania and Spain provide strongly experienced practitioner perspectives. In Romania,

two thirds of respondents had more than five years of experience, including 41.7% with more than ten years. Spain shows the strongest concentration of long-term experience, with 56.8% of practitioners reporting more than ten years of work with young people.

Poland and the Netherlands provide a different lens. In Poland, nearly three quarters of TG1 respondents reported one to five years of experience. In the Netherlands, the profile data indicate that all reported practitioners had five years of experience or less, with almost one third having less than one year.

This contrast strengthens the transnational analysis because it combines seasoned and early-career perspectives. Experienced practitioners are likely to identify long-term organisational patterns, recurring support gaps and structural weaknesses. Early-career practitioners may be more sensitive to onboarding, mentoring, role clarity, emotional boundaries and the availability of accessible support mechanisms.

For POSITIVE, this means that wellbeing resources should be relevant across career stages. Experienced practitioners may need reflective practice, burnout prevention, recognition and opportunities to transfer knowledge without carrying excessive emotional or organisational burden. Early-career practitioners may need mentoring, structured induction, emotional literacy and safe spaces to discuss stress before overload becomes normalised.

d. Level of education

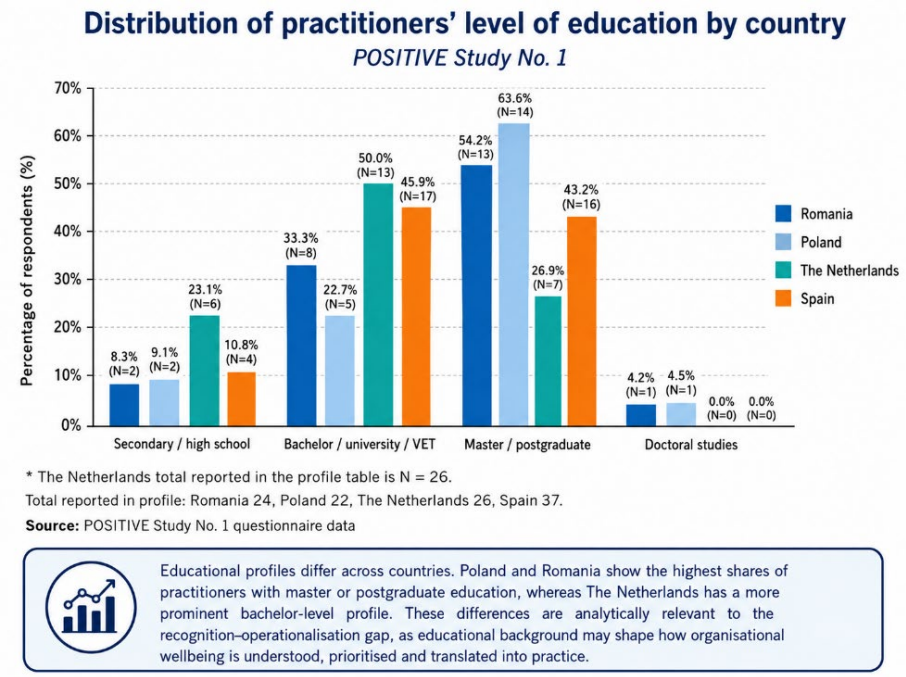
Target Group No. 1 is highly educated across the partnership. In Romania, Poland and Spain, higher education is strongly represented, especially Bachelor's and Master's-level qualifications. The Dutch profile also reports a substantial share of Bachelor's and Master's-level respondents, although with a higher proportion of high-school-level education than the other countries.

Table 13. Target Group 1 – level of education

Level of education	Romania N (%)	Poland N (%)	The Netherlands N (%)*	Spain N (%)
Secondary / high school	2 (8.3%)	2 (9.1%)	6 (23.1%)	4 (10.8%)
Bachelor / university / VET	8 (33.3%)	5 (22.7%)	13 (50.0%)	17 (45.9%)
Master / postgraduate	13 (54.2%)	14 (63.6%)	7 (26.9%)	16 (43.2%)
Doctoral studies	1 (4.2%)	1 (4.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Total reported in profile	**24**	**22**	**26***	**37**

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

Figure 7. Distribution of practitioners' level of education by country



The high educational level strengthens the credibility of the respondent base. Many practitioners are well positioned to reflect not only on their own experience, but also on organisational culture, leadership, psychosocial risks, emotional labour, professional sustainability and the conditions required for high-quality youth work.

At the same time, education should not be interpreted as protection against emotional strain. Highly qualified practitioners can still experience overload, burnout risk, role ambiguity, emotional exhaustion and insufficient organisational support. In fact, the specialised nature of many respondents' works may increase exposure to complex situations involving vulnerability, disability, mental health, social exclusion or relational intensity.

The implication for Study No. 1 is that the recognition–operationalisation gap is not caused by a lack of awareness among practitioners. Many respondents have the educational and professional capacity to understand wellbeing systemically. The challenge lies in whether organisations have the structures, leadership practices and routines to act on that understanding.

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

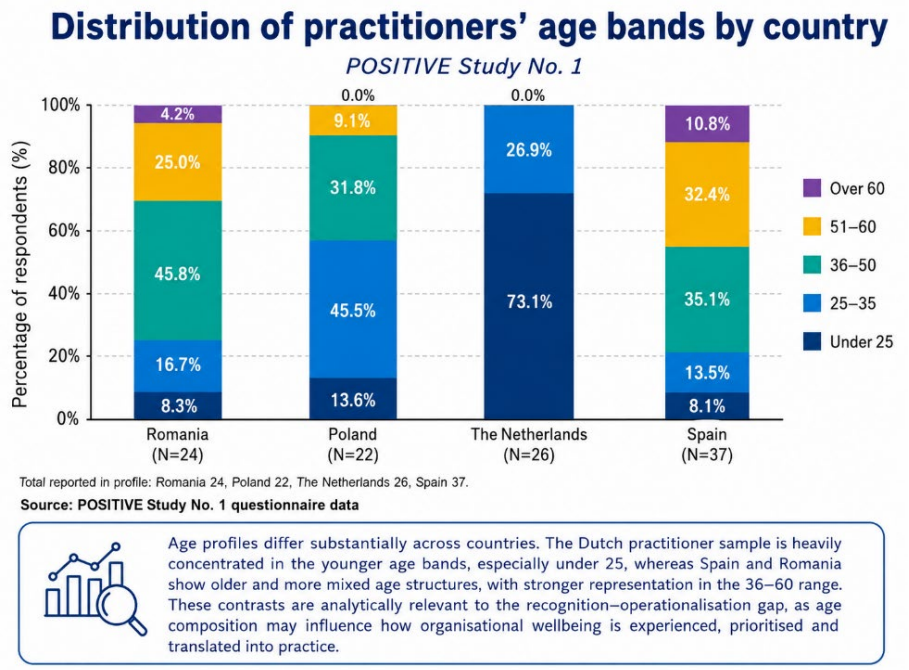
e. Age

Age is one of the clearest areas of cross-country variation. Romania and Spain show mature practitioner profiles, with most respondents concentrated in the 36–50 and 51–60 age groups. Poland presents a younger and middle-career profile. The Dutch profile is the youngest, with all reported TG1 respondents under 35.

Table 14. Target Group 1 – age distribution

Age band	Romania N (%)	Poland N (%)*	The Netherlands N (%)**	Spain N (%)
Under 25	2 (8.3%)	3 (13.6%)	19 (73.1%)	3 (8.1%)
25–35	4 (16.7%)	10 (45.5%)	7 (26.9%)	5 (13.5%)
36–50	11 (45.8%)	7 (31.8%)	0 (0.0%)	13 (35.1%)
51–60	6 (25.0%)	2 (9.1%)	0 (0.0%)	12 (32.4%)
Over 60	1 (4.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (10.8%)
Total reported in profile	**24**	**22**	**26**	**37**

Figure 8. Target Group 1 – age distribution



Age interacts closely with experience. Romania and Spain contribute perspectives from mature and experienced practitioners, offering insight into long-term exposure to organisational cultures, workload patterns, emotional labour and accumulated professional demands. Poland and the Netherlands bring stronger early-career perspectives, making issues

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

such as induction, mentoring, role clarity and support for younger practitioners especially visible.

This matters because age may shape how wellbeing and organisational support are perceived. Younger practitioners may be more exposed to insecurity, role ambiguity, lack of experience and dependence on guidance. More experienced practitioners may be more aware of structural problems, accumulated emotional labour and the long-term effects of insufficient organisational support.

For POSITIVE, this means that resources should not be designed for a single generational profile. Young practitioners and volunteers may need support to enter youth work safely and sustainably. Mid-career and senior practitioners may need recognition, recovery, reflective spaces, burnout prevention and opportunities to transfer knowledge without carrying excessive emotional or organisational responsibility.

Integrated interpretation of Target Group No. 1

Taken together, the profile of Target Group No. 1 provides a credible and analytically rich basis for Study No. 1. The sample includes practitioners who are directly involved in youth work and youth-support activities, who perform diverse roles and who bring different levels of experience, education and organisational belonging.

The central transnational pattern is diversity within a shared practitioner function. Some respondents are salaried professionals embedded in formal third-sector organisations; others are volunteers or collaborators working in more flexible or less formal structures. Some are highly experienced practitioners with long-term exposure to organisational pressures; others are younger or early-career respondents still navigating their professional identity and support needs.

Two axes of variation are especially important.

The first axis is organisational position. Spain and Poland are more employee-based, while Romania and the Netherlands show a stronger volunteer component. This means that wellbeing support cannot be designed only around employment contracts, occupational health procedures or professional staff policies. It must also reach volunteers, collaborators and other contributors whose wellbeing depends more on belonging, guidance, recognition,

role clarity and emotional boundaries.

The second axis is career stage. Romania and Spain bring more mature and experienced practitioner perspectives, while Poland and the Netherlands include younger and earlier-career profiles. This means that the recognition–operationalisation gap may be experienced differently across the partnership. Experienced practitioners may identify accumulated emotional labour, normalised overload and repeated support gaps. Early-career practitioners may experience the gap through uncertainty, lack of mentoring, insufficient onboarding and limited psychological safety.

The implication for the transnational report is clear: practitioner wellbeing cannot be addressed through a single generic model. It must be understood as a differentiated organisational responsibility, adapted to employment status, role, experience, age and organisational context.

This is precisely why Study No. 1 is important for POSITIVE. It shows that organisations do not only need to recognise practitioner wellbeing as important; they need to understand who their practitioners are, how they contribute to youth work, and what forms of support are required to make that recognition operational.

VII. 2 Target group no. 2 – Leaders and managers

Target Group No. 2 brings together leaders, managers, coordinators, directors, board members, project managers, programme managers and other organisational decision-makers involved in youth-serving organisations across Romania, Poland, the Netherlands and Spain.

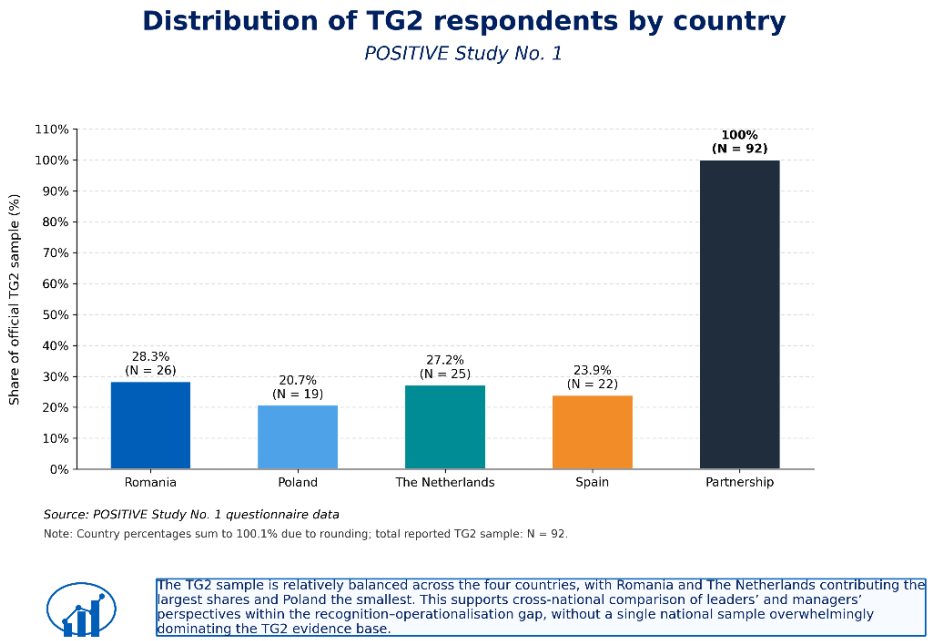
According to the data collection figures used for the transnational synthesis, this group comprises **92 questionnaire respondents**: 26 in Romania, 19 in Poland, 25 in the Netherlands and 22 in Spain. These figures are consistent with the official evidence base for Study No. 1, which establishes a total of **194 questionnaire responses** across both target groups.

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

Table 15. Target Group 2 questionnaire respondents by country

Country	TG2 respondents	Share of official TG2 sample
Romania	26	28.3%
Poland	19	20.7%
The Netherlands	25	27.2%
Spain	22	23.9%
Partnership	**92**	**100%**

Figure 9. Distribution of Target Group 2 respondents by country



Target Group No. 2 is strategically important for Study No. 1 because it captures the perspective of those who shape organisational culture, define priorities, allocate resources, coordinate teams and influence whether practitioner wellbeing is treated as a concrete organisational responsibility or remains mainly an aspirational value.

This group therefore provides the leadership-side view of the recognition–operationalisation gap. Leaders and managers are not only respondents describing organisational attitudes; they are also actors who can influence whether wellbeing becomes embedded through supervision, role clarity, feedback routines, psychological safety, workload management and reflective learning.

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

a. Position within the organisation

The position of leaders and managers varies across the partnership, both in terms of employment status and type of organisational responsibility. Romania, the Netherlands and Spain report this dimension mainly through employment or organisational belonging, while Poland reports it through formal leadership position categories. For this reason, the table below presents the employment-basis comparison where it is available, followed by the Polish leadership-position profile.

Table 16. Target Group 2 – position within the organisation: employment basis where reported

Position	Romania N (%)	The Netherlands N (%)*	Spain N (%)
Employee / paid staff	13 (50.0%)	4 (16.0%)	15 (68.2%)
Collaborator / contracted associate	4 (15.4%)	2 (8.0%)	5 (22.7%)
Volunteer	9 (34.6%)	19 (76.0%)	2 (9.1%)
Total reported	**26**	**25**	**22**

*The Dutch report states that four leaders were employed, two were collaborators and the remaining respondents were volunteers. Based on the official TG2 profile total of 25, this implies 19 volunteers.

Table 17. Target Group 2 – Polish position categories as reported nationally

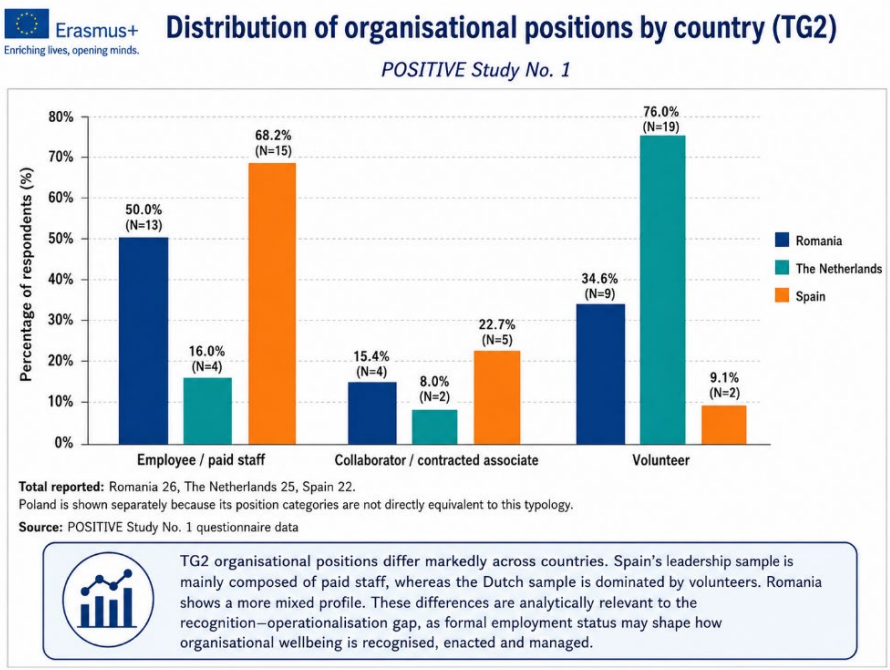
Position category	Poland N (%)
Director / Executive Director / CEO	9 (47.4%)
Coordinator / Manager	7 (36.8%)
Board Member / President / Vice-President	3 (15.8%)
Total reported	**19**

Romania shows a mixed leadership model: half of leaders are paid staff, but more than one third lead or coordinate on a voluntary basis. Spain is more professionalised, with over two thirds of leadership respondents occupying employee positions. The Netherlands presents the strongest volunteer-based leadership profile, with approximately three quarters of TG2 respondents acting as volunteers. Poland, by contrast, reports leadership mainly through formal organisational titles, with almost half of respondents occupying director-level positions.

This variation matters directly for the interpretation of Study No. 1. In employee-based leadership contexts, wellbeing can be more readily linked to formal management

responsibilities, occupational risk prevention, staff supervision and organisational policy. In volunteer-led contexts, the same responsibilities may exist in practice but without dedicated time, professional HR structures or formal accountability mechanisms. This makes the operationalisation of wellbeing more fragile, because it depends heavily on commitment, informal leadership and personal availability.

Figure 10. Target Group 2 – Distribution of organisational positions by country



b. Current leadership or management role in organisation

Across the partnership, leadership roles combine governance-level responsibilities with operational coordination. Some respondents occupy strategic or board-level positions; others are responsible for project implementation, programme coordination, team supervision or staff support.

To allow comparative reading, the national role categories have been harmonised into five broad leadership functions.

Table 18. Target Group 2 – current leadership or management role

Leadership / management role	Romania N (%)	Poland N (%)	The Netherlands N (%)	Spain N (%)
Executive leadership / director	5 (19.2%)	6 (31.6%)	2 (8.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Programme / project management	3 (11.5%)	8 (42.1%)	5 (20.0%)	9 (40.9%)
Team / department coordination or organisational management	4 (15.4%)	3 (15.8%)	6 (24.0%)	3 (13.6%)
Human resources / staff coordination	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (4.0%)	5 (22.7%)
Board / administrative governance	14 (53.8%)	2 (10.5%)	11 (44.0%)	5 (22.7%)
Total reported	**26**	**19**	**25**	**22**

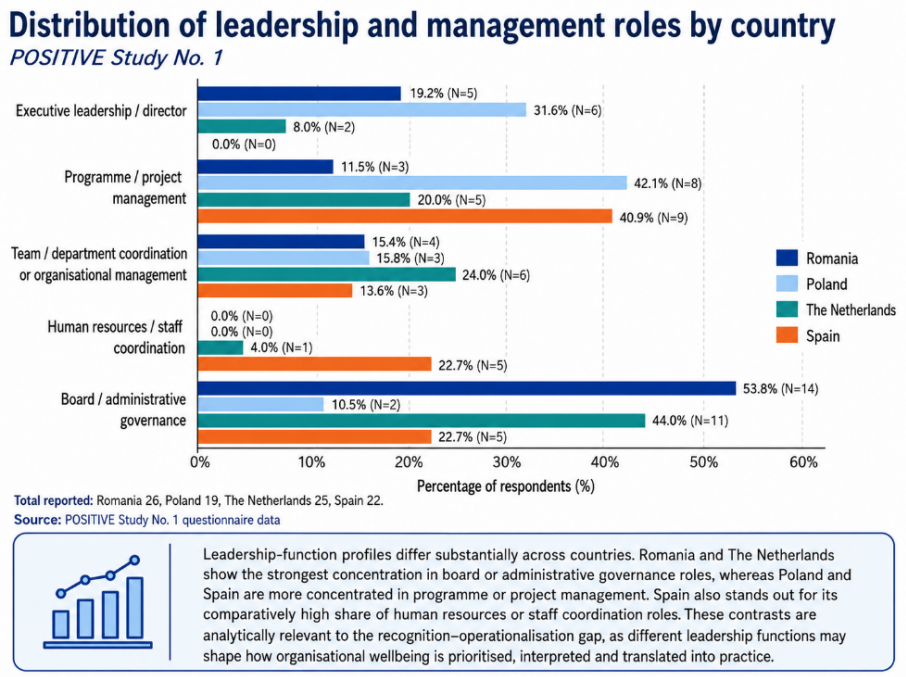
The central transnational pattern is the coexistence of strategic governance and operational management. Romania and the Netherlands show strong board or administrative leadership representation. Poland and Spain are more concentrated in programme and project management functions. Spain also stands out because it has the highest proportion of HR or staff-coordination roles, whereas Romania and Poland report no dedicated HR/staff-coordination function in the extracted TG2 profile.

This is analytically important. Where HR or staff-coordination roles are absent, responsibilities for supervision, emotional support, staff wellbeing and burnout prevention are likely to be distributed informally across directors, coordinators, project managers or board members. This helps explain why, across Study No. 1, wellbeing is often recognised as important but is not always embedded in stable organisational systems.

The Spanish profile also suggests a more explicit distribution of staff-support responsibilities, with 22.7% of leaders identifying as human resources or staff coordinators. However, the qualitative evidence from Spain still shows that leadership support often remains relational and dependent on day-to-day leadership behaviours, not only formal roles. Spanish participants emphasised that coordinators influence whether emotional exhaustion can be discussed safely and whether wellbeing becomes tangible in practice.

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

Figure 11. Target Group 2 – Distribution of leadership and management roles by country



c. Years of experience in a management/coordination position

Leadership experience varies across countries. Romania and Spain contain substantial experienced leadership segments, while Poland and the Netherlands include stronger early-to-mid leadership profiles. The Dutch experience item should be interpreted cautiously because the reported responses for this item add up to 12, not the full TG2 sample of 25.

Table 19. Target Group 2 – years of experience in a management/coordination position

Years of experience	Romania N (%)	Poland N (%)	The Netherlands N (%)	Spain N (%)
Less than 1 year	4 (15.4%)	2 (10.5%)	4 (33.3%)	2 (9.1%)
1–5 years	10 (38.5%)	9 (47.4%)	5 (41.7%)	8 (36.4%)
6–10 years	5 (19.2%)	4 (21.1%)	2 (16.7%)	10 (45.5%)
More than 10 years	7 (26.9%)	4 (21.1%)	1 (8.3%)	2 (9.1%)
Total reported for item	**26**	**19**	**12**	**22**

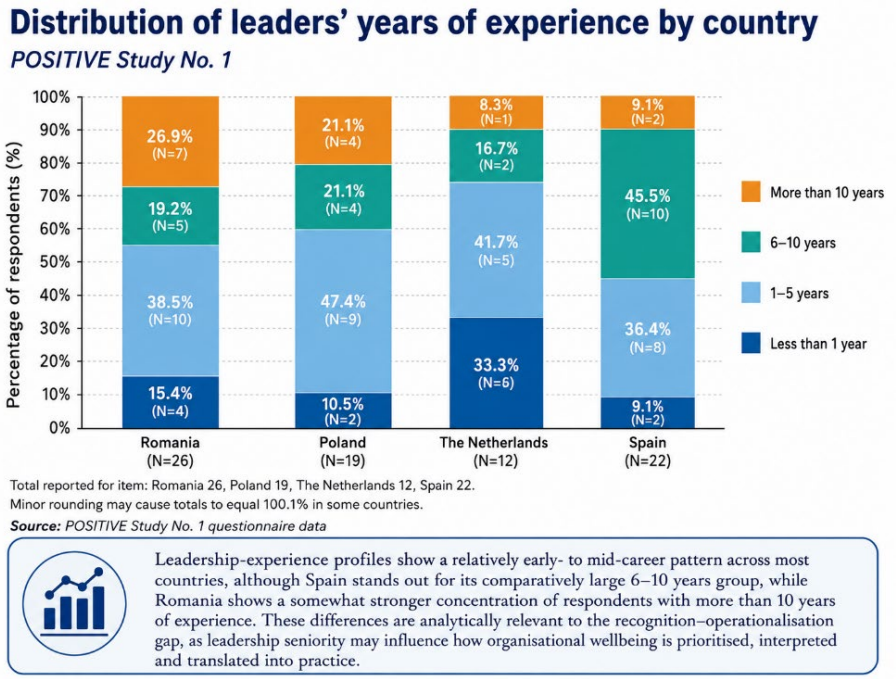
Romania combines experienced and newer leadership: 46.1% of respondents have six or more years of management or coordination experience, while 53.9% have five years or fewer. Poland is more concentrated in the 1–5 years band, but still includes a meaningful experienced

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

group, with 42.2% reporting six or more years. Spain shows the strongest concentration in the 6–10 years band, suggesting a leadership sample with substantial but not necessarily long-established management experience. The Dutch data, although incomplete for this item, point towards a predominantly early-leadership profile.

This profile is useful for interpretation because leadership experience shapes how organisational wellbeing is understood. Newer leaders may be more aware of the absence of clear systems, induction procedures or support structures. More experienced leaders may better understand long-term organisational constraints, funding cycles, volunteer dependence and the cumulative effects of emotional labour. The partnership therefore captures both institutional memory and emerging leadership perspectives.

Figure 12. Target Group 2 – Distribution of leaders' years of experience by country



d. Level of education

Leaders and managers are highly educated across the partnership. Higher education is strongly represented in all four countries, especially at Bachelor's and Master's level.

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

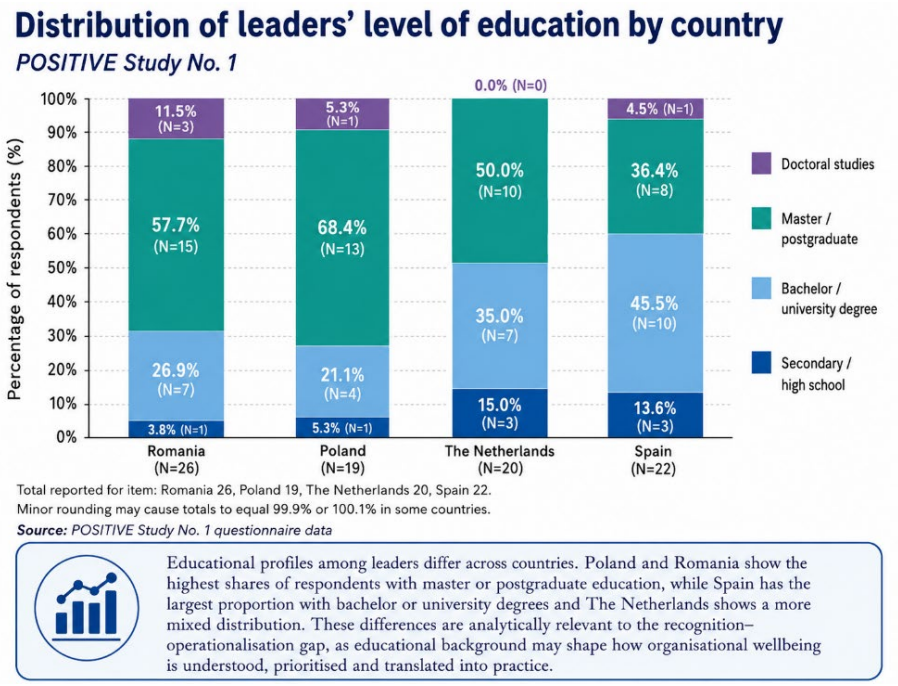
Table 20. Target Group 2 – level of education

Level of education	Romania N (%)	Poland N (%)	The Netherlands N (%)*	Spain N (%)
Secondary / high school	1 (3.8%)	1 (5.3%)	3 (15.0%)	3 (13.6%)
Bachelor / university degree	7 (26.9%)	4 (21.1%)	7 (35.0%)	10 (45.5%)
Master / postgraduate	15 (57.7%)	13 (68.4%)	10 (50.0%)	8 (36.4%)
Doctoral studies	3 (11.5%)	1 (5.3%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (4.5%)
Total reported for item	**26**	**19**	**20**	**22**

The Romanian and Polish leadership samples are particularly concentrated at Master's level, with 57.7% and 68.4% respectively. The Netherlands also shows a highly educated profile, although with a larger Bachelor-level component and a smaller valid item total. Spain presents a more balanced distribution between university degrees and postgraduate education, with a small doctoral component.

This educational profile strengthens the credibility of leadership-side responses. These respondents are likely to have the conceptual capacity to reflect on organisational culture, staff wellbeing, psychosocial risks, governance and systemic responsibility. However, high educational attainment does not automatically mean that wellbeing is operationalised. The evidence across Study No. 1 suggests precisely the opposite tension: leaders often understand the importance of wellbeing, but may lack the time, resources, structures or specialised functions needed to translate that understanding into stable practice.

Figure 13. Target Group 2 – Distribution of leaders' level of education by country



Educational profiles among leaders differ across countries. Poland and Romania show the highest shares of respondents with master or postgraduate education, while Spain has the largest proportion with bachelor or university degrees and The Netherlands shows a more mixed distribution. These differences are analytically relevant to the recognition–operationalisation gap, as educational background may shape how organisational wellbeing is understood, prioritised and translated into practice.

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

e. Age

Age is another important point of comparison. Romania and Spain show more mature leadership profiles, while the Netherlands has a markedly younger leadership sample. Poland sits between these two patterns, with most leaders concentrated between 25 and 50.

Table 21. Target Group 2 – age distribution

Age band	Romania N (%)	Poland N (%)*	The Netherlands N (%)	Spain N (%)
Under 25	1 (3.8%)	1 (5.3%)	13 (52.0%)	0 (0.0%)
25–35	5 (19.2%)	6 (31.6%)	10 (40.0%)	6 (27.3%)
36–50	9 (34.6%)	8 (42.1%)	2 (8.0%)	12 (54.5%)
51–60	10 (38.5%)	3 (15.8%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (13.6%)
Over 60	1 (3.8%)	1 (5.3%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (4.5%)
Total reported	**26**	**19**	**25**	**22**

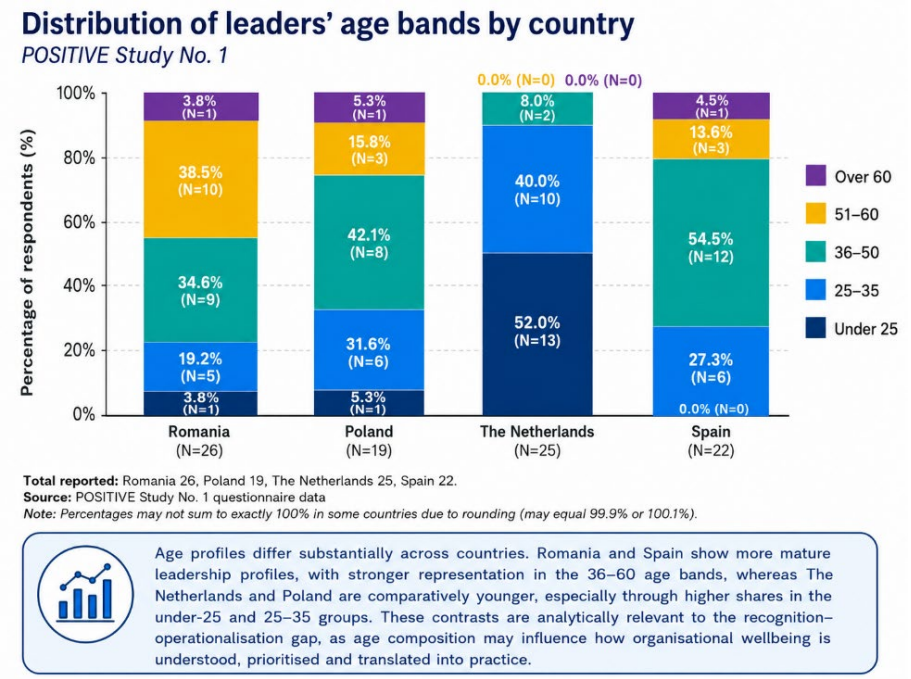
Romania has the oldest leadership profile, with 76.9% of leaders aged 36 or above and the largest group located in the 51–60 band. Spain also shows a mature leadership sample, with 54.5% aged 36–50 and a further 18.1% over 50. Poland is mainly concentrated in the 25–50 range, while the Netherlands is strikingly young, with 92% of reported leaders under 35.

This age distribution has direct analytical relevance. Mature leadership profiles may bring institutional memory, experience of organisational constraints and accumulated knowledge of the sector. Younger leadership profiles may bring flexibility, openness to new organisational cultures and stronger sensitivity to emerging wellbeing discourses, but may also have less experience in building stable systems for supervision, staff support and organisational learning.

For POSITIVE, this means that leadership-development resources should not assume a single leadership profile. In Romania and Spain, resources may need to support experienced leaders in moving from relational support to structured systems. In Poland, tools may be useful for consolidating mid-career leadership practices. In the Netherlands, resources may need to support young and volunteer-based leaders in formalising wellbeing routines, role clarity and psychologically safe organisational cultures.

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

Figure 14. Target Group 2 – Distribution of leaders' age bands by country



Integrated interpretation of Target Group No. 2

Taken together, Target Group No. 2 provides a strong leadership-side basis for interpreting Study No. 1. The sample includes respondents who occupy positions of organisational influence: board members, directors, programme managers, project coordinators, team leaders, HR or staff coordinators and other decision-makers.

The central transnational pattern is leadership diversity under shared responsibility. Leaders and managers across the partnership differ in age, employment basis, level of experience and organisational role, but they share responsibility for shaping whether wellbeing becomes an organisational practice rather than an individual burden.

Three comparative findings are especially important.

First, leadership is not equally professionalised across the partnership. Spain is the most employee-based leadership sample, while the Netherlands is heavily volunteer-led and Romania combines paid and voluntary leadership. This has direct implications for organisational wellbeing. Where leaders are volunteers, expectations around supervision, emotional support, staff guidance and burnout prevention may be carried without formal working time, training or organisational infrastructure.

Second, dedicated staff-support functions are rare. Spain is the exception, with a visible

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

HR or staff-coordination component. Romania and Poland report no dedicated HR/staff-coordination role in the TG2 profile, and the Netherlands reports only one such case. This suggests that staff wellbeing is often handled by leaders who also carry strategic, operational, project-management or governance responsibilities. This helps explain why wellbeing support may remain informal, relational and dependent on individual leadership style.

Third, the sample combines experienced and emerging leaders. Romania and Spain include substantial mature and experienced leadership profiles, while Poland and the Netherlands include younger or earlier-stage leadership profiles. This is analytically valuable because the recognition–operationalisation gap can be viewed from both sides: experienced leaders can identify structural constraints and long-term organisational patterns, while newer leaders may be more attentive to missing systems, role ambiguity and the need for clearer support routines.

The implication for the transnational report is clear: leadership attitudes are central, but they are not sufficient on their own. Leaders may recognise the importance of practitioner wellbeing, but unless they have time, resources, role clarity, support systems and organisational routines, recognition will not automatically become operational practice.

This makes Target Group No. 2 essential to the POSITIVE project. It shows that improving practitioner wellbeing requires not only supporting youth workers, but also strengthening the organisational and leadership conditions through which support becomes consistent, visible and sustainable.

Section VIII: Key findings – quantitative results and qualitative insights (synthesis based on national reports)

VIII.1. Synthesis based on national reports

This section synthesises the main quantitative results and qualitative insights emerging from the four national reports of Study No. 1, conducted in Romania, Poland, the Netherlands and Spain. The analysis is based on the six common indicators defined in the transnational research framework: organisational awareness and strategic recognition of wellbeing; organisational responsibility for practitioner wellbeing; leadership attitudes towards wellbeing and emotional labour; organisational culture and psychological safety; organisational learning and openness to improvement; and systemic understanding of wellbeing and resilience.

The evidence base comprises **194 questionnaire responses**, **13 semi-structured interviews**, **4 focus groups** and **36 focus group participants**. The study used two aligned questionnaires, one for practitioners/youth workers and one for leaders/managers, allowing comparison between those who experience organisational conditions directly and those responsible for shaping them. The qualitative component was used to deepen and contextualise the quantitative results through interviews and focus groups.

This section should be read with methodological caution. The national reports do not present all quantitative results in identical formats. Some countries provide item-level means, others provide percentages of agreement, while the Dutch report relies more strongly on visual summaries and qualitative interpretation. For this reason, the transnational synthesis does not rank countries statistically. Instead, it identifies **comparative patterns, selected quantitative signals and shared organisational mechanisms**.

The central analytical lens is the **recognition–operationalisation gap**. In Study No. 1, the question is not simply whether organisations value practitioner wellbeing. The evidence shows that they largely do. The deeper question is whether this recognition becomes embedded in organisational responsibility, leadership practice, psychological safety, reflective learning, support routines and systemic organisational understanding.

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience
in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by
the European Union

VIII.2. Cross-indicator overview

Across the partnership, the strongest common pattern is the high level of recognition attached to practitioner wellbeing and resilience. Respondents in all four countries generally acknowledge that youth work is emotionally demanding and that the wellbeing of practitioners affects the quality, continuity and sustainability of youth work.

However, this recognition is unevenly operationalised. The national reports consistently show that wellbeing is more often recognised as a desirable value than embedded as a structured organisational practice. This is especially visible in descriptive items asking about current organisational attention, leadership recognition, safe discussion of emotional strain, review of internal practices or actual supportiveness.

Table 22. Cross-indicator synthesis of main transnational findings

Indicator	Main quantitative signal	Main qualitative signal	Transnational interpretation
1. Organisational awareness and strategic recognition	High agreement that wellbeing matters for service quality and should be an organisational priority	Wellbeing is recognised, but often displaced by delivery pressure, funding constraints and workload	Recognition is high, but strategic embedding remains uneven
2. Organisational responsibility	Strong agreement that organisations have responsibility for practitioner wellbeing, but individual coping narratives persist	Responsibility is often shared in principle, but left to individuals in practice	Organisations are moving beyond individual resilience, but not consistently
3. Leadership attitudes and emotional labour	Leadership is strongly recognised as a key factor; lower scores appear where current emotional recognition is assessed	Leaders are seen as decisive in making stress, emotional labour and support legitimate topics	Leadership is the main bridge between values and practice
4. Organisational culture and psychological safety	Psychological safety is highly valued, but fewer practitioners consistently feel safe raising stress or emotional concerns	Peer support is strong, but formal spaces for emotional expression remain weaker	Culture is often supportive, but psychological safety is still fragile
5. Organisational learning and openness to improvement	High support for learning from practitioner experience; weaker evidence on systematic review and change	Organisations are open to reflection, but feedback-to-action mechanisms are uneven	Organisational learning is the key route from recognition to change
6. Systemic understanding of wellbeing and resilience	Strong agreement that resilience is shaped by organisational culture, leadership and resources	Participants increasingly reject purely individualised resilience models	Systemic understanding is emerging, but systemic practice remains incomplete

The following figure visually shows that Study №. 1 is not a readiness score, but a

diagnostic of organisational belief systems.

Figure 15. Overview of the recognition–operationalisation gap across the six indicators

From organisational belief systems to practical embedding →

Indicator	Recognition	Partial operationalisation	Main gap
1. Organisational awareness and strategic recognition	Wellbeing is widely recognised as important for service quality and as an organisational priority.	Recognition is present, but often displaced by delivery pressure, workload and funding constraints.	**High recognition; uneven strategic embedding.**
2. Organisational responsibility	Organisations are broadly seen as responsible for practitioner wellbeing.	Responsibility is shared in principle, but individual coping narratives remain visible.	**Movement beyond individual resilience is incomplete.**
3. Leadership attitudes and emotional labour	Leadership is strongly recognised as a decisive factor for wellbeing.	Leaders can legitimise stress, emotional labour and support, but current emotional recognition is uneven.	**Leadership is the main bridge between values and practice.**
4. Organisational culture and psychological safety	Psychological safety is highly valued across the partnership.	Peer support is strong, while formal spaces for raising stress and emotional concerns are weaker.	**Supportive cultures coexist with fragile psychological safety.**
5. Organisational learning and openness to improvement	There is high support for learning from practitioner experience.	Reflection is valued, but systematic review and feedback-to-action mechanisms are uneven.	**Learning is the key route from recognition to organisational change.**
6. Systemic understanding of wellbeing and resilience	Resilience is increasingly understood as shaped by culture, leadership and resources.	Participants increasingly reject purely individualised resilience models.	**Systemic understanding is emerging, but systemic practice remains incomplete.**

Source: POSITIVE Study No. 1 questionnaire, interview and focus group synthesis

VIII.3. Indicator 1: Organisational Awareness and Strategic Recognition of Wellbeing

The first indicator examined whether organisations recognise practitioner wellbeing as a meaningful organisational concern and strategic priority. Across the four countries, the quantitative results point to a high level of awareness. Respondents generally agree that youth work involves emotional and psychological demands and that practitioner wellbeing is connected to the quality of support provided to young people.

The Polish data illustrate this clearly. Among practitioners, **81.8%** agreed that practitioner wellbeing is important for maintaining high-quality youth work. Among leaders and managers, **94.7%** agreed that practitioner wellbeing directly influences service quality.

Romania also shows strong recognition, but with a clear gap between normative beliefs and perceived organisational reality. In the Romanian report, respondents strongly agreed that wellbeing should be treated as a strategic priority, while the descriptive item on the current level of organisational attention to wellbeing scored lower. Among practitioners, current attention to wellbeing was rated **3.75/5**, with fewer than half scoring it 4 or 5; leaders rated it somewhat higher at **3.96/5**.

Spain confirms the same general pattern. Practitioner wellbeing is widely understood as relevant to the quality and sustainability of youth-serving organisations, especially in third-

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

sector contexts marked by disability, mental health, social inclusion and emotional labour. However, the Spanish findings repeatedly show that leaders tend to assess organisational support more positively than practitioners do, suggesting that recognition at leadership level does not always correspond to practitioners' everyday experience.

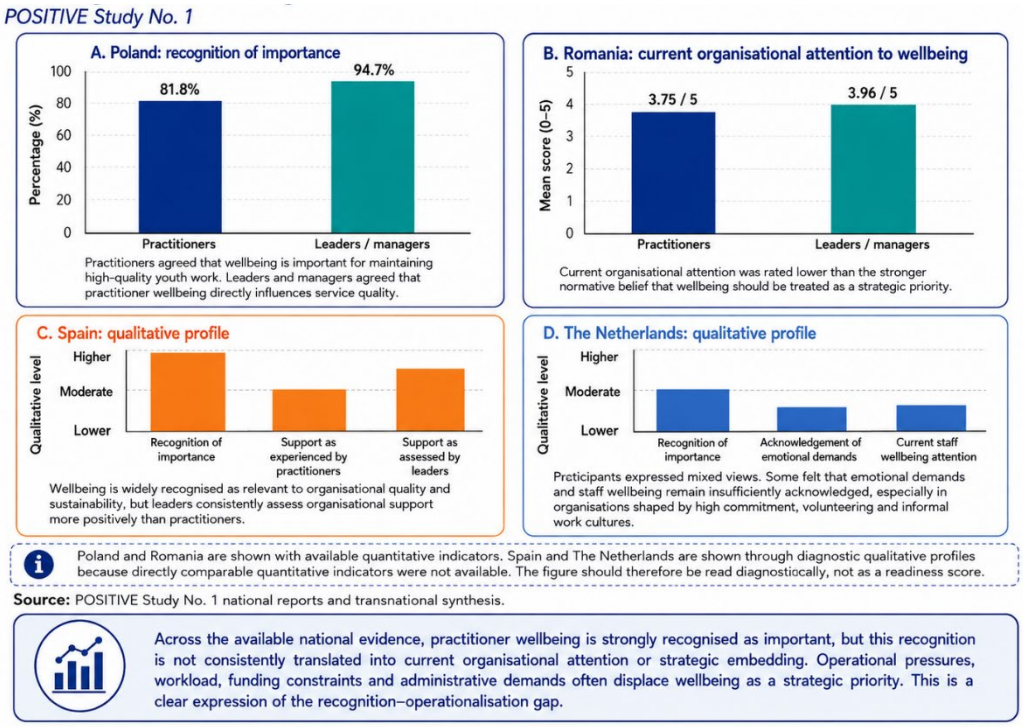
The Dutch report adds a useful contextual nuance. Participants expressed mixed views about whether emotional demands are sufficiently acknowledged in youth work. Some felt that staff wellbeing remains undervalued, especially in organisations shaped by high commitment, volunteering and informal work cultures.

The transnational pattern is therefore clear: **organisations recognise that practitioner wellbeing matters, but recognition is not yet consistently strategic**. The organisational mechanism behind this pattern is displacement. Wellbeing is valued in principle, but urgent project delivery, limited staff capacity, administrative pressure and funding insecurity often push it behind immediate operational demands.

Interpretative conclusion:

Indicator 1 confirms the first working hypothesis. Recognition is high across the partnership, but strategic embedding is uneven. This is the first and most visible expression of the recognition–operationalisation gap.

Figure 16. Overview of the recognition–operationalisation gap across the six indicators



VIII.4. Indicator 2: Organisational Responsibility for Practitioner Wellbeing

The second indicator examined how organisations interpret responsibility for practitioner wellbeing: as an individual matter, a shared responsibility or a structured organisational duty.

The quantitative evidence shows that organisational responsibility is increasingly recognised. In Poland, **95.5%** of practitioners agreed that organisations have a responsibility to actively support practitioner wellbeing, while **84.2%** of leaders agreed that organisations should actively support practitioner wellbeing.

Romania provides one of the clearest examples of the tension within this indicator. Organisational responsibility is strongly endorsed, with Romanian scores of **4.46** among practitioners and **4.31** among leaders for the item on organisational responsibility. At the same time, around two thirds of respondents also agreed that wellbeing is still treated as an individual matter.

This dual pattern is analytically important. It shows that organisational responsibility and individualised resilience narratives coexist. Organisations increasingly know that wellbeing should not be left to practitioners alone, but daily practice still often relies on individual coping, peer support, vocation and personal endurance.

The qualitative material reinforces this point. In Romania, interviewees described a mixed responsibility model: practitioners are often expected to manage their own stress and emotional burden, while some leaders also recognised that organisations must create the conditions that make balance possible.

In Spain, the qualitative evidence points in the same direction. Wellbeing is increasingly viewed as an organisational capacity rather than only an individual characteristic, but smaller organisations and those under stronger structural pressure often rely more heavily on relational and informal support models.

The transnational pattern is therefore one of **incomplete transition**. Youth work organisations are moving from individual resilience towards shared organisational responsibility, but this movement is not yet fully consolidated.

Interpretative conclusion:

Indicator 2 confirms that the sector is conceptually moving in the right direction. However, the practical model remains ambivalent: wellbeing is increasingly described as organisational,

but still frequently managed as individual.

VIII.5. Indicator 3: Leadership Attitudes towards Wellbeing and Emotional Labour

The third indicator explored how leadership attitudes and management practices influence organisational responses to stress, emotional labour and burnout risk.

Across the partnership, leadership emerges as the key mechanism between recognition and operationalisation. The Polish findings show near-universal recognition of leadership's role: **95.5%** of practitioners agreed that leaders should actively support practitioner wellbeing, while **94.7%** of leaders agreed that leadership should actively create supportive work environments.

Romania again illustrates the gap between principle and current practice. The item measuring whether leadership currently recognises emotional demands was one of the lowest descriptive results in the Romanian study: **3.54/5** among practitioners and **3.81/5** among leaders. At the same time, both groups strongly agreed that leader attitudes influence whether practitioners feel comfortable discussing stress and that leaders should actively promote supportive environments.

This pattern is important because it shows that leadership is not rejected or viewed negatively. Rather, leadership is recognised as a high-leverage condition that is not yet sufficiently equipped. Romanian qualitative findings indicate that leaders themselves identify needs for supervision, boundaries and management competence, particularly in emotionally intensive contexts.

Polish qualitative evidence similarly describes leadership as relational rather than purely managerial. Effective leadership was associated with openness, empathy, trust-building, communication and responsiveness. Leadership was therefore interpreted as a process through which wellbeing becomes visible and legitimate within organisational culture.

In Spain, leadership appears as a particularly important protective factor in the third-sector context, where organisations face workload pressure, emotional labour and funding instability. However, the Spanish report also makes clear that empathetic leadership alone is not enough; support must be sustained by organisational structures.

Interpretative conclusion:

Indicator 3 confirms leadership as the central bridge between values and practice. The main issue is not the absence of concern, but the limited formal preparation, time, resources and structures available to leaders for addressing emotional labour and practitioner wellbeing.

VIII.6. Indicator 4: Organisational Culture and Psychological Safety

The fourth indicator examined whether organisational cultures allow practitioners to express concerns, emotional difficulties and professional limits safely.

Across the partnership, psychological safety is strongly valued. However, the evidence shows a difference between psychological safety as a principle and psychological safety as a lived organisational condition.

In Poland, **90.9%** of practitioners agreed that psychological safety is essential for effective youth work, but only **63.6%** felt safe expressing concerns about workload or wellbeing. Among leaders, **94.8%** agreed that psychological safety is essential, while **63.2%** believed staff feel safe expressing such concerns.

Romania shows even stronger normative endorsement. The item on psychological safety as essential for effective youth work reached **4.92/5** among practitioners, with 100% agreement. However, the Romanian qualitative evidence reveals cultural barriers that normalise overwork and silence around mental health.

Spain provides a particularly clear practitioner–leader contrast. Among practitioners, the overall mean for Indicator 4 was **3.32/5**. Only **54.1%** agreed or strongly agreed that they felt comfortable raising concerns about stress, workload or emotional difficulties, and only **45.9%** agreed that emotional concerns can be openly discussed within their organisations. Leaders, by contrast, reported a much more positive overall mean of **4.31/5**.

This is one of the strongest examples of the perception gap. Leaders tend to believe organisational climates are safer and more emotionally open than practitioners experience them in daily work. The Spanish qualitative findings add an important distinction: practitioners often feel more comfortable discussing emotional challenges informally with colleagues than through structured organisational channels. This suggests that psychological safety is frequently relational rather than institutionalised.

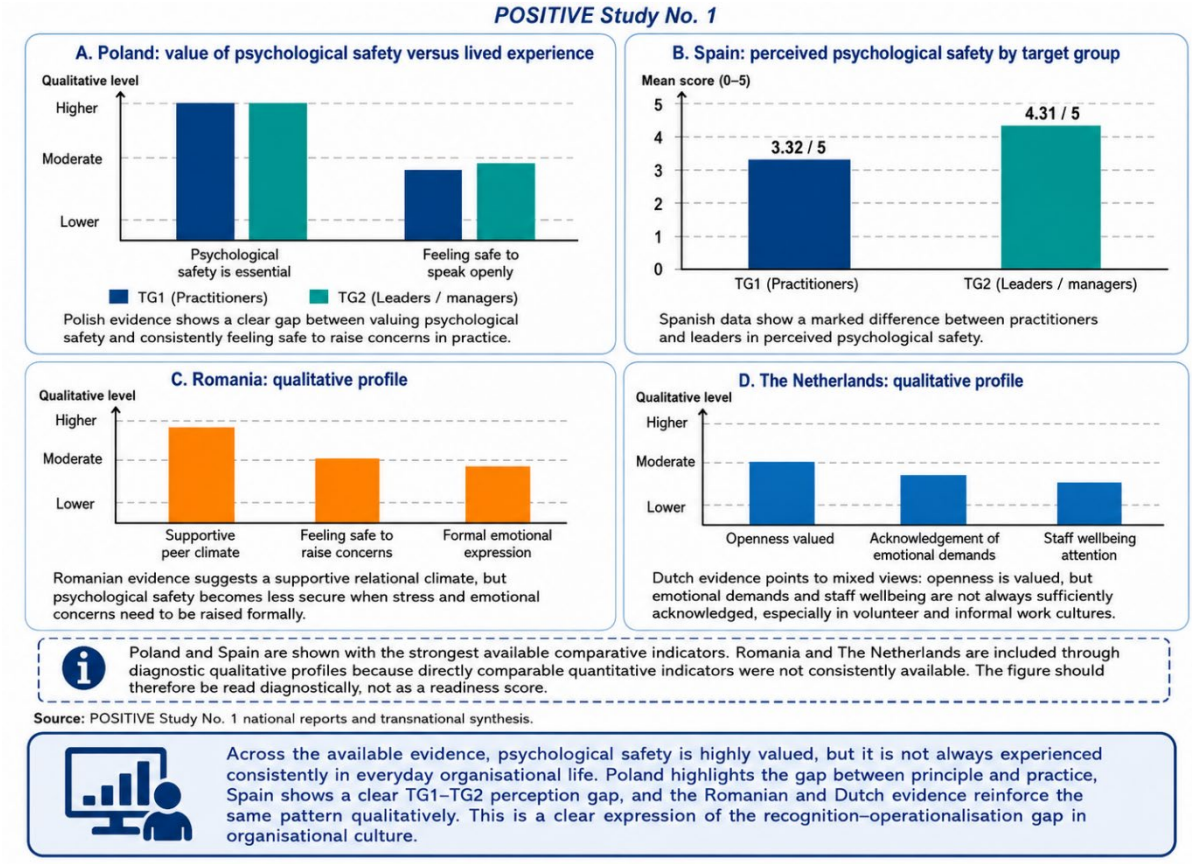
The Dutch focus group also points to variability between organisations. Some participants described open and supportive environments, while others suggested that emotional

demands and wellbeing are not always sufficiently acknowledged.

Interpretative conclusion:

Indicator 4 partially confirms the working hypothesis. Supportive cultures and peer relationships exist and are important protective factors. However, psychological safety remains fragile where it depends on individual relationships rather than explicit organisational routines, leadership expectations or safe spaces for reflection.

Figure 17. Psychological safety is valued more strongly than it is experienced in practice



VIII.7. Indicator 5: Organisational Learning and Openness to Improvement

The fifth indicator examined whether organisations reflect on practitioner experiences and adapt internal practices to improve wellbeing.

Across the partnership, organisational learning receives strong support in principle. Respondents generally believe that practitioner feedback should inform organisational improvement and that organisations should learn from wellbeing-related experiences. However, the evidence is weaker when the question concerns systematic review, visible

change and feedback-to-action mechanisms.

Poland shows very strong normative support. In the Polish cross-indicator synthesis, **100%** of practitioners agreed that learning from practitioner experiences improves support systems, and **100%** of leaders agreed that practitioner feedback should inform organisational development.

Romania also shows strong support for reflection and learning, but the national report concludes that organisational learning is often reactive. Feedback is valued, yet it is not always converted into structured organisational change.

Spain provides one of the clearest quantitative illustrations of the difference between openness and operationalisation. Among practitioners, the overall mean for Indicator 5 was **3.46/5**. While **59.5%** agreed that their organisations are receptive to staff experiences and suggestions, only **45.9%** agreed that practices related to wellbeing are regularly reviewed and improved. Leaders again reported a more positive picture, with an overall mean of **4.27/5** and **81.8%** stating that internal practices are periodically reviewed and adapted.

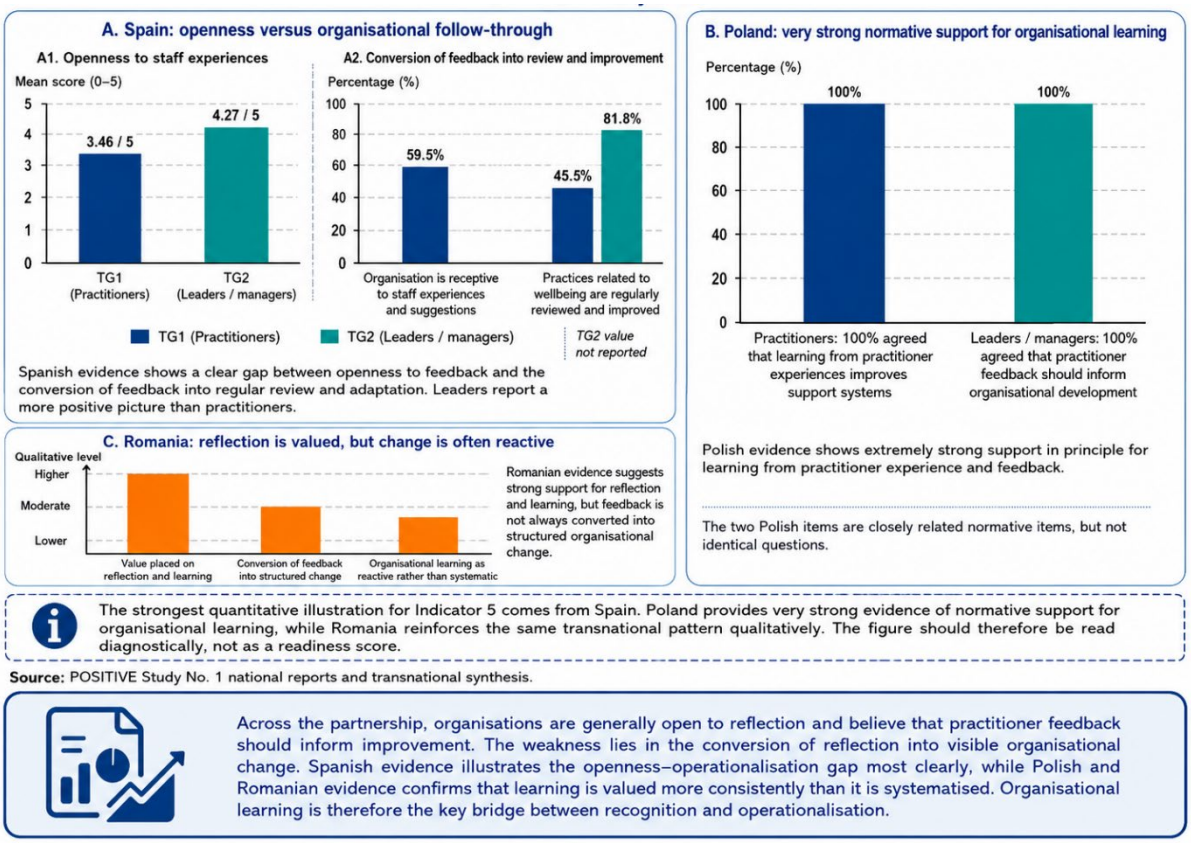
The qualitative Spanish evidence shows both promise and limitation. Some organisations, such as more consolidated entities, described structured mechanisms including psychosocial risk assessments, workplace climate evaluations, feedback channels and training processes. Other organisations relied more on meetings, informal dialogue and ad hoc adaptation, often constrained by workload and time pressure.

The transnational finding is therefore not that organisations refuse to learn. On the contrary, many are open to reflection. The weakness lies in the conversion of reflection into organisational change.

Interpretative conclusion:

Indicator 5 confirms that organisational learning is the bridge between recognition and operationalisation. Without feedback-to-action systems, wellbeing remains a topic of discussion rather than a driver of organisational adaptation.

Figure 18. Organisations value feedback, but feedback-to-action mechanisms remain uneven



VIII.8. Indicator 6: Systemic Understanding of Wellbeing and Resilience

The sixth indicator examined whether organisations understand practitioner wellbeing and resilience as systemic outcomes shaped by leadership, culture, workload, resources, communication and wider organisational conditions.

This is one of the strongest conceptual findings of Study No. 1. Across the partnership, there is growing awareness that resilience cannot be reduced to individual coping. In Poland, **100%** of practitioners agreed that organisational culture, leadership and resources influence resilience, and **100%** of leaders agreed that organisational factors significantly affect practitioner resilience.

Romania shows the same pattern. The national report concludes that respondents demonstrate a genuinely systemic understanding of resilience, recognising that it is shaped by organisational conditions rather than being purely personal. However, actual organisational supportiveness was assessed more modestly, at **3.75–3.81**, confirming that systemic

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

understanding has not yet become systemic practice.

Spain provides especially strong qualitative evidence for this indicator. The focus group expressed the idea clearly: “If we are not well, we cannot properly support young people.” Participants linked practitioner wellbeing to continuity of care, motivation, quality of relationships with young people and organisational sustainability. They also identified funding insecurity, project-based working models, staff shortages and administrative overload as structural barriers to sustaining wellbeing.

The Spanish report concludes that wellbeing and resilience are increasingly viewed as organisational capacities rather than solely individual characteristics. At the same time, it notes that smaller organisations or those operating under stronger structural pressure often rely more heavily on informal and relational support.

The Dutch evidence also supports this systemic interpretation. The report frames practitioner wellbeing as shaped by organisational culture, leadership, resources and support structures, while also identifying a gap between policy discourse and everyday organisational practice.

Interpretative conclusion:

Indicator 6 confirms the emergence of a systemic understanding of wellbeing and resilience across the partnership. However, systemic awareness is stronger than systemic implementation. This is the most mature expression of the recognition–operationalisation gap.

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience
in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by
the European Union

VIII.9. Integrated synthesis of Section VIII

Figure 19. Qualitative synthesis matrix: recurring organisational mechanisms across countries

Recurring theme	Romania	Poland	The Netherlands	Spain	Transnational meaning
Informal support and peer solidarity	Strong peer support, often informal	Team solidarity and open dialogue valued	Informal support varies by organisation	Colleague support often stronger than formal channels	Informal support is a key protective factor, but rarely enough on its own
Leadership as protective or limiting factor	Leaders shape whether emotional strain can be discussed	Empathetic leadership linked to trust and support	Leadership acknowledgement of wellbeing is uneven	Leadership strongly influences perceived support and safety	Leadership is the main bridge between wellbeing values and practice
Emotional labour and overload	Emotional demands recognised but not always addressed	Staff face emotional strain in youth work roles	High commitment can mask pressure and fatigue	Workload, emotional intensity and administration create pressure	Emotional labour is widely recognised, but often normalised
Psychological safety	Valued highly, but silence around mental health persists	Seen as essential, yet not always fully experienced	Safe expression varies between organisations	Practitioners report less safety than leaders perceive	Psychological safety is valued more strongly than it is consistently experienced
Feedback without systematic change	Reflection exists, but learning is often reactive	Feedback is valued for improvement	Openness exists, but structures are inconsistent	Feedback channels exist, but practice review is uneven	Organisations are open to feedback, but feedback-to-action systems are uneven
Funding and workload pressure	Limited resources constrain support practices	Organisational capacity affects implementation	Volunteer-based settings limit formal support	Funding insecurity and workload displace wellbeing	Structural pressure often pushes wellbeing behind delivery needs
Systemic understanding of wellbeing	Resilience increasingly seen as organisational	Organisational factors clearly linked to resilience	Wellbeing seen as shaped by culture and support	Wellbeing connected to service quality and sustainability	Systemic understanding is growing faster than systemic implementation

Read across the six indicators, the evidence points to a coherent transnational diagnosis:

Youth work organisations across the partnership are rich in recognition but uneven in operationalisation.

This does not mean that organisations are indifferent to practitioner wellbeing. On the contrary, the quantitative and qualitative evidence shows strong recognition of its importance. Respondents across countries understand that practitioner wellbeing affects the quality of youth work, the sustainability of organisations and the capacity to support young people in situations of vulnerability.

However, the findings also show that recognition alone is insufficient. The gap appears when wellbeing must be translated into organisational responsibility, leadership practice, psychological safety, reflective learning, structured support, workload awareness and systemic change.

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

Three organisational mechanisms explain this gap.

First, wellbeing is often displaced by urgency. Project delivery, funding insecurity, small teams, administrative workload and volunteer dependence make it difficult to sustain wellbeing routines, even when organisations recognise their importance.

Second, support often remains relational rather than systemic. Peer solidarity, empathetic leaders and informal flexibility are strong assets, but they cannot replace supervision, reflective spaces, psychosocial risk monitoring, feedback-to-action systems or clear responsibilities.

Third, practitioners and leaders do not always perceive organisational reality in the same way. Leaders often report stronger confidence in organisational support than practitioners, especially in Spain. Romania shows a more complex pattern, with leaders themselves acknowledging structural limitations. This comparison is one of the most valuable contributions of Study No. 1 because it shows that organisational beliefs are not uniform inside organisations.

Table 23. Main transnational conclusions by indicator

Indicator	Main conclusion	Recognition–operationalisation gap
1. Awareness and strategic recognition	Wellbeing is widely recognised as important for quality youth work	Recognition is not always translated into strategic prioritisation
2. Organisational responsibility	Organisations increasingly accept responsibility for wellbeing	Individualised resilience narratives still shape practice
3. Leadership	Leadership is seen as decisive for wellbeing culture	Leaders often lack time, tools, training or structures
4. Psychological safety	Trust and peer support are protective factors	Emotional openness is often informal, not institutionalised
5. Organisational learning	Organisations value reflection and feedback	Feedback-to-action mechanisms remain uneven
6. Systemic understanding	Wellbeing is increasingly seen as systemic	Systemic awareness is stronger than systemic implementation

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

Figure 20. The recognition–operationalisation gap in Study No. 1

Indicator	Recognition	Operationalisation	Gap intensity
1. Awareness and strategic recognition	High	Uneven	Moderate–High
2. Organisational responsibility	High	Partial	Moderate
3. Leadership attitudes and emotional labour	High	Partial	Moderate–High
4. Organisational culture and psychological safety	High	Fragile / Uneven	High
5. Organisational learning and openness to improvement	High	Uneven	Moderate–High
6. Systemic understanding of wellbeing and resilience	High	Emerging / Partial	High

High / Strong | Moderate | Partial / Uneven | High gap

The implication for POSITIVE is clear. Later outputs should not only raise awareness. The awareness already exists. The strategic challenge is to help organisations convert awareness into practical routines, leadership behaviours, reflective spaces, feedback mechanisms and systemic support models adapted to different organisational capacities.

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

Section IX: General conclusions and recommendations – synthesis based on national reports

This section draws together the main conclusions and recommendations emerging from Study No. 1 across Romania, Poland, the Netherlands and Spain. It builds on the evidence analysed in Section VIII and interprets the combined quantitative and qualitative findings through the central lens of the **recognition–operationalisation gap**.

The national reports converge around a clear transnational diagnosis: youth work organisations increasingly recognise practitioner wellbeing and resilience as essential for quality youth work, but this recognition is not yet consistently translated into structured organisational practices. The Polish report identifies high awareness and a strong systemic understanding of wellbeing, while also noting barriers such as financial insecurity, workload, limited capacity and uneven access to formal support. The Dutch report similarly concludes that wellbeing is broadly recognised, but not yet consistently embedded in structured organisational practices. The Spanish report emphasises the need to move from reactive support towards preventive organisational cultures, stronger leadership capacity and more formalised wellbeing mechanisms.

Table 24. Convergence of the national conclusions

Shared conclusion	Romania	Poland	The Netherlands	Spain	Transnational interpretation
Practitioner wellbeing is widely recognised as important	✓	✓	✓	✓	Awareness is no longer the main weakness; the challenge is how recognition becomes practice.
Wellbeing is increasingly understood as an organisational responsibility	✓	✓	✓	✓	The sector is moving beyond purely individualised resilience models.
Individual coping narratives still persist	✓	Partial	✓	✓	Organisations may recognise shared responsibility while still relying on personal endurance, vocation or self-care.
Leadership is a decisive factor	✓	✓	✓	✓	Leaders shape whether wellbeing, stress and emotional labour become visible and legitimate.
Psychological safety is valued but unevenly experienced	✓	✓	✓	✓	Trust and openness exist, but safe expression is not always institutionalised.
Organisational learning is valued	✓	✓	✓	✓	Reflection and feedback are seen as important across

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

					countries.
Feedback-to-action mechanisms remain uneven	✓	Partial	✓	✓	Listening does not always lead to visible organisational adaptation.
Informal support carries much of the wellbeing burden	✓	✓	✓	✓	Peer solidarity and relational care are strengths, but they cannot substitute organisational systems.
Structural pressures limit operationalisation	✓	✓	✓	✓	Funding instability, workload, staffing constraints and project-based work restrict wellbeing routines.
Systemic understanding is emerging faster than systemic practice	✓	✓	✓	✓	Organisations increasingly understand wellbeing systemically, but many still lack the tools to act systemically.

The convergence is strong. Despite differences in organisational ecosystems, sample profiles and national contexts, the same underlying pattern appears across the partnership: recognition is high, but operationalisation remains uneven. This should not be interpreted as organisational indifference. Rather, it shows that many youth work organisations are operating with values that exceed their current structures, resources and support systems.

a. Conclusions (what we learned)

Conclusion 1. Study No. 1 confirms that practitioner wellbeing is now a legitimate organisational concern

The first major conclusion is that practitioner wellbeing and resilience are widely recognised across the four countries as important for youth work quality, professional sustainability and meaningful support for young people. Organisations are not generally questioning whether wellbeing matters. In most contexts, this recognition is already present.

This is a significant finding. It suggests that the youth work sector has moved beyond a narrow view of wellbeing as a private or secondary issue. Practitioners and leaders increasingly understand that youth work is emotionally demanding and that those who support young people also require support themselves.

However, this conclusion should be read carefully. Recognition does not mean consolidation. The fact that wellbeing is considered important does not automatically mean that it is embedded in organisational planning, leadership practice, supervision, workload

review or internal support systems.

The main conclusion is therefore not "organisations need to become aware". The evidence suggests something more precise: **organisations are aware, but awareness needs to be converted into organisational responsibility and practice**.

Conclusion 2. The central transnational pattern is the recognition–operationalisation gap

The second and most important conclusion is that the **recognition–operationalisation gap** is the central finding of Study No. 1.

Across the partnership, organisations recognise practitioner wellbeing as valuable, necessary and connected to youth work quality. Yet this recognition is unevenly translated into stable routines, structures, leadership practices and learning mechanisms.

This gap appears in different ways:

Table 25. Recognition–operationalisation gap

Area	How the gap appears
Strategic recognition	Wellbeing is valued, but not always prioritised in planning or resource allocation.
Organisational responsibility	Organisations accept responsibility in principle, but practitioners may still be expected to cope individually.
Leadership	Leaders are seen as important, but may lack tools, time, training or formal structures.
Psychological safety	Open dialogue is valued, but practitioners may not always feel safe expressing stress or vulnerability.
Organisational learning	Feedback is welcomed, but not always converted into visible change.
Systemic understanding	Wellbeing is increasingly understood as systemic, but systemic support remains incomplete.

This gap is not simply a failure of will. It is an organisational mechanism. Youth-serving organisations often work under conditions of limited funding, project dependence, small teams, volunteer reliance, emotional labour and administrative pressure. These conditions make it difficult to transform values into systems.

Conclusion 3. The strongest barriers are structural, not attitudinal

The evidence indicates that the main barriers to practitioner wellbeing are not primarily a lack of concern or lack of goodwill. The strongest barriers are structural and organisational.

Across the national reports, the most recurrent obstacles are funding instability, project-

based work, insufficient staff capacity, administrative overload, lack of time, limited access to supervision, absence of dedicated HR or wellbeing roles, volunteer dependence and uneven organisational maturity.

This is an important distinction. If the problem were only lack of awareness, the solution would be awareness-raising. But Study No. 1 shows that the problem is deeper: many organisations already recognise wellbeing, but lack the conditions to make wellbeing sustainable.

In practical terms, this means that future interventions must focus less on convincing organisations that wellbeing matters and more on helping them create **simple, scalable and realistic organisational mechanisms** that can work under resource constraints.

Conclusion 4. Informal support is a major strength, but also a sign of system weakness

One of the most positive findings is the importance of informal support. Across the partnership, peer solidarity, relational trust, supportive colleagues and empathetic leadership appear as important protective factors.

These strengths should not be underestimated. In many youth work organisations, especially small or volunteer-based ones, informal care is the first line of support. It helps practitioners feel recognised, accompanied and less isolated.

However, the evidence also shows that informal support can become overloaded. When wellbeing depends mainly on goodwill, personal relationships or the sensitivity of individual leaders, support becomes fragile. It may disappear when staff change, projects end, workload increases or conflicts arise.

The conclusion is therefore balanced: informal support is valuable, but insufficient. It should be protected and strengthened, but also complemented by structured routines, clear responsibilities, psychological safety, supervision and feedback-to-action mechanisms.

Conclusion 5. Leadership is the main bridge between values and practice

Leadership emerges as one of the most decisive mechanisms in the study. Leaders, managers, coordinators and board members influence whether practitioner wellbeing becomes visible, legitimate and actionable.

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

Supportive leadership can normalise conversations about emotional labour, recognise signs of overload, create trust, open spaces for reflection and model healthier organisational behaviour. Conversely, when leadership is overburdened, informal, unavailable or insufficiently trained, wellbeing remains dependent on individual coping or peer solidarity.

The key conclusion is that leadership attitudes matter, but leadership attitudes alone are not enough. Leaders also need tools, time, training and organisational backing. A committed leader cannot replace a wellbeing system.

This is particularly relevant for POSITIVE because later project outputs should address leaders as central actors in the operationalisation of wellbeing, not only practitioners as individual users of resilience resources.

Conclusion 6. Psychological safety is essential but fragile

The study shows that psychological safety is widely recognised as essential for sustainable youth work. Practitioners need to feel able to express stress, emotional fatigue, uncertainty, mistakes or limits without fear of judgement, stigma or negative consequences.

However, psychological safety is not yet consistently institutionalised. In several contexts, practitioners may feel safer speaking informally with colleagues than through formal organisational channels. This means that psychological safety often exists as a relational climate rather than as an organisational standard.

This matters because organisations cannot respond to stress or burnout risks if practitioners do not feel safe naming them. Psychological safety is therefore not a “soft” issue. It is a prerequisite for prevention, learning and quality improvement.

Conclusion 7. Organisational learning is the missing link between awareness and change

Across the partnership, organisations generally value reflection, feedback and improvement. However, the evidence shows that feedback-to-action mechanisms remain uneven.

This is one of the most important conclusions for the future of POSITIVE. Organisations may listen to practitioners, but listening alone does not guarantee change. Practitioner feedback must be connected to decision-making, internal review, adaptation of practices and

visible follow-up.

Organisational learning is therefore the mechanism that can transform recognition into operationalisation. Without learning systems, wellbeing remains a topic of concern. With learning systems, wellbeing can become part of organisational development.

Conclusion 8. Practitioner wellbeing must be treated as a quality condition for youth work

The final conclusion is that practitioner wellbeing should not be understood as an optional internal matter or as an individual benefit. It is a condition for quality youth work.

Youth work depends on trust, continuity, emotional availability, ethical responsibility, relational competence and the ability to support young people in complex situations. When practitioners are unsupported, exhausted or emotionally overloaded, the quality and sustainability of youth work are weakened.

For this reason, practitioner wellbeing should be placed alongside safeguarding, inclusion, participation and service quality. Organisations that support vulnerable young people must also be able to support the people who carry out that work.

This is the strategic meaning of Study No. 1 for POSITIVE: the project should help organisations move from care as a value to care as an organisational capacity.

b. Recommendations (what should be done)

The recommendations below are designed to be operational, evidence-based and adaptable to organisations with different sizes, resources and levels of maturity. They are not intended as abstract principles. They indicate the organisational changes that can help reduce the recognition–operationalisation gap identified in Study No. 1.

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

Table 26. Recommendations for moving from recognition to operationalisation

Recommendation	Why it matters	Practical actions	Link with POSITIVE outputs
1. Move from recognition to structured organisational responsibility	Awareness is already high, but practice remains uneven.	Assign internal responsibility for wellbeing; include wellbeing in planning; create minimum wellbeing routines.	Handbook, Digital Toolkit, National Training
2. Strengthen leadership capacity for emotional labour and wellbeing	Leadership is the main bridge between values and practice.	Train leaders in emotional labour, supportive supervision, psychological safety and workload conversations.	Transnational Training, Handbook, Digital Toolkit
3. Normalise psychological safety	Practitioners cannot ask for support if they do not feel safe.	Create safe dialogue spaces; reduce stigma; establish non-punitive communication practices.	Resilience Cards, Training, Storybook
4. Institutionalise reflective practice and organisational learning	Reflection is valued, but feedback-to-action is uneven.	Use regular reflection meetings, feedback reviews and action logs.	Digital Toolkit, Handbook, organisational self-analysis activities
5. Create scalable wellbeing routines for small and volunteer-led organisations	Not all organisations have HR departments or formal systems.	Use lightweight check-ins, peer support formats, simple supervision templates and role-clarity tools.	Resilience Cards, Toolkit, National Training
6. Include volunteers and non-standard roles in wellbeing frameworks	Youth work is often delivered by mixed teams.	Adapt support to volunteers, collaborators, mentors and project staff, not only employees.	Handbook, Training, Toolkit
7. Treat practitioner wellbeing as a quality and sustainability criterion	Wellbeing affects the quality of support provided to young people.	Link wellbeing to safeguarding, service quality, continuity and organisational sustainability.	Policy recommendations, Storybook, Handbook
8. Connect Study No. 1 with Study No. 2 and later work packages	Attitudes and beliefs must inform readiness tools and practical resources.	Use Study No. 1 findings to design capacity-building resources and Study No. 2 self-analysis tools.	WP3, WP4, Digital Toolkit, training resources

Recommendation 1. Move from declared recognition to structured organisational responsibility

Youth work organisations should progressively move from recognising wellbeing as important to assigning clear organisational responsibility for it. This does not necessarily require complex systems. Even small organisations can establish minimum routines: regular wellbeing check-ins, workload conversations, emotional reflection spaces, basic psychosocial risk monitoring and clear points of contact for support.

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

Wellbeing should be treated as part of organisational quality, not as an informal extra. This means including practitioner wellbeing in planning, team coordination, evaluation and organisational development.

Recommendation 2. Develop leadership capacity for wellbeing and emotional labour

Leadership development should be one of the main priorities emerging from Study No. 1. Leaders, coordinators, project managers and board members need practical competences to recognise emotional labour, identify early signs of overload, facilitate safe conversations, manage conflict, support volunteers and staff, and respond to stress before it becomes burnout.

This recommendation is especially important because many organisations already rely heavily on relational leadership. POSITIVE should help transform relational sensitivity into practical leadership competence.

Training should include emotional intelligence, mental health literacy, psychologically safe communication, supportive supervision, role clarity and workload management.

Recommendation 3. Normalise psychological safety and open discussion of stress

Organisations should actively normalise conversations about emotional strain, stress, uncertainty and professional limits. Practitioners should not have to wait until they are exhausted to speak about wellbeing.

Psychological safety should become an explicit organisational standard. This requires more than encouraging people to “speak up”. Organisations need to create conditions where speaking up is safe, non-punitive and followed by constructive response.

Practical measures may include facilitated team reflection, peer-support circles, confidential feedback channels, regular check-ins and leadership commitments to respond without judgement.

Recommendation 4. Embed reflective practice and feedback-to-action mechanisms

Organisations should strengthen their capacity to learn from practitioner experiences. Feedback should not remain symbolic. It should be gathered, discussed, prioritised and

translated into visible changes.

Table 27. A simple feedback-to-action cycle could include four steps

Step	Organisational practice
Listen	Collect practitioner experiences through meetings, check-ins or surveys.
Interpret	Identify recurring pressures, risks or support needs.
Act	Agree on practical changes, even small ones.
Review	Check whether the change improved wellbeing or working conditions.

This type of cycle would help organisations move from informal concern to organisational learning.

Recommendation 5. Create simple wellbeing routines for small, project-based and volunteer-led organisations

Not all organisations have the same capacity. Some have formal staff structures and HR functions; others rely on volunteers, short-term collaborators or project-based teams. POSITIVE resources should therefore be scalable.

For smaller or volunteer-led organisations, practical tools should be light and easy to use. Examples include short wellbeing check-in templates, peer-support prompts, role-clarity sheets, emotional-boundary exercises, supervision questions and simple reflection cards.

The aim should not be to impose bureaucratic systems on small organisations. The aim should be to provide realistic routines that can be integrated into everyday practice.

Recommendation 6. Include volunteers, collaborators and project staff in wellbeing frameworks

The study shows that practitioner wellbeing cannot be designed only for employees. In several countries, youth work is delivered through mixed teams involving volunteers, collaborators, mentors, trainers, project staff and informal contributors.

Wellbeing frameworks should therefore include non-standard roles. Volunteers also need orientation, recognition, emotional boundaries, mentoring, role clarity and safe channels to discuss stress or overload.

This is especially relevant for POSITIVE because resources such as the Digital Toolkit,

Resilience Cards and training activities should be accessible to both paid and unpaid contributors.

Recommendation 7. Treat practitioner wellbeing as a condition for quality youth work

Youth work organisations and sector stakeholders should recognise practitioner wellbeing as a core condition for quality, continuity and ethical practice.

This recommendation has implications beyond internal organisational management. Funders, public authorities, umbrella organisations and youth-sector networks should increasingly consider whether organisations have the resources and structures needed to protect those delivering youth work.

Practitioner wellbeing should be connected to quality standards, project design, funding criteria, staff development and organisational sustainability. Supporting practitioners is not an optional benefit. It is part of ensuring meaningful and safe support for young people.

Recommendation 8. Use Study No. 1 to inform Study No. 2, WP3 and WP4

Study No. 1 should directly inform the next stages of the POSITIVE project. Its value lies in identifying the beliefs, assumptions and organisational mechanisms that shape wellbeing. Study No. 2 can then build on this by examining organisational readiness, strengths, weaknesses and self-analysis capacities.

Later outputs should reflect the main lesson of Study No. 1: resources should not frame resilience only as individual coping. They should support both individual and organisational change.

This means that the Digital Toolkit, Resilience Cards, Storybook, Handbook, National Training and Transnational Training should address:

Table 28. Recommended focus of POSITIVE outputs

POSITIVE output	Recommended focus from Study No. 1
Digital Toolkit	Emotional intelligence, mental health literacy, psychological safety and organisational responsibility.
Resilience Cards	Practical reflection tools for emotional labour, stress, boundaries and peer support.
Storybook	Real narratives showing how organisations move from informal care to structured support.

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

Handbook	Guidance for leaders and organisations on embedding wellbeing routines.
National Training	Context-sensitive training for practitioners, leaders and mixed teams.
Transnational Training	Shared European learning on leadership, systemic wellbeing and organisational support.

Overall recommendation

The overall recommendation of Study No. 1 is that POSITIVE should help youth work organisations move from **recognising wellbeing** to **organising for wellbeing**.

The evidence shows that practitioner wellbeing is already valued. The next step is to make it visible in organisational routines, leadership behaviours, psychological safety, reflective learning and support systems.

In practical terms, the POSITIVE project should support organisations to build a culture in which practitioner wellbeing is not treated as an individual burden, a private vulnerability or a crisis response, but as a shared organisational responsibility and a condition for sustainable youth work.

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

Section X: Limitations and lessons learned

This final section reflects on the methodological limitations of Transnational Study No. 1 and identifies the main lessons learned for future POSITIVE activities. The section does not weaken the value of the study. On the contrary, it clarifies the level of inference that can be drawn from the evidence and strengthens the credibility of the transnational synthesis.

Study No. 1 was designed as the first diagnostic layer of WP2. Its purpose was to provide an "x-ray" of how youth work organisations understand, value and assume responsibility for the wellbeing and resilience of practitioners, staff members and volunteers working with young people. This is consistent with the wider WP2 logic, which emphasises the need to collect and interpret robust data as a basis for supporting the human resources of youth-serving organisations.

The study generated a substantial exploratory evidence base: **194 questionnaire responses**, **13 semi-structured interviews**, **4 focus groups** and **36 focus group participants**. It was explicitly framed as an exploratory and comparative analysis, not as a statistically representative survey of the entire European youth work sector.

X.1 Limitations

The first limitation concerns the **exploratory nature of the study**. The sample provides a meaningful and diverse evidence base across Romania, Poland, the Netherlands and Spain, but it cannot be considered statistically representative of all youth work organisations in the four countries. The findings should therefore be interpreted as indicative of relevant organisational patterns, not as definitive sector-wide measurements.

The second limitation relates to **sampling and recruitment**. Participants were mainly reached through partner networks, professional contacts, organisational outreach and voluntary participation. This approach was appropriate for an exploratory Erasmus+ study, but it also means that the sample may include a higher proportion of organisations already interested in wellbeing, resilience, youth work quality or organisational development.

The third limitation concerns **self-selection bias**. Organisations and individuals more willing to reflect on practitioner wellbeing may have been more likely to participate. As a result, the study may slightly over-represent organisations with greater awareness of the topic. This makes the recognition–operationalisation gap even more significant: if relatively

aware organisations still struggle to operationalise wellbeing, the challenge may be greater in less engaged parts of the sector.

The fourth limitation concerns the use of **self-reported data**. Questionnaires, interviews and focus groups capture perceptions, beliefs and experiences. This is appropriate for Study No. 1, because the study focuses precisely on attitudes and beliefs. However, self-reported responses may be influenced by social desirability, organisational loyalty, role position or respondents' expectations about what a supportive organisation should be.

The fifth limitation concerns **differences between national datasets**. The four national studies used a shared framework, but the data were not always reported with identical levels of detail. Some reports provided item-level means, others prioritised percentages of agreement, and some qualitative findings were more developed than others. This required careful transnational harmonisation and cautious interpretation.

The sixth limitation relates to **the Dutch respondent-profile inconsistency**. The Dutch data collection section reports 44 questionnaire responses, including 19 practitioners and 25 leaders/managers, while some later respondent-profile tables include different valid item totals. For this reason, the transnational report uses the official data collection figures for sample totals and treats some Dutch profile data descriptively rather than as a fully harmonised statistical base.

The seventh limitation concerns **comparability between countries**. National youth work ecosystems differ in legal frameworks, organisational maturity, degree of professionalisation, reliance on volunteers, funding models and terminology. These differences are not a problem in themselves; they are part of the comparative value of the study. However, they mean that country comparisons should be read as contextualised interpretations rather than direct rankings.

The eighth limitation concerns **the qualitative evidence base**. The 13 interviews and 4 focus groups provided rich and valuable interpretative material, but they do not capture the full diversity of organisational experiences in each country. Their main contribution is explanatory depth: they help interpret why certain quantitative patterns appear, rather than providing exhaustive coverage of all possible youth work realities.

The ninth limitation concerns **the legislative synthesis**. The legal and policy section was

based on the information included in the national reports. It should not be read as a complete legal analysis of all applicable legislation in each country. Its purpose was to identify the legal and policy elements most relevant to practitioner wellbeing, organisational responsibility, psychosocial risk prevention, volunteering and youth work.

Table 29. Main limitations and how they were addressed

Limitation	Implication	How it was addressed in the transnational report
Exploratory sample	Findings cannot be statistically generalised to the whole sector	Results are interpreted as comparative patterns and organisational mechanisms
Convenience and purposive recruitment	Possible over-representation of organisations interested in wellbeing	The analysis avoids claiming representativeness and focuses on diagnostic value
Self-selection bias	Awareness levels may be higher than in the wider sector	The report emphasises that recognition remains insufficient without operationalisation
Self-reported data	Responses may reflect perceptions or social desirability	Quantitative findings are triangulated with interviews and focus groups
Different national reporting formats	Not all indicators are equally comparable across countries	The synthesis uses cautious language and avoids artificial rankings
Dutch profile inconsistency	Some profile tables do not align with official sample totals	Official data collection figures are used for totals; profile data are treated descriptively
Limited qualitative sample	Qualitative findings are not exhaustive	Qualitative evidence is used to explain patterns, not to represent all organisations
Non-exhaustive legislative review	Legal conclusions cannot be treated as complete legal advice	The legal section is framed as a thematic synthesis of national reports

Overall, these limitations define the proper scope of the study. Study No. 1 should be read as a robust exploratory and comparative diagnosis of organisational attitudes and beliefs, not as a representative statistical audit of the European youth work sector.

X.2 Lessons learned

The first lesson learned is that **mixed methods were essential**. The recognition–operationalisation gap could not have been understood through numbers alone. Quantitative data helped identify patterns of recognition, responsibility, leadership, psychological safety and organisational learning. Qualitative evidence helped explain why these patterns appear, how organisations talk about wellbeing, and what prevents recognition from becoming practice.

The second lesson is that **attitudes and beliefs are not abstract**. They shape whether

wellbeing is treated as an individual coping issue, an informal relational concern, a leadership responsibility or a systemic organisational condition. This confirms the value of Study No. 1 as a necessary first diagnostic layer before Study No. 2 and later capacity-building activities.

The third lesson is that **high recognition should not be confused with effective support**. One of the strongest findings of the study is that organisations often recognise practitioner wellbeing as important, but still lack stable routines, leadership tools, supervision practices, feedback systems or workload-management mechanisms. Awareness is therefore a starting point, not an outcome.

The fourth lesson is that **the comparison between practitioners and leaders is especially valuable**. In several areas, leaders tend to assess organisational support more positively than practitioners. This does not necessarily indicate bad faith. It suggests that organisational reality is experienced differently depending on role, responsibility and proximity to frontline emotional labour. Future POSITIVE tools should therefore encourage dialogue between practitioners and leaders, rather than treating their perspectives separately.

The fifth lesson is that **informal support is both a strength and a warning sign**. Peer solidarity, empathetic leadership and relational trust are major protective factors in youth work organisations. However, when they become the main or only support mechanism, they reveal the absence of more structured organisational systems. POSITIVE resources should therefore strengthen informal care while helping organisations move beyond dependence on goodwill alone.

The sixth lesson is that **volunteers and non-standard contributors must be included**. The study shows that youth work is often delivered by mixed teams, including employees, volunteers, collaborators, mentors, project staff and board members. Wellbeing frameworks designed only for employees would miss a significant part of the youth work reality in several partner countries.

The seventh lesson is that **future data collection should be more tightly harmonised**. The common framework worked well, but future studies would benefit from more uniform item reporting, shared response scales, common demographic categories and clearer templates for national data tables. This would make transnational comparison easier and reduce the need for later harmonisation.

The eighth lesson is that **small and volunteer-led organisations need realistic tools**. The study confirms that many organisations recognise wellbeing but lack resources, time or formal HR structures. Future POSITIVE outputs should therefore avoid overly complex models and instead offer scalable routines that can be used in organisations with different capacities.

The ninth lesson is that **the recognition–operationalisation gap is a useful strategic concept for the whole project**. It helps distinguish between concern and action, between values and systems, and between informal support and organisational capacity. This concept should remain visible in later outputs, especially the Digital Toolkit, Resilience Cards, Storybook, Handbook, National Training and Transnational Training.

Table 30. Lessons learned and implications for POSITIVE

Lesson learned	Implication for POSITIVE
Mixed methods are necessary to understand organisational wellbeing	Future tools should combine diagnostic questions, reflection prompts and practical exercises
Attitudes and beliefs shape organisational practice	Training should address organisational assumptions, not only individual skills
Recognition is high but not enough	Resources should focus on operationalisation, routines and practical support mechanisms
Practitioners and leaders perceive reality differently	POSITIVE should create tools for structured dialogue between both groups
Informal support is valuable but insufficient	Resources should help organisations complement peer support with structured practices
Volunteers and non-standard roles are central	Toolkit and training materials should be usable by paid and unpaid contributors
Harmonised data improves comparison	Future monitoring should use clearer shared indicators and common templates
Small organisations need scalable solutions	Outputs should include light, practical and low-burden wellbeing routines
The recognition–operationalisation gap is a strong project lens	Later work packages should help organisations move from awareness to action

X.3 Closing reflection

The main lesson of Study No. 1 is that youth work organisations do not start from indifference. Across the partnership, they increasingly recognise that practitioner wellbeing and resilience matter for quality youth work, ethical practice and organisational sustainability.

The challenge is more demanding: organisations need to transform recognition into organisational capacity.

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change
Co-funded by the European Union

This means moving from wellbeing as a value to wellbeing as a routine; from individual coping to shared responsibility; from informal care to supported systems; from isolated reflection to organisational learning; and from awareness of emotional labour to leadership practices that protect practitioners over time.

In this sense, Study No. 1 provides the conceptual and attitudinal foundation for the next stages of POSITIVE. It shows where organisations already have strong values, where their systems remain fragile, and where project outputs can make the greatest contribution.

The final message is therefore clear: **supportive youth work requires supportive organisations**. To sustain young people in situations of vulnerability, organisations must also sustain the practitioners, volunteers and leaders who make youth work possible.

MAIN SOURCES OF THE TRANSNATIONAL REPORT

a. Project Documents of the POSITIVE Project – Activity A2.2

- POSITIVE – Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change. **Study No. 1 Methodology / General Framework**.
- POSITIVE – Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change. **Questionnaire 1 – Youth Workers and Practitioners**.
- POSITIVE – Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change. **Questionnaire 2 – Leaders and Managers**.
- POSITIVE – Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change. **Interview Guide**.
- POSITIVE – Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change. **Focus Group Guide**.
- POSITIVE – Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change. **National Report Template – Study No. 1**.
- POSITIVE – Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change. **WP2 / Activity A2.2 project documentation and work package references**, where relevant to the interpretation of the transnational study framework.

b. National Reports analysed for the Transnational Report – Study No. 1

- Romania

  POSITIVE – Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change. National Report – Study No. 1, Activity A2.2: "Attitudes & beliefs of organisations towards Wellbeing & Resilience of practitioners in Youth Work." Developed by Zamolxes Foundation and ACE-ES Romania – Năvodari Branch.
- Poland

  POSITIVE – Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change. National Report – Study No. 1: "Attitudes & Beliefs of Organisations towards Wellbeing & Resilience of Practitioners in Youth Work." Developed by Fundacja SOWA.
- The Netherlands

POSITIVE – Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change. National Report – Study No. 1: "Attitudes and beliefs of organisations towards wellbeing and resilience of practitioners in youth work." Developed by NLO – Network & Learning Opportunities.

- Spain

  POSITIVE – Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change. National Report – Study No. 1, Activity A2.2: "Attitudes & beliefs of organisations towards Wellbeing & Resilience of practitioners in Youth Work." Developed by COCEMFE Sevilla.

c. *Empirical data sources used for the Transnational Report*

- Questionnaire 1 responses collected from **102 youth workers and practitioners** across Romania, Poland, the Netherlands and Spain.
- Questionnaire 2 responses collected from **92 leaders, managers and organisational decision-makers** across Romania, Poland, the Netherlands and Spain.
- Semi-structured interviews conducted with **13 representatives of participating organisations** across the four partner countries.
- Four national focus groups conducted in Romania, Poland, the Netherlands and Spain, involving **36 participants** in total.
- Quantitative and qualitative analyses conducted within the four national implementations of **Study No. 1** and synthesised at transnational level.

d. *Legislative, policy and European-level sources*

The transnational report also draws on the legislative, policy and European-level sources analysed in the four national reports. These sources informed **Section IV: Specific legislation in partner countries related to the study topic**, particularly in relation to occupational health and safety, psychosocial risk prevention, labour protection, volunteering, youth work recognition, mental health, equality, non-discrimination and third-sector organisational

frameworks.

Where relevant, the transnational synthesis also considered European-level policy references included in the national reports, such as the EU Youth Strategy, the European Youth Work Agenda, Council of Europe recommendations on youth work, the Bonn Declaration on Youth Work, and European-level frameworks concerning youth work quality, psychosocial risks, mental health and practitioner competences.

e. Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools

As part of the data processing, synthesis and reporting phase, Artificial Intelligence-assisted tools, including ChatGPT, were used as supportive instruments to assist with the organisation, comparison, visualisation and drafting of quantitative and qualitative findings from the national reports.

AI tools were used exclusively to support analytical structuring, comparative synthesis, drafting, editing and the preparation of visual and narrative materials. All data used in the report originated from the POSITIVE project documentation, the four national reports and the empirical research conducted by the partner organisations.

The use of AI tools did not replace human judgement, expert analysis or the responsibility of the project partners for the interpretation of findings. All analytical outputs, conclusions and recommendations remain the responsibility of the research team and the POSITIVE project consortium.