Transnational Report

Study no. 2

”Ready for positive&supportive organizations for practitioners in Youth Work?”

Activity A2.3

Developed by
SOWA & ACE-ES Romania Navodari Branch

Positive
Wellbeing & Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change

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Section I: Executive summary

The POSITIVE project asks, through Activity A2.3 and Study no. 2, a single strategic question: are youth organisations ready to be positive and supportive environments for the people who carry out youth work? This transnational report synthesises four national studies of Romania, Poland, the Netherlands and Spain into one comparative picture of organisational readiness for practitioner wellbeing and support.

The evidence base is 203 questionnaire responses (105 youth workers and practitioners, and 98 leaders and managers), 12 interviews and 4 focus groups. For each of 17 organisational capacities, grouped in five indicators, respondents rated how important the capacity is and how well it is currently implemented in their own organisation, each on a 1-5 scale. The distance between the two - the importance-implementation gap - is the report's central measure: a wide gap marks a capability that is valued but not yet matched by practice.

The participating organisations are mostly programme-delivering youth NGOs and youth NGOs, working in education, youth development and social inclusion. They are mature-dominated in Romania, Poland and Spain and younger and more volunteer-led in the Netherlands. Their respondents are highly educated, volunteer-heavy in Romania and the Netherlands and employee-based in Poland and Spain.

Key findings

- Intention exceeds infrastructure everywhere: in all four countries every capacity is valued more highly than it is currently delivered - organisations know what a supportive environment requires, but have not yet built the systems to deliver it.
- Culture is the shared strength: organisational culture, inclusion and psychological safety record the highest current level in every country, experienced as a genuine climate of respect and belonging.
- Wellbeing is the shared weakness: wellbeing, mental health and burnout prevention record the lowest current level in every country, with fair workload distribution and access to mental-health resources the most acute problems.
- The other recurring gaps are practitioner involvement in decision-making, turning feedback into visible change, and recognition of practitioners' work.
- Scale and perception differ: Polish scores sit lower across the board, Spain pairs very high aspirations with the largest gaps, and the practitioner-leader perception gap runs in opposite directions in Romania (leaders more critical) and Spain (practitioners more critical).

The readiness verdict is mixed but actionable: conceptual readiness is high, relational readiness moderate-to-high, and structural readiness moderate-to-low. The partnership already has strong values and relational foundations, but the systems that would make support reliable - wellbeing infrastructure, supervision, participation and feedback mechanisms - are not yet consistently in place.

What should change

Ten recommendations follow from the evidence. The priorities common to all four countries are to:

- treat wellbeing and burnout prevention as a strategic, preventive function;
- institutionalise supervision, mentoring and reflective practice for staff and volunteers;
- invest in supportive leadership development;
- make participation and feedback-to-action a routine, and formalise psychological safety and recognition;
- protect support functions in funding, engage funders and municipalities, and collaborate across the sector.

In short, the partnership's youth organisations are **rich in values but uneven in infrastructure**. The decisive step - shared by Poland, Romania, Spain and the Netherlands - is to turn supportive practices from informal behaviours into formal organisational systems, so that positive and supportive environments do not depend on goodwill alone.

Section II: Context and rationale of the transnational study

Across Europe, youth work organisations are being asked to deliver increasingly complex social value under conditions of high uncertainty. Practitioners support young people who are navigating technological acceleration, socio-economic pressure, climate anxiety, digital overload and the lasting consequences of the pandemic, while at the same time the organisations themselves contend with project-based funding cycles, administrative pressure, staff and volunteer turnover and emotional overload. In this environment, the central question is no longer only whether organisations can deliver youth activities, but whether they can sustain the people who deliver them.

This is the strategic premise shared by all four national studies carried out within Activity A2.3 - in **Poland, Romania, Spain and the Netherlands**. Each partner frames practitioner wellbeing not as an individual matter, but as a condition for both staff health and service quality for young people. As the Spanish report puts it, personal resilience and coping strategies remain relevant, but they cannot compensate for inadequate working conditions or insufficient organisational support. Leadership practices, supervision, professional development, workload distribution, communication systems, psychological safety, participation in decision-making and access to appropriate resources all influence whether practitioners can perform their roles in a sustainable manner.

The transnational study reflects a broader shift in European policy and research: a move away from individual-level resilience narratives towards organisational responsibility for wellbeing and psychosocial safety. Leadership style, supervision quality, psychological safety, mental-health-protective practices, communication fairness and structural resources are no longer treated as peripheral management topics. They are core determinants of whether youth workers can remain engaged, effective and healthy over the medium and long term.

All five partners operationalise the same two concepts established in the common methodology:

- **Positive organisation** - an organisation that enables practitioners and teams to thrive through meaningful work, high-quality relationships, opportunities for growth and a sustained culture of wellbeing.
- **Supportive organisation** - an organisation that creates the physical, psychological and social conditions that allow workers to maintain and improve their health and wellbeing through organisational culture, management practices and participatory processes (World Health Organization, 2010).

The shared assumption is that these are not symbolic values. They require observable organisational capacities that can be measured, compared and improved - which is precisely what Study no. 2 sets out to do.

While the partners share a common diagnosis, each national report grounds it in a distinct ecosystem. Taken together, these contexts explain why organisational readiness is expected to vary considerably both between and within countries.

Country	Contextual emphasis from the national report
Romania	A youth NGO ecosystem marked by strong reliance on project-based funding, mixed staff-volunteer teams, unequal organisational capacity across regions and uneven access to support functions such as supervision, HR systems, reflective practice and mental-health protection. The legal framework offers legitimacy but little guidance on practitioner wellbeing; organisational wellbeing remains uneven and dependent on local leadership capacity.
Poland	A highly diverse sector in which large, well-established organisations operate alongside small local associations and informal initiatives. Many have expanded beyond project delivery into psychosocial support and community resilience, increasing the emotional demands on practitioners. Public debate on mental health focuses mainly on young people, while the wellbeing of those who work with them remains far less explored.
Netherlands	A relatively well-developed youth, welfare and public-health infrastructure, yet under pressure since the decentralisation of youth services to municipalities. Practitioners face municipal commissioning structures, project-based funding, staff shortages and rising complexity of youth needs. National evidence shows youth mental health is a strategic concern and that workload pressure and personnel shortages in social work and youth care are expected to grow.
Spain	A third sector operating under structural constraints linked to project-based funding, dependency on public grants, limited human resources and administrative pressure. The first POSITIVE national study had already revealed a gap between awareness of practitioner wellbeing and its systematic implementation, with support often remaining informal, reactive or dependent on individual leadership styles.

Two threads run through every context. First, the same structural pressures - unstable funding, thin staffing, administrative load and emotionally demanding relational work - recur in all four countries. Second, formal values around inclusion, wellbeing or support may exist on paper, but the real test of organisational maturity is whether practitioners experience these values in daily work. This is why the study assesses readiness through both the perceived importance of supportive practices and their current level of implementation, and why it deliberately compares the perspectives of practitioners with those of leaders and managers.

On this basis, the transnational study pursues a single overarching purpose: to produce a clear, comparative picture of how prepared youth work organisations across the partnership are to become and evolve into spaces where practitioners can thrive, feel safe, remain resilient and sustainably engage in social-change work.

Section III: Objectives and research questions of transnational Study no. 2

a. Specific objectives

The overall purpose of Study no. 2 at the transnational level is to assess the extent to which youth organisations and organisations working with young people across the four partner countries are prepared to function as positive and supportive environments for practitioners, staff members and volunteers. The national objectives converge closely; synthesised, the transnational study aims to:

1. assess the current level of organisational readiness across the five key dimensions associated with positive and supportive organisations;
2. identify organisational strengths and areas for improvement in practices related to leadership, supervision, professional development, organisational culture, wellbeing, communication, participation and organisational support;
3. identify the gap between the importance assigned to supportive organisational practices and their actual level of implementation within organisations;
4. assess the extent to which wellbeing-oriented structures, policies and practices are genuinely embedded in everyday organisational life, distinguishing formal systems from informal, individual-dependent support;
5. examine how leadership, organisational culture, wellbeing practices, communication systems and organisational resources influence practitioners' everyday experiences;
6. compare the perceptions of youth workers and practitioners with those of leaders and managers regarding organisational strengths, gaps and development needs;
7. identify organisational factors that contribute to practitioner wellbeing, resilience, motivation and long-term engagement in youth work;
8. explore the main barriers that prevent organisations from translating positive values into sustainable organisational practices;
9. identify the forms of organisational-level support that organisations need in order to strengthen their capacity to become more positive, supportive and resilient workplaces;
10. generate evidence-based recommendations for strengthening organisational readiness and developing healthier, more resilient youth work environments across the partnership.

b. Research questions, working hypotheses and targeted indicators

Central research question

To what extent are youth organisations and organisations working with young people in the partner countries prepared to become positive and supportive environments for practitioners, staff members and volunteers?

Operational research questions

All five partners share the same central research question and examine the same five indicators. At the operational level, the Romanian, Dutch and Polish studies posed questions

aligned with each indicator, while the Spanish study addressed the same dimensions through a differently framed set of questions. The common operational research questions can be summarised as follows.

Common operational research questions:

- How effectively do leadership, supervision and professional development practices support practitioners in their daily work?
- To what extent are inclusion, trust and psychological safety embedded in everyday organisational culture and practices?
- How well do organisations address practitioner wellbeing, mental health and burnout prevention through organisational policies and support mechanisms?
- How effectively do communication processes, participation mechanisms and interpersonal support systems function within organisations, and how do they influence perceived support and cohesion?
- Do organisations possess adequate resources, internal systems and adaptive capacities to sustain supportive environments over time?

Additional questions raised by individual partners:

- Spain framed nine questions around the study's analytical operations: how important practitioners and leaders consider supportive organisations to be; how prepared organisations perceive themselves to be; which organisational capacities matter most; the extent to which they are currently implemented; the main importance-implementation gaps; whether perceptions differ between practitioners and leaders; which aspects are relative strengths and which require development; the organisational, financial and structural barriers involved; and the forms of external support considered most relevant.
- Poland added an integrative question on how the interactions between the organisational dimensions shape overall organisational readiness (RQ6).
- The Netherlands added explicit questions on the main importance-implementation gaps and on the types of support needed to strengthen organisational readiness.

Working hypotheses

All partners adopted the working hypotheses set out in the common methodological framework. They do not predict outcomes; they articulate the expected relationships that informed the choice of indicators and instruments.

	Working hypothesis (common framework)
H1	Organisational readiness is shaped by the extent to which leadership, supervision and professional development practices are experienced as coherent, consistent and responsive to the emotional and professional demands of youth work.
H2	Readiness is contingent on the degree to which inclusion, trust and psychological safety are embedded in everyday organisational interactions, rather than existing only as formal values or policies.

H3	Readiness to support practitioner wellbeing depends on the organisation's capacity to address mental-health and burnout risks proactively and systemically, rather than placing responsibility on individual resilience.
H4	Readiness is strongly influenced by the quality, reciprocity and perceived fairness of internal communication and participatory processes.
H5	The sustainability of supportive practices depends on the alignment between available resources, internal systems and the organisation's capacity for reflection, learning and adaptation.
H6	Overall readiness is an emergent and relational construct, arising from the interaction and alignment of multiple organisational dimensions rather than from the strength of any single indicator in isolation.

In addition to these common hypotheses, the Romanian, Dutch and Spanish studies each stated a single national-level working hypothesis. These are closely aligned and can be summarised as follows: although youth organisations generally recognise the importance of supportive organisational practices and demonstrate commitment to positive organisational values, significant gaps continue to exist between organisational intentions and the practical systems, resources, procedures and everyday practices required to sustain practitioner wellbeing, resilience and long-term engagement in youth work.

Targeted indicators

Organisational readiness is assessed through five targeted indicators, common to all four countries and to the transnational analysis:

1. **Leadership, Supervision and Professional Development** - mentoring, guidance, supportive supervision, constructive feedback, continuous learning and the exchange of ideas.
2. **Organisational Culture, Inclusion and Psychological Safety** - safe and respectful working environments, inclusion, equal opportunities, anti-discrimination practices, organisational stability and trust.
3. **Wellbeing, Mental Health and Burnout Prevention** - emotional and practical support in high-pressure situations, fair workload distribution, burnout prevention and access to mental-health resources.
4. **Communication, Participation and Interpersonal Support** - clear and transparent communication, collaboration, teamwork, peer support and meaningful participation in decision-making.
5. **Organisational Resources, Systems and Adaptability** - adequate time, tools and spaces, continuous assessment and adaptation based on staff feedback, and recognition of professional contributions.

Together, these indicators provide a comprehensive framework for understanding whether organisations are capable not only of delivering youth work activities, but also of creating the internal conditions that allow practitioners to remain engaged, supported, healthy and effective over time.

Section IV: Specific legislation in partner countries related to the study topic

None of the four countries regulates the notion of a "positive and supportive organisation" through a single, dedicated law. Instead, in each country the relevant conditions are shaped by a combination of frameworks: occupational health and safety (including psychosocial risk), labour and employment law, volunteering legislation, equality and anti-discrimination provisions, data-protection rules and national mental-health policy, complemented in some cases by youth-sector standards. A consistent pattern emerges across the partnership: legislation establishes minimum standards and duties of protection, but stops short of prescribing the supervision, mentoring, reflective practice, wellbeing systems and burnout prevention that distinguish a genuinely supportive organisation. Translating legal compliance into supportive everyday practice is therefore left largely to internal organisational capacity.

Comparative overview

Theme	Romania	Poland	Netherlands	Spain
Occupational health & safety / psychosocial risk	Occupational Safety and Health Law No. 319/2006 (extends to volunteers).	Occupational Health & Safety (BHP) regulations; increasing recognition of psychosocial risks.	Working Conditions Act (Arbowet), incl. duty to prevent psychosocial workload (PSA).	Law 31/1995 on Occupational Risk Prevention; RD 39/1997; INSST psychosocial-risk guidance.
Labour / employment	Labour Code (Law No. 53/2003): equal treatment, dignity, working time, training.	Labour Code (1974, amended): safe conditions, equal treatment, anti-mobbing, dignity.	not specifically addressed in the national report	Workers' Statute (RDL 2/2015); digital-disconnection rights; Remote Work Law 10/2021.
Volunteering	Volunteering Law No. 78/2014 (contracts, training, recognition).	Act on Public Benefit Activity and Volunteer Work (2003).	not specifically addressed in the national report	Law 45/2015 on Volunteering (training, participation, accessibility).
Equality & anti-discrimination	GO No. 137/2000; Law No. 202/2002 on Equal Opportunities.	Anti-discrimination provisions within the Labour Code.	Article 1 of the Constitution; equal-treatment laws.	Constitution (Art. 14); Organic Law 3/2007; Law 15/2022; Law 4/2023 (LGTBI); disability-rights law.
Mental-health / youth policy	National Youth Strategy 2024-2027 (professionalisation, coverage, monitoring).	National Mental Health Protection Programme; Standards of Youth Work in Poland.	Youth Act (Jeugdwet); Social Support Act 2015 (Wmo); "Mental Health: Of All of Us".	Mental Health Strategy 2022-2026; Mental Health Action Plan 2025-2027;

				Third-Sector Law 43/2015.

Country highlights

a) Romania

Youth organisations are formally recognised through Youth Law No. 350/2006 and GO No. 26/2000 on Associations and Foundations. The Labour Code, Volunteering Law No. 78/2014, Occupational Safety and Health Law No. 319/2006 and Child Rights Law No. 272/2004 create a solid safeguarding and protection framework, while anti-discrimination duties flow from GO No. 137/2000 and Law No. 202/2002. The national report concludes that the context is "legally regulated but professionally under-systematised": legislation regulates functioning through compliance requirements, but offers no comprehensive national framework for supervision, practitioner wellbeing, burnout prevention, mentoring or reflective practice.

b) Poland

The Labour Code and Occupational Health & Safety (BHP) regulations establish duties on safe and healthy conditions, equal treatment and protection against harassment and mobbing, with growing recognition of psychosocial risks. The Act on Public Benefit Activity and Volunteer Work (2003) frames the operation of many youth organisations and the rights of volunteers. Beyond binding law, the National Mental Health Protection Programme signals mental health as a policy priority, and the non-binding Standards of Youth Work in Poland promote participation, safety, ethical practice and professional development - supporting the ongoing professionalisation of the sector.

c) Netherlands

The Youth Act (Jeugdwet) and the Social Support Act 2015 (Wmo) define the decentralised, municipality-led environment in which Dutch youth organisations operate, directly affecting organisational stability, workload and resources. The Working Conditions Act (Arbowet) is especially relevant: it obliges employers to prevent psychosocial workload (PSA) - stress arising from high workload, aggression, bullying, discrimination or harassment - connecting the legal framework directly to burnout prevention and supportive environments. Equal-treatment legislation (from Article 1 of the Constitution) underpins inclusive, non-discriminatory cultures.

d) Spain

Spain addresses the topic through constitutional principles (health, dignity, equality, youth participation), Law 31/1995 on Occupational Risk Prevention and its prevention-services regulation (RD 39/1997), complemented by INSST guidance that brings psychosocial hazards - workload, autonomy, support, emotional demands, harassment - within the general prevention framework. Labour rights (Workers' Statute; digital disconnection; remote work), a broad equality architecture (Organic Law 3/2007; Law 15/2022, which expressly covers illness and health condition; Law 4/2023 on LGTBI equality), disability-rights legislation, Law 45/2015 on Volunteering and the Third-Sector Law 43/2015 complete the picture, alongside the national Mental Health Strategy 2022-2026 and Action Plan 2025-2027.

Implications for the study

The legal mapping reinforces the study's central rationale in every country: practitioner wellbeing, safety, inclusion and organisational support are not only matters of organisational development but also part of a wider legal and policy responsibility. At the same time, because legislation sets minimum standards rather than defining supportive practice, the readiness of organisations to support practitioners effectively is likely to vary considerably - depending on internal capacity, leadership practices and the ability to translate legal requirements into meaningful organisational support systems.

Section V: How the transnational study no. 2 was carried out

a. Research design

All five partners followed the common methodological framework developed for Activity A2.3 and adopted a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques. The quantitative component captured the perceptions of practitioners and of leaders/managers regarding the current level of organisational readiness; the qualitative component explored the experiences, explanations and contextual factors behind the numbers. Combining the two made it possible to compare perspectives across organisational roles and to interpret statistical patterns in light of lived experience. Spain additionally incorporated a documentary review of the national legal and policy context as a third, triangulating source.

b. Implementation stages

Although described with different levels of detail, the national implementations followed the same logical sequence:

1. review and contextualisation of the common methodological framework, and adaptation of the research tools;
2. mapping and identification of relevant youth organisations, including organisations working with vulnerable young people;
3. dissemination of the two online questionnaires and recruitment of participants from both target groups;
4. collection of quantitative data through Questionnaire 1 (practitioners) and Questionnaire 2 (leaders and managers);
5. collection of qualitative data through semi-structured interviews with leaders and managers;
6. organisation and facilitation of a focus group with representatives of both target groups;
7. processing, analysis and triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data; and
8. preparation of the national report as a contribution to the transnational analysis.

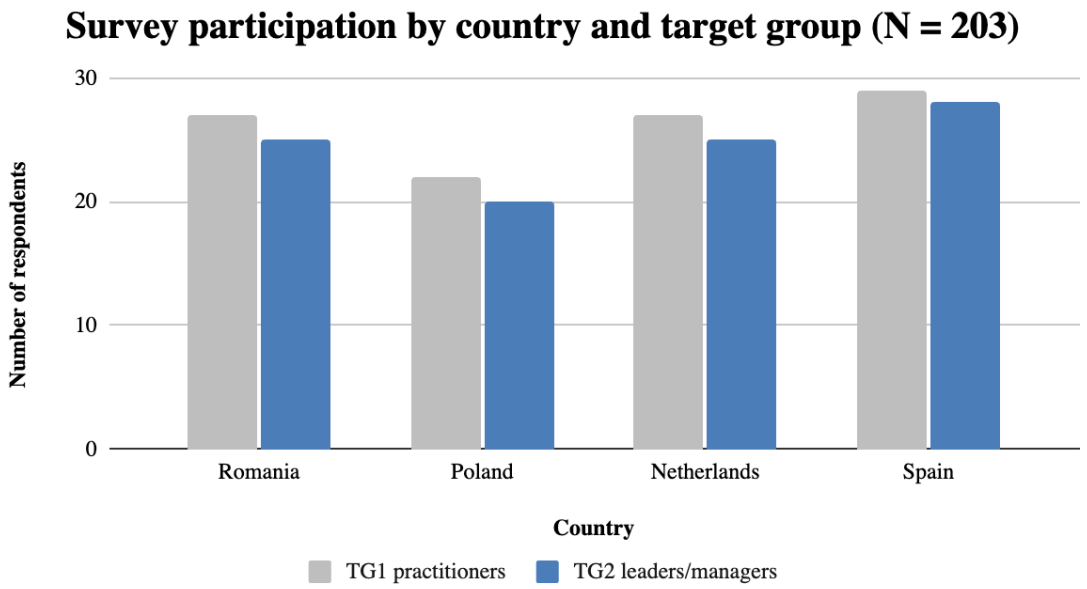
c. Methods and instruments used

Every partner used the same set of instruments from the common methodology: two online questionnaires (administered through Google Forms), a semi-structured interview guide for leaders and managers, and a focus-group guide for both target groups. The questionnaires assessed 17 organisational capacities grouped into the five indicators, and for each capacity respondents rated both its importance and its current level of implementation - the basis for the importance-implementation gap analysis. The tools were kept aligned with the transnational framework to ensure comparability between countries. The Netherlands administered the questionnaires in English only (reflecting the high number of international youth workers and high English proficiency), whereas the previous study had used both Dutch and English versions.

d. Data collection

Data were collected during spring 2026. The combined dataset comprises 203 valid questionnaire responses, 12 semi-structured interviews and 4 focus groups across the partnership. The table below synthesises participation by country; the survey total comfortably exceeds the indicative target of at least 50 respondents per country set in the methodology (Spain, Romania and the Netherlands each exceeded it, while Poland reached a slightly lower but balanced sample).

Country	Survey responses (TG1 / TG2)	Interviews	Focus group
Romania	52 (27 / 25)	3 leaders/managers	31 Mar 2026, online (Zoom) - 9 participants, of whom 5 leaders, 2 facilitators
Poland	42 (22 / 20)	3 leaders/managers	15 Jun 2026, online - both target groups (rescheduled)
Netherlands	52 (27 / 25)	3 leaders/managers	Online - 6 participants, both groups, 2 facilitators
Spain	57 (29 / 28)	3 leaders/managers	6 May 2026, COCEMFE Sevilla - 11 participants (5 / 6), 2 facilitators
Total	203 (105 / 98)	12	4 focus groups



The balance between the two target groups was maintained throughout: practitioners (TG1) account for 105 responses and leaders/managers (TG2) for 98, allowing the perceptions of

those who experience the organisational climate daily to be compared with those who shape it. In Spain, the participants involved in the interviews and focus group had also completed the questionnaires, so the qualitative work deepened - rather than added to - the survey sample.

e. Ethical considerations

All four studies applied the ethical principles set out in the common framework: voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the objectives of the POSITIVE project and the intended use of the data before deciding whether to take part, and could withdraw at any time. Questionnaire responses were collected and analysed in aggregated, anonymised form, with personal identifiers removed at the analysis and reporting stages. For interviews and focus groups, participants consented to the recording of their contributions, which were used solely for note-taking, analysis and reporting; qualitative insights are reported thematically to avoid identifying individuals or organisations. Where respondents could optionally leave an email address to stay involved in the project, doing so was never a condition for participating.

f. Difficulties and limitations encountered

The partners reported a consistent set of difficulties, several of which are themselves indicative of the structural pressures the study examines:

- **Recruitment and availability - r**eaching participants required continuous outreach and follow-up. Many organisations operate with limited human resources, intensive project schedules and competing priorities, which constrained availability - in Spain, despite dissemination to more than 500 organisations, many staff could not join interviews or focus groups because of workload. The limited capacity to take part in research on wellbeing arguably reflects the very pressures under study.
- **Engaging leaders and managers - t**he Netherlands in particular found TG2 harder to reach, owing to busy schedules and workload, requiring extra effort to secure enough responses.
- **Scheduling -** Poland had to postpone and reschedule its focus group (eventually held online on 15 June 2026), and the Dutch data-collection period was extended into mid-June to reach the required numbers.
- **Overlap with the previous study** - some Dutch respondents had been contacted during an earlier study and initially assumed Study no. 2 was the same, requiring clarification.
- **Self-reported, point-in-time data -** across all countries, findings reflect participants' perceptions and experiences at a specific moment, not external organisational audits, and may be influenced by social desirability - a risk mitigated by emphasising anonymity and confidentiality.
- **Exploratory samples -** the national samples are exploratory rather than statistically representative; participants may have had a particular interest in organisational wellbeing. In Spain, the profiles of the two groups also differed (TG1 concentrated in mature organisations, TG2 more varied), and the qualitative work was concentrated in the disability and inclusion fields.

Despite these limitations, every partner concluded that the combination of questionnaires, interviews and focus groups provided a coherent and sufficiently rich evidence base for assessing organisational readiness - with the added value, in the Romanian case, that such an analysis had not previously been conducted nationally. These points feed directly into Section X (Limitations and lessons learned).

Section VI: Description of organisations involved in study no. 2

Across the partnership, Study no. 2 captured the perceptions of 203 respondents reporting on the organisations in which they work or volunteer: 52 in Romania, 42 in Poland, 52 in the Netherlands and 57 in Spain. In every country the sample forms a youth-work and youth-programme ecosystem, dominated by NGOs that deliver programmes or activities for young people and complemented by youth NGOs. The organisations operate mainly at the intersection of education, youth development and empowerment, social inclusion and community development, and they span the full developmental range from start-ups to mature organisations active for more than ten years.

a. Typology of participating organisations

In all four countries the sample is dominated by NGOs that provide programmes or activities for young people, complemented by youth NGOs. Poland shows the strongest concentration of programme-delivering NGOs (85.7% overall). Romania is more balanced (around 60% programme NGOs and 40% youth NGOs across both groups). Spain displays a marked split between the two target groups: practitioners overwhelmingly describe their organisation as a programme-delivering NGO (93.1%), whereas leaders are almost evenly divided between programme NGOs (53.6%) and youth organisations (46.4%). The Netherlands reported the same two organisational types but did not provide percentages.

Table VI.1. Typology of participating organisations (share of respondents)

Typology	Romania	Poland	Netherlands	Spain
NGOs providing programmes / activities for young people	63.0% TG1 / 56.0% TG2	81.8% TG1 / 90.0% TG2	Present (no % reported)	93.1% TG1 / 53.6% TG2
Youth NGOs / youth organisations	37.0% TG1 / 40.0% TG2	18.2% TG1 / 10.0% TG2	Present (no % reported)	6.9% TG1 / 46.4% TG2
Both categories	4.0% TG2	not reported	not reported	not reported

The transnational picture is therefore one of a programme-oriented youth NGO sector. The Spanish leadership profile is the main exception: a substantial share of leaders identify their organisation primarily as a youth organisation rather than a programme provider, which is consistent with Spain having recruited several established youth and disability federations into the leadership sample.

b. Field(s) in which organisations operate

Fields of activity were measured slightly differently across the four national surveys, so the figures below are best read as an indication of relative emphasis within each country rather than precisely comparable percentages. Even so, a consistent core emerges: education and lifelong learning, youth development and empowerment, and social inclusion and equal opportunities are leading fields in every country.

Table VI.2. Leading fields of activity, by country

Country	Leading fields (in order reported)
Romania	Education and lifelong learning (28.8%); youth development and empowerment (25.0%); social inclusion and equal opportunities (17.3%); community development and civic engagement (15.4%); entrepreneurship, employment and labour market (11.5%)
Poland	Education and lifelong learning (26.2%); social inclusion and equal opportunities (14.3%); community development and civic engagement, arts and culture, and mental health and wellbeing (9.5% each); youth development and empowerment also prominent among practitioners
Netherlands	Youth development and empowerment (largest, by rank); social inclusion and equal opportunities; then mental health and wellbeing and sports, leisure and non-formal activities
Spain	Social inclusion and equal opportunities (47.4%); entrepreneurship, employment and labour-market inclusion (43.9%); youth development and empowerment (38.6%); community development and civic engagement (26.3%); education and lifelong learning (24.6%)

Fields were measured slightly differently across the four national surveys (Romania: combined counts, n = 52, some multi-response; Poland: single-select, n = 42; the Netherlands: rank only, no percentages; Spain: multi-select, so shares sum to well over 100% before weighting). Spain's figures above are a weighted TG1/TG2 combination, computed as the combined count for each field divided by the total sample of 57; practitioners placed noticeably more weight on entrepreneurship and employment (62.1%) than leaders did (25.0%), while leaders emphasised social inclusion and youth empowerment somewhat more.

The shared emphasis on education, youth development and social inclusion confirms that the partnership captured organisations engaged in intensive relational work with young people. Two national accents stand out: Spain shows a strong orientation towards employment and labour-market inclusion (reflecting its disability- and inclusion-focused federations), while mental health and wellbeing appears as an explicit field of activity in Poland and the Netherlands, signalling that some organisations already frame wellbeing as part of their mission.

c. Stage of development

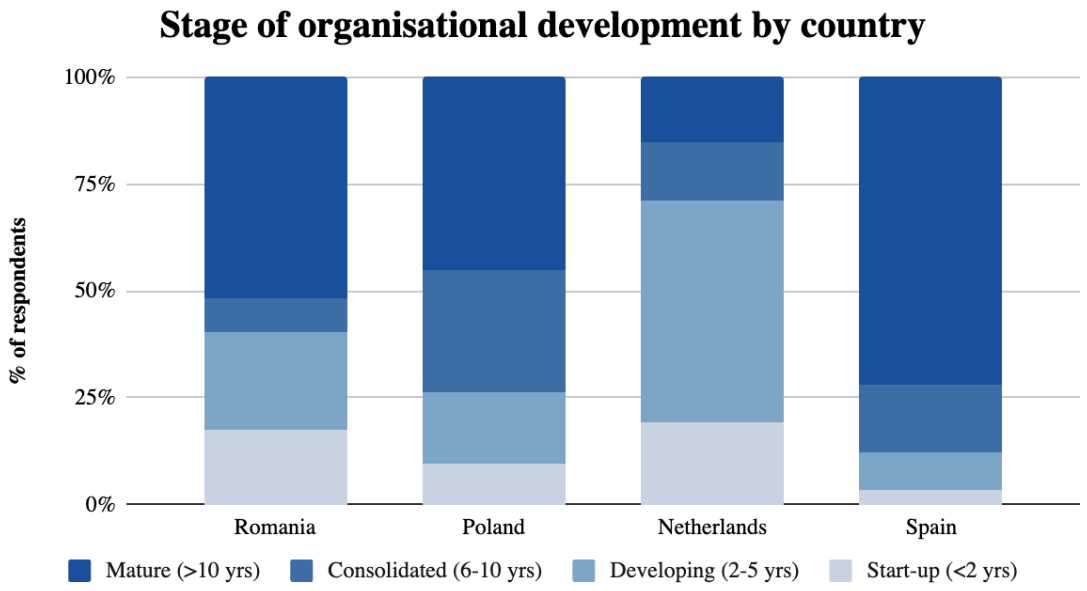
Three of the four ecosystems are mature-heavy. In Romania, Poland and Spain, organisations active for more than ten years form the largest single group, and consolidated or mature organisations together make up most of the sample. The Netherlands is the clear contrast: its sample is dominated by developing and early-stage organisations, reflecting a younger, more volunteer- and student-led ecosystem.

Table VI.3. Stage of organisational development (overall share of respondents)

Stage	Romania	Poland	Netherlands	Spain	Partnership
Start-up / early-stage (<2 yrs)	17.3% (9)	9.5% (4)	19.2% (10)	3.5% (2)	12.4% (25)
Developing (2-5 yrs)	23.1% (12)	16.7% (7)	51.9% (27)	8.8% (5)	25.1% (51)
Consolidated / established (6-10 yrs)	7.7% (4)	28.6% (12)	13.5% (7)	15.8% (9)	15.8% (32)

Mature (>10 yrs)	51.9% (27)	45.2% (19)	15.4% (8)	71.9% (41)	46.8% (95)

Chart VI.3. Stage of organisational development



The developmental contrast matters for the study: mature organisations may already have routines, governance structures and accumulated experience, whereas the developing and early-stage organisations that dominate the Dutch sample have simply had less time to build those structures, and may need more support to formalise positive and supportive practices. Age alone is not the whole story, however: organisational readiness cannot be inferred exclusively from how long an organisation has existed. Mature entities can still struggle with workload, communication, funding or practices inherited from an earlier period, while younger, growing organisations can develop real cultures of trust and flexibility even before their internal systems are fully formalised.

Read together, Section VI shows that the partnership engaged an established but developmentally diverse field of organisations, working in emotionally demanding, relational fields. Organisational experience is substantial in most countries, but, as the indicator analysis will show, experience alone does not guarantee positive and supportive environments: readiness depends on internal systems more than on age or size, and the differences in organisational diversity, developmental stage and perceived readiness documented here are themselves part of why respondents reported both strengths and gaps across leadership, organisational culture, wellbeing, communication and organisational systems in Section VIII.

Section VII: Description of respondents

The transnational dataset comprises 203 respondents across two target groups: 105 youth workers and practitioners (Target group no. 1) and 98 leaders and managers (Target group no. 2). The balance between the two groups was maintained in every country, allowing the perceptions of those who experience the organisational climate daily to be compared with those of the people who shape it. The country samples are summarised below.

Table VII.1. Respondents by country and target group

Country	TG1 (practitioners)	TG2 (leaders / managers)	Total	Share of total
Romania	27	25	52	25.6%
Poland	22	20	42	20.7%
Netherlands	27	25	52	25.6%
Spain	29	28	57	28.1%
Partnership	105	98	203	100%

VII.1 Target group no. 1 - youth workers and practitioners (N = 105)

Target group no. 1 brings together front-line practitioners: youth workers, project and programme staff, and mentors, educators, trainers and counsellors. The profile differs markedly between countries on two dimensions in particular - employment status and age - while converging on a high overall level of formal education.

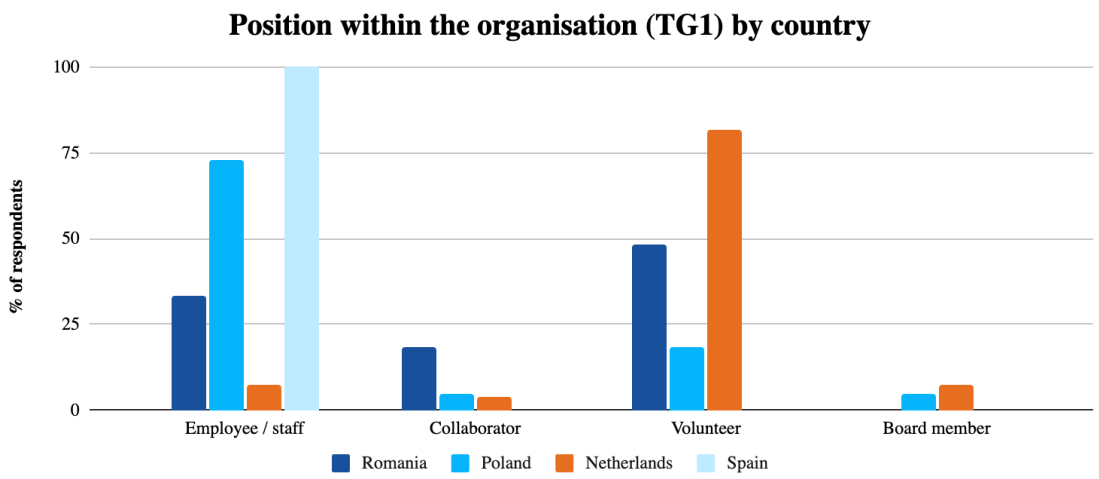
a. Position within the organisation

The employment basis of practitioners varies sharply across the partnership. Spain is fully professionalised (100% employees) and Poland is employee-dominated (72.7%), whereas Romania and the Netherlands rely heavily on volunteers (48.1% and 81.5% respectively). This means that, for half of the partnership sample, organisational wellbeing cannot be framed only around formal employment relations; volunteers depend strongly on informal support, belonging, mentoring and recognition.

Table VII.2. Target group 1 - position within the organisation

Position	Romania	Poland	Netherlands	Spain	Partnership
Employee / staff	33.3% (9)	72.7% (16)	7.4% (2)	100% (29)	53.3% (56)
Collaborator	18.5% (5)	4.5% (1)	3.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	6.7% (7)
Volunteer	48.1% (13)	18.2% (4)	81.5% (22)	0.0% (0)	37.1% (39)
Board member	0.0% (0)	4.5% (1)	7.4% (2)	0.0% (0)	2.9% (3)

Chart VII.2. Target group 1 - position within the organisation



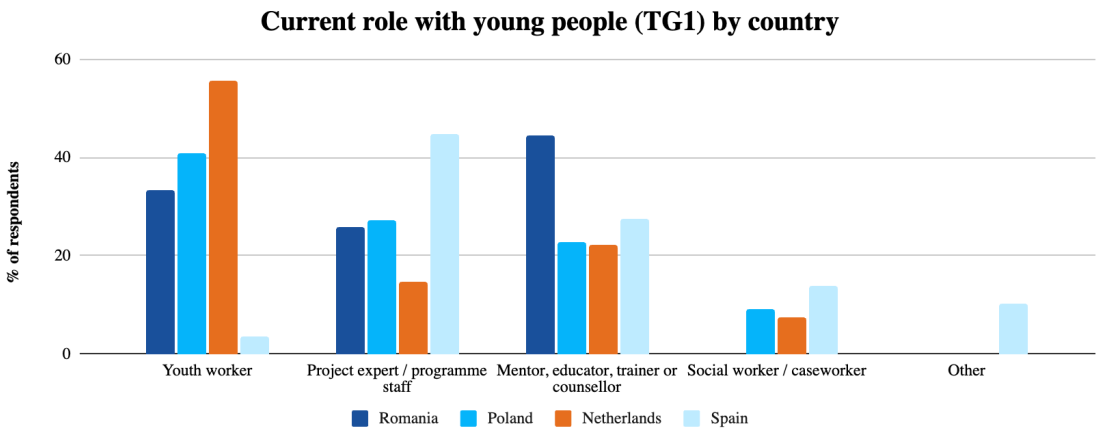
b. Current role when working with young people

Roles overlap (the item was multi-response in Romania), but a clear pattern emerges. Direct youth work and mentoring/education/counselling dominate in Romania, Poland and the Netherlands, while Spain leans towards project and programme roles. Social-worker / caseworker profiles are rare everywhere. The mix confirms that organisational support must serve both relational front-line work and programme coordination.

Table VII.3. Target group 1 - current role with young people (multi-response in Romania)

Role	Romania	Poland	Netherlands	Spain
Youth worker	33.3% (9)	40.9% (9)	55.6% (15)	3.4% (1)
Project expert / programme staff	25.9% (7)	27.3% (6)	14.8% (4)	44.8% (13)
Mentor, educator, trainer or counsellor	44.4% (12)	22.7% (5)	22.2% (6)	27.6% (8)
Social worker / caseworker / youth-support specialist	0.0% (0)	9.1% (2)	7.4% (2)	13.8% (4)
Other	not reported	not reported	not reported	10.3% (3)

Chart VII.3. Target group 1 - current role with young people (multi-response in Romania)



c. Years of experience in working with youth

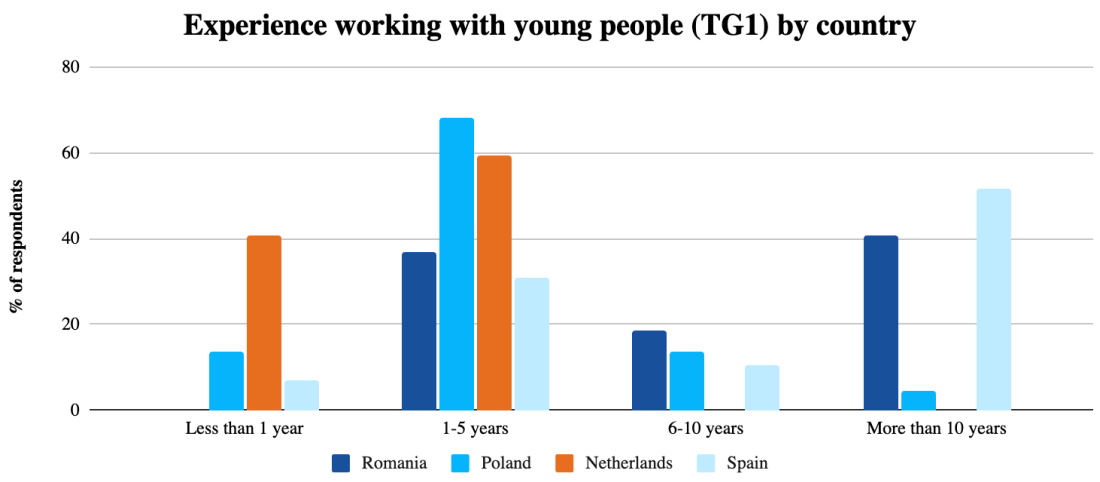
Experience splits the partnership into two profiles. Romania and Spain are experience-heavy (about 59% and 62% with six or more years), whereas Poland and the Netherlands are early-career: roughly two thirds of Polish practitioners have one to five years, and all Dutch practitioners fall in the two lowest experience bands. This mirrors the age distribution below. This mix means the questionnaire captures both seasoned and fresh perspectives, which is worth bearing in mind when interpreting the indicator results in Section VIII.

Table VII.4. Target group 1 - experience in working with young people

Experience	Romania	Poland	Netherlands	Spain	Partnership
Less than 1 year	0.0% (0)	13.6% (3)	40.7% (11)	6.9% (2)	15.2% (16)
1-5 years	37.0% (10)	68.2% (15)	59.3% (16)	31.0% (9)	47.6% (50)
6-10 years	18.5% (5)	13.6% (3)	0% (0)	10.3% (3)	10.5% (11)
More than 10 years	40.7% (11)	4.5% (1)	0% (0)	51.7% (15)	25.7% (27)

Note: Romania additionally recorded one respondent in a combined "<1 + 1-5 years" category. This respondent is included in Romania's total of 27 but is not separately reflected in the four experience-band columns above; as a result, the four columns in the Partnership row sum to 104 rather than the full N = 105 for Target group no. 1.

Chart VII.4. Target group 1 - experience in working with young people



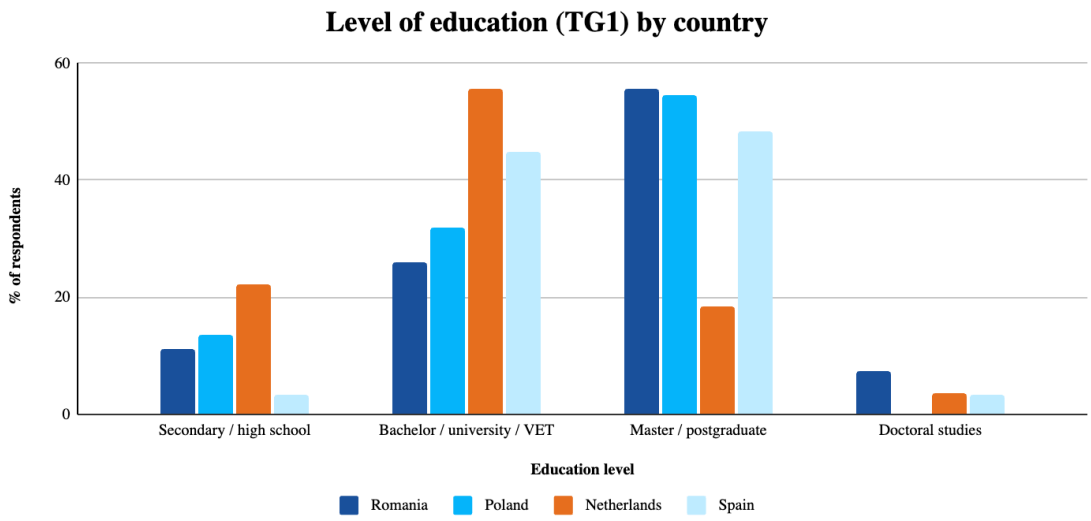
d. Level of education

The practitioner group is highly educated across the partnership: 87.6% hold a tertiary qualification (bachelor, master or doctorate), and master-level qualifications are the single largest category. This strengthens the credibility of the qualitative interpretation, since respondents have the conceptual capacity to assess organisational culture and support systems.

Table VII.5. Target group 1 - level of education

Education	Romania	Poland	Netherlands	Spain	Partnership
Secondary / high school	11.1% (3)	13.6% (3)	22.2% (6)	3.4% (1)	12.4% (13)
Bachelor / university / VET	25.9% (7)	31.8% (7)	55.6% (15)	44.8% (13)	40.0% (42)
Master / postgraduate	55.6% (15)	54.5% (12)	18.5% (5)	48.3% (14)	43.8% (46)
Doctoral studies	7.4% (2)	0.0% (0)	3.7% (1)	3.4% (1)	3.8% (4)

Chart VII.5 Target group 1 - level of education



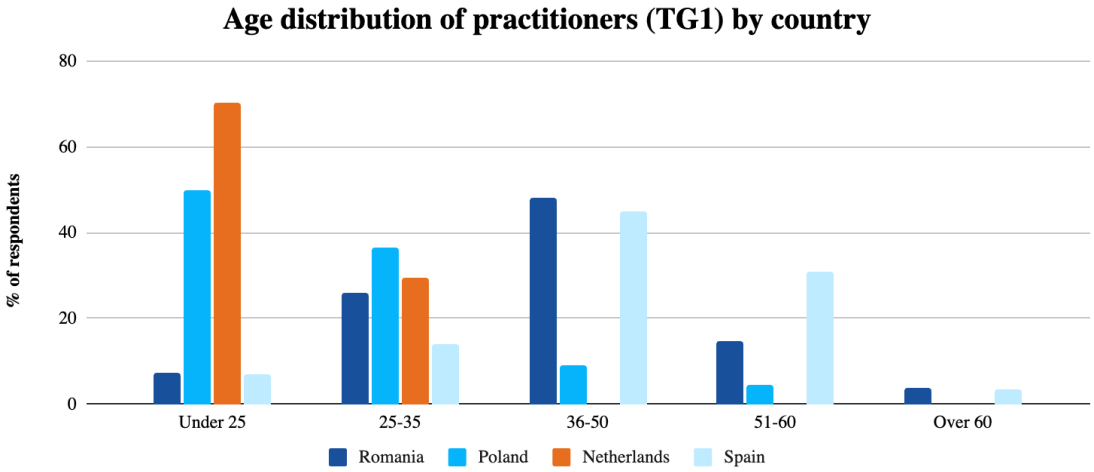
e. Age

Age is the sharpest point of divergence. Romania and Spain are mid-to-later career (most practitioners over 35), whereas Poland and the Netherlands are strikingly young: 86% of Polish practitioners and all Dutch practitioners are under 35. Across the partnership the group is broadly balanced, with 58% under 35 once the younger samples are included.

Table VII.6. Target group 1 - age distribution

Age band	Romania	Poland	Netherlands	Spain	Partnership
Under 25	7.4% (2)	50.0% (11)	70.4% (19)	6.9% (2)	32.4% (34)
25-35	25.9% (7)	36.4% (8)	29.6% (8)	13.8% (4)	25.7% (27)
36-50	48.1% (13)	9.1% (2)	0.0% (0)	44.8% (13)	26.7% (28)
51-60	14.8% (4)	4.5% (1)	0.0% (0)	31.0% (9)	13.3% (14)
Over 60	3.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3.4% (1)	1.9% (2)

Chart VII.6. Target group 1 - age distribution



Taken together, these five dimensions show a practitioner sample that is credible and well placed to assess organisational readiness: it is highly educated and active across the core

youth-work functions. Its internal diversity, however, runs along two separate lines. By age and experience, Romania and Spain are the more seasoned, mid-career samples, while Poland and the Netherlands skew young and early-career, as shown above. By employment status, the pattern crosses that split differently: Romania and the Netherlands rely heavily on volunteer staff, while Poland and Spain are answered almost entirely by salaried practitioners. Supportive practices that work for experienced, salaried staff may not automatically reach young volunteers, and vice versa; the transnational reading of the indicators in Section VIII should be interpreted against this demographic variation.

VII.2 Target group no. 2 - leaders and managers (N = 98)

Target group no. 2 consists of people who hold leadership, coordination, project-management, board or administrative responsibilities. They are particularly relevant for readiness because they shape strategy, internal culture, staff support, supervision and the allocation of resources. As with practitioners, the leadership profile is volunteer-heavy in Romania and the Netherlands and employee-based in Poland and Spain.

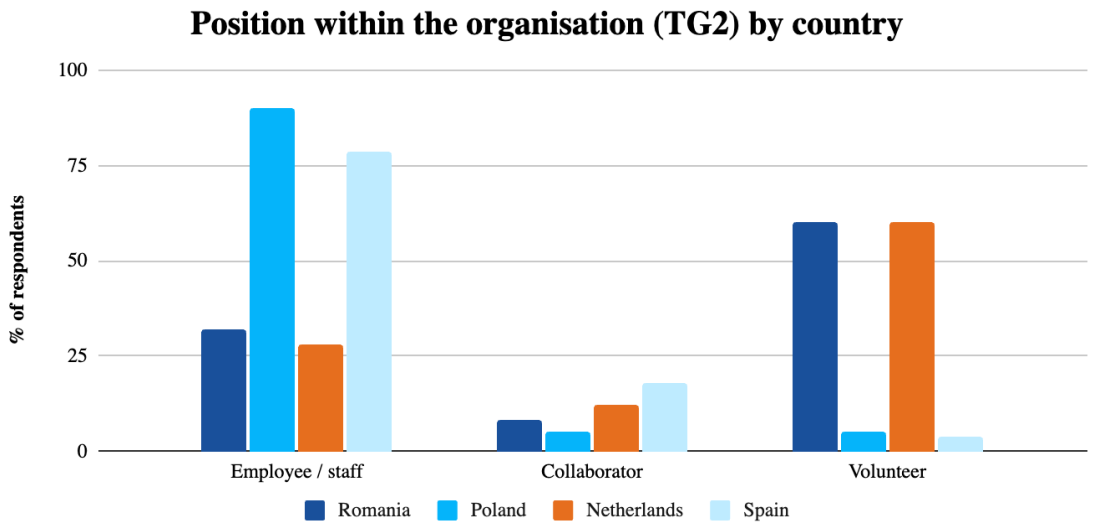
a. Position within the organisation

Leadership is not exclusively professionalised. In Romania (60.0%) and the Netherlands (60.0%) most leaders are volunteers, whereas Poland (90.0%) and Spain (78.6%) rely on employed leaders. Where leadership is voluntary, positive and supportive practices, role clarity, supervision, workload boundaries and recognition have to be designed for unpaid coordinators and board members, not only for paid staff.

Table VII.7. Target group 2 - position within the organisation

Position	Romania	Poland	Netherlands	Spain	Partnership
Employee / staff	32.0% (8)	90.0% (18)	28.0% (7)	78.6% (22)	56.1% (55)
Collaborator	8.0% (2)	5.0% (1)	12.0% (3)	17.9% (5)	11.2% (11)
Volunteer	60.0% (15)	5.0% (1)	60.0% (15)	3.6% (1)	32.7% (32)

Chart VII.7. Target group 2 - position within the organisation



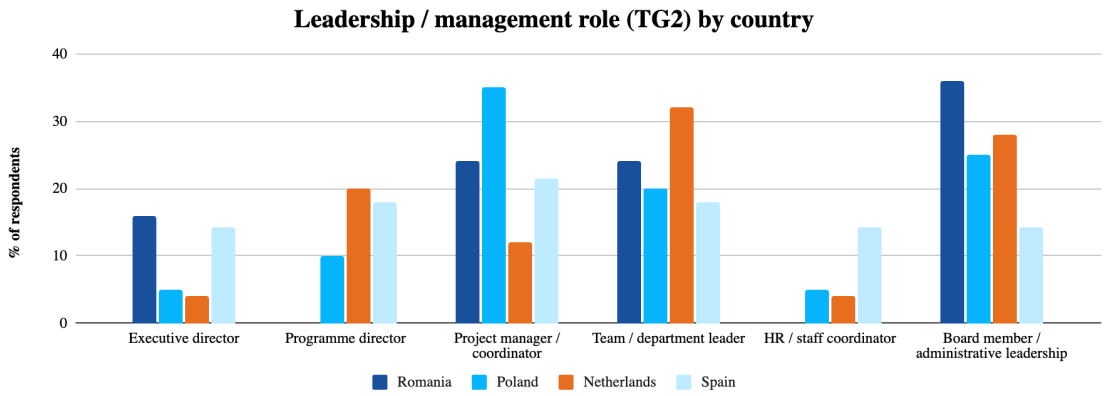
b. Current leadership or management role in the organisation

The leadership samples combine governance-level roles (board / administrative leadership, executive and programme directors) with operational roles (project managers, team leaders). Board and administrative roles are most frequent in Romania; project coordination leads in Poland and Spain; and the Dutch sample is weighted towards team-level and board roles. A notable common feature is the near-absence of dedicated HR / staff-coordinator roles (none in Romania, one each in Poland and the Netherlands, four in Spain), suggesting that human-resource responsibilities - including staff wellbeing and supervision - are usually distributed across other roles rather than held by a specialist.

Table VII.8. Target group 2 - current leadership or management role

Leadership / management role	Romania	Poland	Netherlands	Spain
Executive director	16.0% (4)	5.0% (1)	4.0% (1)	14.3% (4)
Programme director	0.0% (0)	10.0% (2)	20.0% (5)	17.9% (5)
Project manager / coordinator	24.0% (6)	35.0% (7)	12.0% (3)	21.4% (6)
Team / department leader	24.0% (6)	20.0% (4)	32.0% (8)	17.9% (5)
HR / staff coordinator	0.0% (0)	5.0% (1)	4.0% (1)	14.3% (4)
Board member / administrative leadership	36.0% (9)	25.0% (5)	28.0% (7)	14.3% (4)

Chart VII.8. Target group 2 - current leadership or management role



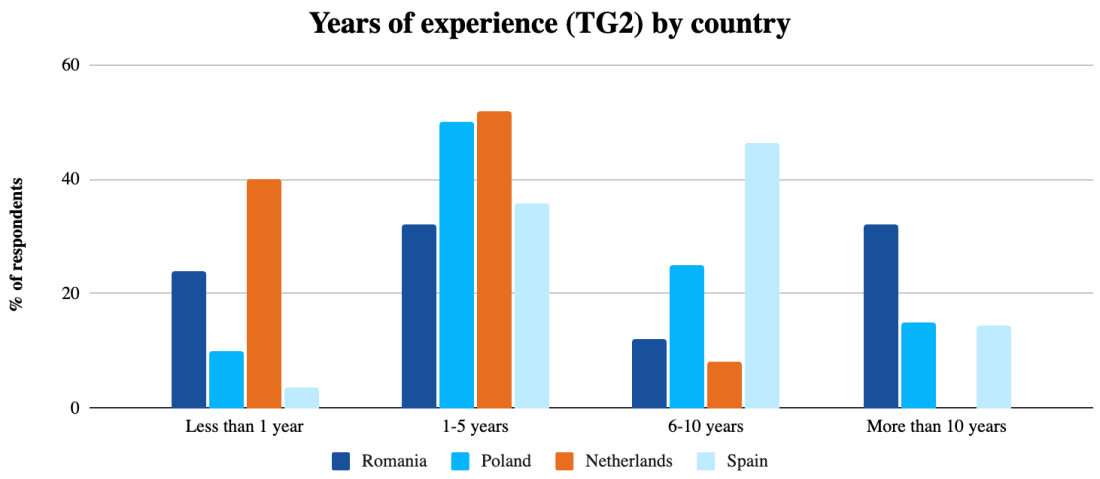
c. Years of experience in a management / coordination position

Leadership experience is mixed. Spain has the most seasoned leaders (60.7% with six or more years), and Romania combines very experienced leaders with a large early-leadership segment (24% with less than one year). Poland and the Netherlands lean towards newer leaders. Early-leadership cohorts are valuable because newer leaders are often more aware of gaps in systems and supervision.

Table VII.9. Target group 2 - experience in management or coordination

Experience	Romania	Poland	Netherlands	Spain	Partnership
Less than 1 year	24.0% (6)	10.0% (2)	40.0% (10)	3.6% (1)	19.4% (19)
1-5 years	32.0% (8)	50.0% (10)	52.0% (13)	35.7% (10)	41.8% (41)
6-10 years	12.0% (3)	25.0% (5)	8.0% (2)	46.4% (13)	23.5% (23)
More than 10 years	32.0% (8)	15.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	14.3% (4)	15.3% (15)

Chart VII.9. Target group 2 - experience in management or coordination



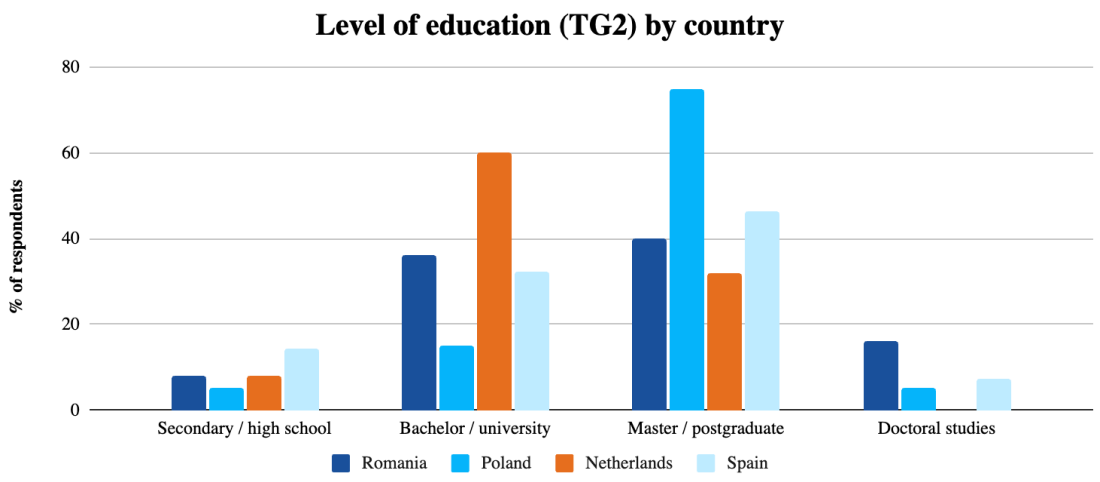
d. Level of education

Leaders are highly educated: across the partnership about 91% hold a tertiary qualification and master-level study is the most common category, peaking in Poland (75.0%). This educational capital supports the relevance of leaders' assessments of organisational systems and development needs.

Table VII.10. Target group 2 - level of education

Education	Romania	Poland	Netherlands	Spain	Partnership
Secondary / high school	8.0% (2)	5.0% (1)	8.0% (2)	14.3% (4)	9.2% (9)
Bachelor / university	36.0% (9)	15.0% (3)	60.0% (15)	32.1% (9)	36.7% (36)
Master / postgraduate	40.0% (10)	75.0% (15)	32.0% (8)	46.4% (13)	46.9% (46)
Doctoral studies	16.0% (4)	5.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	7.1% (2)	7.1% (7)

Chart VII.10. Target group 2 - level of education



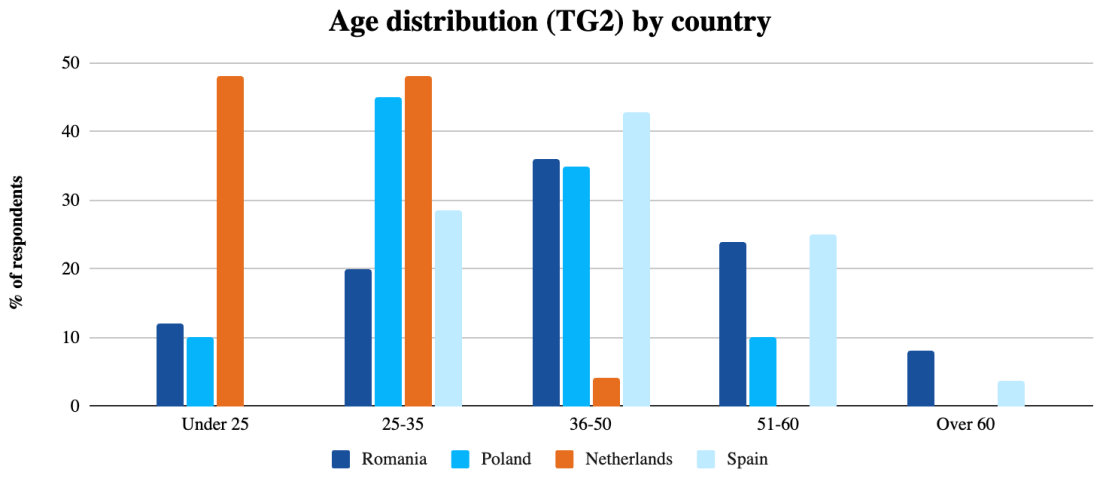
e. Age

Leaders are, on balance, older than practitioners, but the spread is wide. Romania and Spain concentrate in the 36-50 and 51-60 bands; Poland and the Netherlands have younger leadership cohorts (the Dutch leadership sample is split evenly between under-25 and 25-35). Across the partnership, leaders cluster in the 25-50 range.

Table VII.11. Target group 2 - age distribution

Age band	Romania	Poland	Netherlands	Spain	Partnership
Under 25	12.0% (3)	10.0% (2)	48.0% (12)	0.0% (0)	17.3% (17)
25-35	20.0% (5)	45.0% (9)	48.0% (12)	28.6% (8)	34.7% (34)
36-50	36.0% (9)	35.0% (7)	4.0% (1)	42.9% (12)	29.6% (29)
51-60	24.0% (6)	10.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	25.0% (7)	15.3% (15)
Over 60	8.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3.6% (1)	3.1% (3)

Chart VII.11. Target group 2 - age distribution



The leadership sample provides the governance- and management-side view of readiness. It is experienced enough to be credible and educated enough to reflect on organisational systems, yet two structural features stand out across the partnership: a heavy reliance on voluntary

leadership in half the countries, and the near-absence of dedicated HR or staff-coordination functions. Both features make it less likely that practitioner wellbeing, supervision and burnout prevention are handled systematically rather than informally. This sets up the central tension explored in Section VIII: leaders across the partnership strongly value positive and supportive organisations, but do not uniformly experience their own organisations as fully prepared.

Taken together, Sections VI and VII show that the partnership captured perceptions from people embedded in organisations with substantial youth-related activity and, in most countries, considerable organisational maturity. Yet the respondent profile reveals strong volunteer components (Romania, the Netherlands), young early-career cohorts (Poland, the Netherlands) and the absence of specialised HR functions almost everywhere. Even where organisations are institutionally mature, the people delivering youth work depend heavily on relational, motivational and wellbeing-oriented support. Readiness, in other words, is not a completed achievement but an uneven and promising foundation - which is precisely what the indicator analysis in Section VIII sets out to measure.

Section VIII: Key findings - quantitative results and qualitative insights

This section synthesises the quantitative results of the four national studies across the five indicators, together with the qualitative insights drawn from interviews and focus groups. For each of the 17 organisational capacities, respondents rated both the importance of the capacity (Q13, 1-5) and its current level of implementation in their own organisation (Q14, 1-5). On both scales, 5 represents the most positive rating (very important for Q13; the highest current level for Q14). The difference between the two - the importance-implementation gap - is the central analytical measure: a large gap marks a capability that is widely valued but not yet matched by organisational practice.

A second methodological point concerns the perception gap between practitioners (TG1) and leaders/managers (TG2). This gap is real in every country, but its direction is not uniform. In Romania, practitioners consistently rate current implementation higher than leaders, so leaders appear more aware of structural limitations. In Spain the pattern reverses: practitioners rate current implementation lower than leaders on every indicator, so practitioners are the more critical group. Poland shows a mixed picture, while the Dutch report works mainly with overall figures. A single combined figure should always be read with this divergence in mind.

Cross-indicator overview

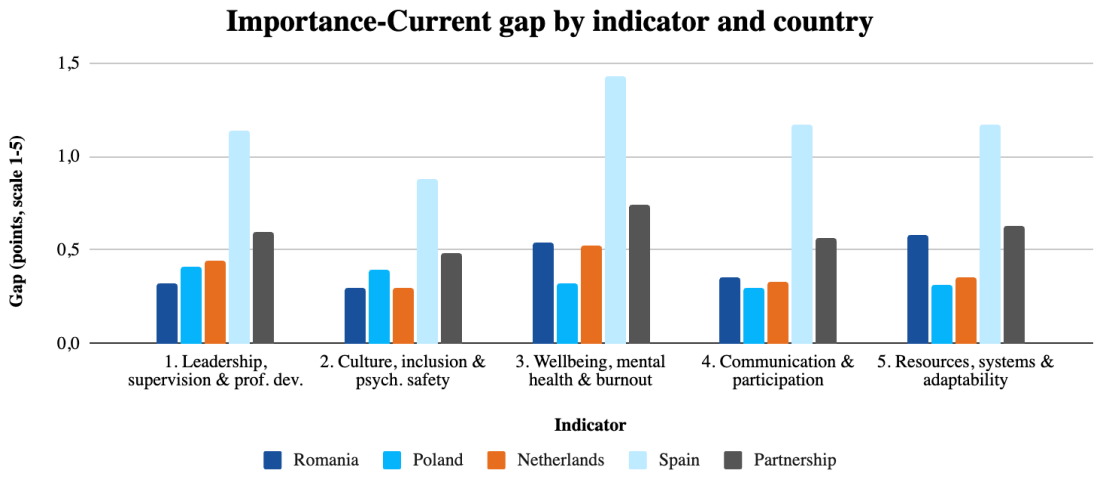
Across all four countries and both target groups, importance exceeds current implementation on every indicator without exception, confirming the partnership-wide finding that organisational intention is stronger than organisational infrastructure. Two patterns are strikingly consistent. Indicator 2 (organisational culture, inclusion and psychological safety) records the highest current level in every country, and Indicator 3 (wellbeing, mental health and burnout prevention) records the lowest current level in every country. Culture is the partnership's relative strength; wellbeing is its weakest point. Indicators 4 and 5 sit in between, with participation in decision-making and feedback-to-action emerging as the specific structural weak spots.

Table VIII.1. Cross-indicator results by country (importance / current level (gap))

Indicator	Romania	Poland	Netherlands	Spain	Partnership
1. Leadership, supervision & professional development	4.54 / 4.22 (0.32)	3.93 / 3.52 (0.41)	4.41 / 3.96 (0.44)	4.58 / 3.45 (1.14)	4.39 / 3.79 (0.60)
2. Organisational culture, inclusion & psychological safety	4.60 / 4.30 (0.30)	4.15 / 3.76 (0.39)	4.56 / 4.26 (0.30)	4.76 / 3.88 (0.88)	4.54 / 4.06 (0.48)
3. Wellbeing, mental health & burnout prevention	4.54 / 4.00 (0.54)	3.67 / 3.35 (0.32)	4.17 / 3.65 (0.52)	4.74 / 3.30 (1.43)	4.32 / 3.58 (0.74)
4. Communication, participation &	4.62 / 4.27 (0.35)	4.00 / 3.70 (0.30)	4.52 / 4.19 (0.33)	4.73 / 3.56 (1.17)	4.50 / 3.93 (0.56)

interpersonal support					
5. Organisational resources, systems & adaptability	4.65 / 4.07 (0.58)	3.93 / 3.62 (0.31)	4.32 / 3.98 (0.35)	4.77 / 3.60 (1.17)	4.45 / 3.82 (0.63)

Chart VIII.1. Cross-indicator results by country (gap)



Within each country, the smallest indicator gap is found for organisational culture (Indicator 2) in Romania, the Netherlands and Spain, and for communication (Indicator 4) in Poland. The largest gap falls on wellbeing (Indicator 3) in the Netherlands and Spain, on resources and systems (Indicator 5) in Romania, and - in Poland, where gaps are uniformly small - on leadership (Indicator 1). The recurring message is that the partnership knows what a supportive organisation requires, but has not yet built the systems, wellbeing infrastructure and participatory routines to deliver it consistently.

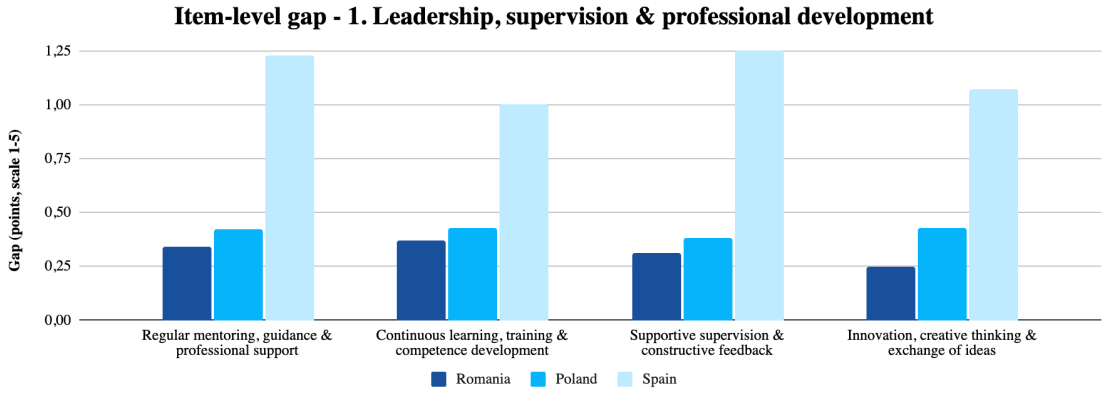
Table VIII.2. Implementation gaps at item level (importance minus current level)

Capability (sub-item)	Romania	Poland	Netherlands	Spain
Indicator 1: Leadership, supervision & professional development				
Regular mentoring, guidance & professional support	0.34	0.42	n/r	1.23
Continuous learning, training & competence development	0.37	0.43	n/r	1.00
Supportive supervision & constructive feedback	0.31	0.38	n/r	1.25
Innovation, creative thinking & exchange of ideas	0.25	0.43	n/r	1.07
Indicator 2: Organisational culture, inclusion & psychological safety				

Safe, inclusive & respectful work environment	0.29	0.38	n/r	0.75
Inclusion, anti-discrimination & equal-opportunity practices	0.31	0.36	n/r	0.81
Organisational stability, psychological safety & secure climate	0.31	0.45	n/r	1.09
Indicator 3: Wellbeing, mental health & burnout prevention				
Emotional & practical support in difficult / high-stress situations	0.42	0.26	n/r	1.35
Fair & realistic workload distribution to prevent burnout	0.67	0.36	n/r	1.40
Access to mental-health resources & wellbeing support services	0.53	0.33	n/r	1.54
Indicator 4: Communication, participation & interpersonal support				
Clear, consistent & transparent communication	0.23	0.36	n/r	1.04
Collaboration, teamwork & support between colleagues	0.25	0.48	n/r	1.18
Solid interpersonal support systems & team cohesion	0.33	0.10	n/r	1.26
Practitioner involvement in relevant decision-making	0.59	0.26	n/r	1.19
Indicator 5: Organisational resources, systems & adaptability				
Allocation of necessary resources: time, tools & space	0.55	0.26	n/r	1.09
Evaluation, reflection & adaptation based on staff feedback	0.60	0.33	n/r	1.12
Recognition & celebration of practitioners' work & contributions	0.59	0.36	n/r	1.30

Because Spain pairs very high importance with low current levels, its item gaps dominate any raw ranking of largest gaps; the more informative cross-country signal is therefore which items are weakest **within** each country.

Indicator 1: Leadership, Supervision and Professional Development



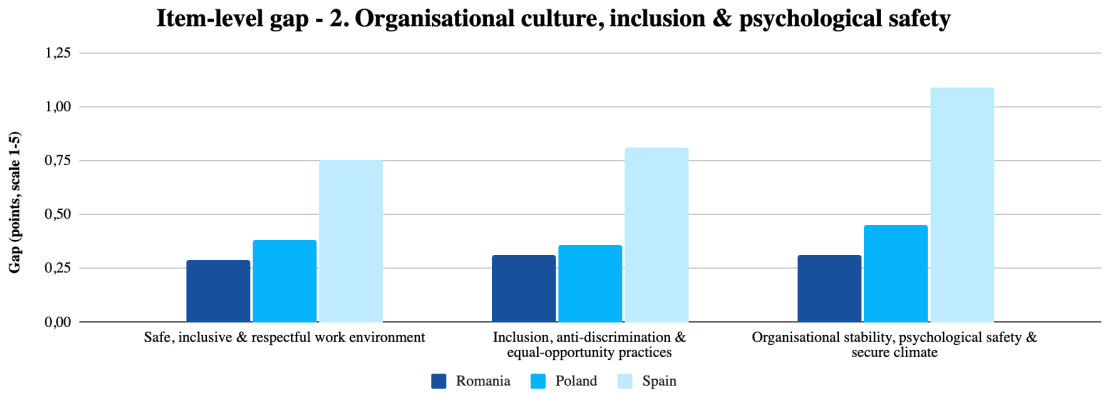
Leadership, supervision and professional development are valued highly everywhere (importance 4.4-4.6 in Romania, the Netherlands and Spain; lower in Poland's scale at 3.9). Current capacity is consistently rated below importance. The gap is moderate in Romania (0.32), Poland (0.41) and the Netherlands (0.44) but very large in Spain (1.14), where supervision and feedback in particular are perceived as underdeveloped. At item level, supervision and mentoring are the weak points across most of the partnership: supportive supervision shows the largest Indicator 1 gap in Spain (1.25), regular mentoring is the lowest current item in the Netherlands (3.67), while innovation and the exchange of ideas are the relative strength everywhere (Romania's smallest gap, 0.25; the Netherlands' strongest current item, 4.22). The consistency of this pattern across four independent national samples points to a structural rather than a local explanation: mentoring and supervision require sustained, dedicated one-to-one time, whereas exchanging ideas can happen informally within existing group settings and needs little dedicated resourcing.

The qualitative material reframes this as a question of systems rather than goodwill. Across countries, supportive leadership clearly exists, but it tends to rely on individual leaders rather than on embedded structures: supervision, mentoring and professional-development pathways are described as informal, uneven or project-dependent. Polish participants valued accessible, responsive leadership ("We have never felt unheard by him") yet asked for consistent feedback on every task; Dutch and Spanish reports stress that continuity is fragile in volunteer-based or changing-board organisations. The shared implication is to move from occasional support towards stable, planned mentoring, supervision and learning structures - for volunteers as well as paid staff. Two further qualitative threads deepen this picture. In Poland, leaders described adapting responsibilities and learning opportunities to individual strengths and interests rather than applying a standard approach - development as relationship-based and personalised - but this closeness came with a trade-off: several respondents pointed to a tension between the autonomy and trust staff valued and the structured guidance they did not always receive, a risk several felt would grow as organisations expanded. The Dutch material adds that support needs to be structurally embedded rather than informal or occasional, with a specific call to

improve handover processes so that mentoring, task division and professional support survive a change of leader rather than resetting each time someone new takes over. In Spain, the national report frames the whole indicator as a strategic organisational capacity rather than a personnel matter: strengthening it is expected to support competence, but also wellbeing, motivation, staff retention and long-term sustainability.

The practitioner-leader comparison follows a broadly consistent direction with one clear exception. In Romania, practitioners rate current leadership support somewhat more positively than leaders and managers do, who report the larger importance-implementation gap - read as leaders being more conscious of unmet structural need than practitioners are from their day-to-day vantage point. Poland shows the same direction in concrete numbers: practitioners score 3.77/3.41 (gap 0.36) against leaders' 4.10/3.63 (gap 0.47), with mentoring driving the leader-side shortfall (0.53, the largest single figure in Poland's Indicator 1). Spain breaks this pattern: practitioners' current rating (2.97) sits nearly a full point below leaders' (3.95) - practitioners feel the sharpest shortfall in supervision, feedback and mentoring specifically, while leaders' own largest gap is different again, continuous learning and training (0.86), with mentoring their own lowest-rated current item (3.86). The two Spanish groups nonetheless agree on urgency: leadership and management development is among the highest-rated external-support needs for both (practitioners 4.59, leaders 4.61 out of 5), and practitioners rank it their own single top priority for outside help (mean rank 2.28, ten respondents placing it first), while leaders lean slightly more towards organisational-development support instead.

Indicator 2: Organisational Culture, Inclusion and Psychological Safety



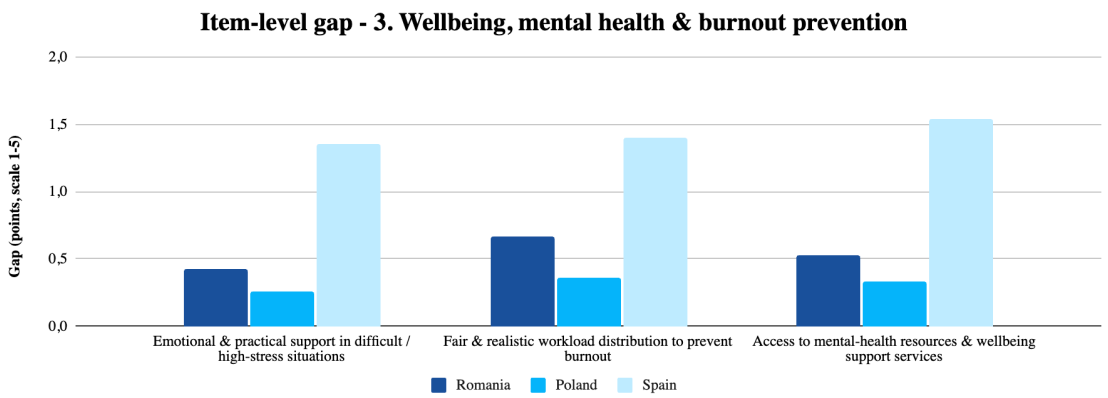
Organisational culture is the partnership's relative strength: it records the highest current level in every country and the smallest gap in three of the four (Romania 0.30; the Netherlands 0.30; Spain 0.88, its own smallest; Poland 0.39). A safe, inclusive and respectful working environment is experienced most strongly, while the more systemic dimensions - organisational stability and psychological safety, and formal inclusion/anti-discrimination practices - lag behind. Psychological safety is the soft spot within an otherwise strong area: it carries the largest within-indicator gap in Poland (0.45) and Spain (1.09). In Romania two items are tied for the largest gap, both at 0.31: inclusion/anti-discrimination practices, and organisational stability, psychological safety and secure climate.

The qualitative findings in every country point in a similar direction, though the sharpest illustrations come from specific countries. The Polish interviews put it most directly ("We are

simply open to everyone"; "there is a high level of trust in the organisation, which translates into psychological safety"), describing inclusion as a practical habit of adapting organisational processes to individual needs rather than a formal principle - though the same respondents noted that dispersed or partly remote teams found this harder to sustain, with limited face-to-face contact occasionally creating friction without undermining the overall sense of an inclusive culture. Belonging, in the same Polish material, was tied less to formal policy than to feeling that one's contribution matters ("It's the feeling that people are needed, that they are important, that they are doing something meaningful"). Romanian leaders and managers echo the same theme in more concrete terms: they connect culture and inclusion to specific practices - transparent decisions, feedback routines, accessible environments, safe spaces for discussing stress or conflict - rather than treating them as abstract values, seeing the task ahead as turning what already exists informally into explicit organisational practice.

The practitioner-leader comparison adds a third dimension in Romania beyond the two already noted: for inclusion and anti-discrimination practices, practitioners again rate current implementation higher than leaders (4.37 versus 4.04) - a pattern the national report reads not as a warning sign but as organisational self-awareness, since it reverses the common assumption that leaders would rate culture more positively than the people below them. Poland's two groups locate the strain differently rather than disagreeing on its existence: practitioners' largest remaining gap is the safe, respectful environment itself (0.41), ahead of stability and psychological safety (0.36) and anti-discrimination practice (0.27); leaders reverse that order, with stability and psychological safety their largest gap (0.55), followed by anti-discrimination (0.45) and the safe environment (0.35). Spain's leaders rate their two strongest current items - a safe, respectful environment and inclusive practices - identically at 4.32, and their qualitative comments reveal a further split by role: leaders tend to see belonging as a matter of cohesion and support for organisational decisions, while practitioners and middle managers tie it instead to transparency, participation, recognition and fair treatment - two different routes to the same goal. Even so, both Spanish groups rank organisational culture and inclusion as a high external-support priority (4.31 practitioners, 4.79 leaders out of 5), and leaders place it among their very top priorities (mean rank 2.18, twelve respondents ranking it first) despite already recording the partnership's strongest current scores here.

Indicator 3: Wellbeing, Mental Health and Burnout Prevention



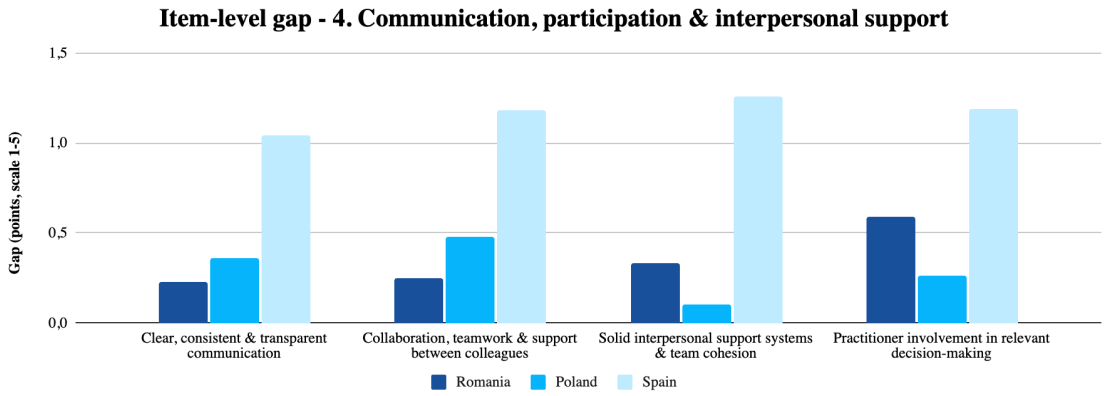
Wellbeing is the clearest shared weakness in the partnership: it records the lowest current level in all four countries (Romania 4.00; Poland 3.35; the Netherlands 3.65; Spain 3.30) and the largest indicator gap in the Netherlands (0.52) and Spain (1.43). The single most acute capability problems recur across countries: fair and realistic workload distribution to prevent burnout (the largest item gap in Romania, 0.67, and very high in Spain, 1.40) and access to mental-health resources and wellbeing support services (the lowest current item in the Netherlands and in Spain, and Spain's single largest gap at 1.54). Romania and Spain show that organisations are better at offering informal, relational support in stressful moments than at providing systematic wellbeing infrastructure.

The practitioner-leader divide recurs across all three dimensions of this indicator, not only on access to mental-health resources. In Romania, leaders rate current wellbeing capacity lower than practitioners on every sub-item, which the national report reads as leaders being more aware of gaps in workload planning and burnout prevention that practitioners' day-to-day informal support can obscure. In Spain, leaders' own largest remaining gap is different from practitioners' - emotional and practical support in difficult situations (0.82) rather than mental-health access - even though they rate current implementation more positively overall than practitioners do; both groups agree the difficulty lies less in recognising wellbeing's importance, which practitioners rate extremely highly, than in translating that recognition into consistent practice. In Poland, the split between roles is wide (practitioners' gap 0.41 against leaders' 0.22), and access to mental-health resources is practitioners' single lowest-rated item anywhere in the Polish dataset (current 3.09) - concentrating the shortfall exactly where respondents say it matters most, and prompting the Polish focus group's bluntest comment in the whole study: "Almost all of our staff are at the point of a minor breakdown." And in Spain, where the gap is largest of all, leaders' own proposed response is the most comprehensive in the partnership - psychosocial-risk assessment, protected reflection time, workload review, dedicated space for supervision, external psychological support - itself a sign that leaders recognise informal goodwill has already been stretched past what it can absorb.

Across the partnership, respondents call for the same concrete mechanisms: workload monitoring, recovery periods after intensive work, wellbeing check-ins, confidential support and access to professional mental-health resources - wellbeing treated as an organisational responsibility, not an individual one. Two further nuances qualify the numbers. In Romania, workload is framed explicitly as a management and planning problem rather than a matter of individual resilience. Respondents called for realistic planning, limits on overtime, fairer distribution of work and real breaks during intense periods. In Poland, the picture is not uniformly bleak: some organisations already build recovery into their rhythm ("After intensive periods, we know that time for regeneration is necessary"), but this coexists with organisations where commitment to the mission blurs the line between work and personal life to the point of exhaustion. In the Netherlands, access to mental-health resources is not only the weakest item within this indicator - at 3.30, it is the single weakest-rated item anywhere in the entire Dutch survey, across all five indicators - which the focus group traced to structure rather than attitude: support currently depends on whichever leader or team happens to notice a problem, not on a system that would catch it regardless of who is watching. Romania's qualitative record adds a warning of its own: participants cautioned against organisations defaulting to toxic

positivity, asking instead for a culture where stress can be named honestly rather than absorbed quietly until it surfaces as burnout.

Indicator 4: Communication, Participation and Interpersonal Support



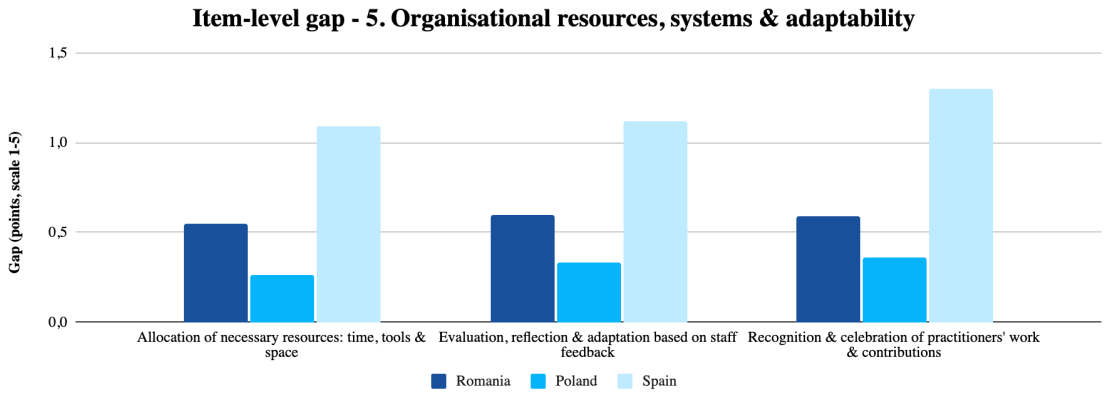
Everyday relational practice is a comparative strength: clear communication and collaboration between colleagues are among the best-rated capabilities in every country, with small gaps (Romania 0.23-0.25; the Netherlands and Poland similar). The weakness is concentrated in one place - practitioner involvement in relevant decision-making, which carries the largest Indicator 4 gap in Romania (0.59) and the lowest current item in the Netherlands (4.11), and is rated low in Spain (gap 1.19). Communication as information flow works; participation as shared influence does not yet.

The practitioner-leader comparison in Romania mirrors Indicator 1: practitioners rate current practice more positively than leaders across all four dimensions, most visibly for interpersonal support and decision-making involvement, suggesting leaders are more conscious of the absence of formal systems behind what practitioners experience as day-to-day support. Their own written comments are specific about the fix: regular, anonymous feedback routines and clearer role definitions, not simply more meetings - evidence that the shortfall is the absence of a defined channel rather than any unwillingness to listen. Poland's leaders locate their concern in collaboration and peer support (gap 0.55) ahead of communication (0.50), with smaller but still real gaps in decision-making (0.30) and interpersonal support (0.25); tellingly, team cohesion is the one item anywhere in the Polish dataset where practitioners' current rating (3.77) exceeds its own importance (3.73) - solidarity between colleagues currently doing work that organisational structure should share. Dutch practitioners asked for something specific rather than general: visibility into board-level discussions and decisions, not additional team meetings, suggesting the gap is about access to decisions already being made rather than a shortage of dialogue. Spain's practitioners report their two largest gaps in collaboration/teamwork and interpersonal support/team cohesion, both 1.76 points - a wider shortfall than decision-making itself - while leaders' strongest current scores are communication (4.18) and collaboration (4.11); despite that relative strength, both Spanish groups rate external support for participatory structures highly (practitioners 4.45, leaders 4.64), and leaders rank it a firmer priority than practitioners do (mean rank 2.36 with ten

respondents placing it first, against practitioners' 3.21 with two) - even leaders' own largest remaining gap here is practitioner involvement in decisions (0.82), so both sides flag the same weakness independently.

Qualitatively, respondents across countries ask for the same move from informal conversation to structured routine: regular and anonymous feedback meetings, team reflection, clearer roles and responsibilities, and genuine involvement of staff and volunteers in decisions that affect their work. The Polish material states this most bluntly ("Communication is the key to everything"; "people involved in activities should have a real influence on decisions"), and frames peer support specifically as a protective factor during periods of high workload. Even as larger or rapidly growing Polish organisations reported that remote working and unclear responsibilities occasionally undid this solidarity through misunderstandings. Romanian respondents extend interpersonal support beyond the organisation itself, describing peer networks and communities of practice as part of a wider relational ecosystem that sustains practitioners. In Spain, the same focus group that raised participation also surfaced a live disagreement about how to strengthen it: some participants favoured external conflict-mediation support to increase perceived impartiality, while leaders preferred to strengthen existing internal procedures instead - a genuine difference in how to fix a shortfall that, for now, still depends on ordinary solidarity between colleagues. The Dutch material adds its own texture to the same shift: participants said simply "talking in general" about both positive and difficult experiences is what makes people feel connected, valued and less isolated, and described current practice as running mostly through meetings, WhatsApp groups, email updates, brainstorming sessions and informal conversation, with online formats such as show-and-tell sessions suggested to keep remote or hybrid teams connected emotionally. The Dutch report's own conclusion states the tension this paragraph opened with directly: communication works well relationally, but still needs to be "supported by clear systems" rather than happening only casually.

Indicator 5: Organisational Resources, Systems and Adaptability



Systemic capacity shows the largest gap in Romania (0.58) and a very large gap in Spain (1.17), while remaining moderate in the Netherlands (0.35) and Poland (0.31). The recurring weak points are evaluation, reflection and adaptation based on staff feedback (Romania's largest item gap, 0.60) and allocation of time, tools and space (0.55 in Romania, 1.09 in Spain). Recognition of practitioners' contributions is valued most highly of all Indicator 5 items, yet it

remains the one most often described as occasional rather than systematic (Spain's gap 1.30; a notable practitioner-leader divergence in Romania, 4.26 versus 3.96).

The qualitative theme is that resources are experienced as time, tools and organisational space - not only money - and that feedback becomes valuable only when it produces visible change. Across countries, structural conditions set the ceiling: project-based financing, funding insecurity, thin staffing and dependence on a few key individuals - named most starkly in Poland ("it is difficult to maintain a stable team of professionals when you do not know in February whether there will be funding in May"). The shared recommendation is to move from project-by-project functioning towards stable, learning-oriented systems with real feedback cycles, monitoring and visible recognition. Two further nuances qualify this picture. In Poland, several respondents described organisational learning as a matter of degree rather than presence or absence: newer organisations in particular reported being in the process of building internal systems and support mechanisms without yet having them fully established, while still showing a clear awareness of what is needed and a willingness to invest over time. In the Netherlands, participants were specific about what adaptability should look like in practice over the next two years: clearer structures, more people, stronger funding, regular check-ins and codes of conduct.

Recognition is where the practitioner-leader gap is sharpest in more than one country. Romania's practitioners and leaders actually agree on two of the three capabilities - current resource allocation (4.19 versus 3.96) and current evaluation and feedback practice (4.07 versus 3.96) are rated similarly by both - and diverge specifically on recognition (4.26 versus 3.96), suggesting the other two are experienced consistently across roles even though none yet meets its own stated importance. In Spain, practitioners' own recognition gap reaches 1.41 points - even larger than the partnership-wide figure suggests - and leaders, despite rating all three capacities more positively overall, still name feedback-based assessment and adaptation as their own largest remaining gap (0.89), converging with practitioners on which capability needs the most work even as they disagree on how far it has already improved. Poland's two groups locate the strain differently again: practitioners' largest gap is evaluation and adaptation based on feedback (0.27), while leaders' is recognition itself (0.50) - the reverse emphasis from Spain, but the same underlying message that formal recognition and feedback loops lag behind informal practice. Despite this, Poland's practitioners and leaders largely agree on where the country stands overall, a sign of a shared, realistic read on conditions rather than two disconnected perspectives, and both converge on funding insecurity as the constraint that concentrates responsibility in too few people; the Polish report's own conclusion is blunt that strengthening this one indicator would have knock-on benefits for wellbeing and leadership too, since much of what looks like a problem elsewhere in the data traces back to resource instability here. Dutch practitioners named their constraints just as plainly - budget, tools, the fact that many combine youth work with another job or study and asked for specific mechanisms rather than more money in the abstract: anonymous feedback tools, consistent follow-up, clearer task division. And in Spain, leaders single out organisational-development support as their own top priority for external help, ranked ahead of every other type of assistance offered in the survey - a rare case of leadership naming its own blind spot unprompted, rather than practitioners naming it for them.

Organisational support needs (Q15 and Q16)

Alongside the indicators, respondents rated how much external support their organisation needs in five areas (Q15, 1-5) and ranked those areas by priority (Q16, where a lower mean rank means a higher priority). The data are available for Romania, Spain and the Netherlands; the Polish report did not present an equivalent Q15/Q16 analysis. Two findings are consistent: leadership and management development is a top-ranked support need (ranked first in Romania, first among Spanish practitioners, and the most-needed area in the Dutch Q15), and wellbeing and mental-health systems show high need everywhere they are measured. For Spanish leaders, organisational development and sustainability is the single highest priority (mean rank 1.79).

Table VIII.3. Organisational support needs - Q15 need intensity (1-5) and Q16 mean rank (lower = higher priority)

Support area	Romania	Poland	Netherlands	Spain
Leadership & management development	need 4.21; rank 1.90	not reported	Q15 need 3.04 (most needed)	need 4.60; rank 2.28 / 2.71 (TG1/TG2)
Organisational culture & inclusion	need 3.96; rank 2.69	not reported	rank 2.33 (best rank)	need 4.55; rank 2.83 / 2.18
Wellbeing & mental-health support systems	need 4.17; rank 2.52	not reported	not reported	need 4.60; rank 2.86 / 2.32
Participatory structures & communities of practice	need 4.00; rank 3.00	not reported	rank 2.52	need 4.54; rank 3.21 / 2.36
Organisational development & sustainability	need 4.17; rank 2.94	not reported	need 2.85; rank 2.81	need 4.61; rank 2.83 / 1.79

The priority profile mirrors the indicator findings. Romania and Spain place wellbeing systems and leadership development at the top, while Spanish leaders add organisational sustainability as their first priority - consistent with Spain's very large resource and wellbeing gaps. The Dutch profile is flatter but still ranks organisational culture highly (its strongest area) and identifies leadership development as the most-needed form of external support.

Synthesis of Section VIII

Read across the four countries, the quantitative and qualitative evidence converges on a single diagnosis: the partnership is rich in values but uneven in infrastructure. Importance is high everywhere; current implementation always trails it; and the shape of the shortfall is remarkably consistent. Organisational culture and everyday communication are the relative strengths, while wellbeing and burnout prevention, participation in decision-making, feedback-to-action and recognition are the recurring weak points - the dimensions that depend on systems rather than on goodwill. National scales differ (Poland lower, Spain pairing high importance with low current), and the practitioner-leader gap runs in opposite directions in Romania and Spain, but these differences sit on top of the same underlying pattern. Section IX translates this diagnosis into conclusions and recommendations for the partnership.

Section IX: General conclusions and recommendations

This section draws the four national studies together into a single set of transnational conclusions and recommendations. It integrates all evidence streams - 203 questionnaire responses, 12 interviews and 4 focus groups - with the indicator analysis of Section VIII. The striking feature of the national reports is how closely their conclusions converge: despite different scales, sample profiles and ecosystems, Poland, Romania, Spain and the Netherlands arrive at essentially the same diagnosis. The matrix below summarises that convergence before the conclusions and recommendations are stated.

Table IX.1. Convergence of the national conclusions

Shared conclusion	Romania	Poland	Netherlands	Spain
Intention outruns infrastructure	✓	✓	✓	✓
Culture is the shared strength	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wellbeing is the shared weakness	✓	✓	✓	✓
Leadership is supportive but personal rather than systematic	✓	✓	✓	✓
Communication works; shared decision-making does not	✓	X	✓	✓
Listening is not yet translated into change	✓	-	✓	✓
Solidarity carries load that systems should share	✓	✓	✓	✓
Structural conditions set the ceiling	✓	✓	✓	✓
Practitioner-leader gap is real but not uniform in direction	leaders lower	mixed	-	practitioners lower

Read down the columns, the agreement is almost complete. Three rows carry a qualification: the practitioner-leader perception gap, which runs in opposite directions in Romania and Spain; the feedback-to-action conclusion, which the Polish report does not state explicitly; and communication versus participation, where Poland's own report describes both as strengths rather than drawing the same contrast the other three countries make. Everything else is shared partnership-wide.

a. Conclusions (what we learned)

Conclusion 1 - Intention outruns infrastructure. Across all four countries every indicator is rated more important than it is currently implemented. Organisations understand what a positive and supportive environment requires; the shortfall lies in systems, not in values.

Conclusion 2 - Culture is the shared strength. Organisational culture, inclusion and psychological safety record the highest current level in every country and the smallest implementation gap in most. Respondents experience a genuine climate of respect and belonging. The qualifier is that psychological safety and formal inclusion / anti-discrimination practices are the soft spot within this otherwise strong area, becoming fragile under pressure.

Conclusion 3 - Wellbeing is the shared weakness. Wellbeing, mental health and burnout prevention record the lowest current level in every country and the most urgent development need. Fair workload distribution and access to mental-health resources are the most acute problems; support tends to be reactive rather than preventive, and relational rather than systematic.

Conclusion 4 - Leadership is supportive but personal rather than systematic. Supportive leadership clearly exists across the partnership, but it depends on individual leaders rather than embedded structures. Supervision, mentoring and professional-development pathways are described as informal, uneven or project-dependent, and continuity is fragile in volunteer-based, young or changing-board organisations.

Conclusion 5 - Communication works; shared decision-making does not yet. Clear communication and teamwork are consistent strengths, but practitioner involvement in decisions that affect their work is among the largest gaps in the partnership. Voice as information flow is present; voice as influence over governance is not.

Conclusion 6 - Listening is not yet translated into change. Feedback is collected more often than it is acted upon. The distance between consultation and a visible organisational response - the feedback-to-action loop - is a recurring implementation bottleneck in Romania, Spain and the Netherlands.

Conclusion 7 - Solidarity carries load that systems should share. Interpersonal support, empathy and peer help are major protective strengths in every country, but they currently compensate for missing formal systems. This is sustainable only if it is backed by structures rather than relied upon in their place.

Conclusion 8 - Structural conditions set the ceiling. Funding insecurity, project-based financing, thin staffing and dependence on a few key individuals recur across the partnership and limit how far supportive practices can be sustained. Readiness cannot rest on goodwill alone.

Conclusion 9 - The practitioner-leader perception gap is real but not uniform in direction. In Romania, leaders rate current implementation lower than practitioners, appearing more aware of structural limits; in Spain the reverse holds, with practitioners the more critical group; Poland is mixed and the Netherlands works mainly with overall figures. Any single combined figure should be read with this divergence in mind.

b. Recommendations (what should be done)

The recommendations below draw on all four national reports; each recurs in at least three of the four, though the exact framing and emphasis vary by country and are ordered to follow the evidence, beginning with the largest shared gaps. Each is a partnership-level priority; the concrete measures are drawn directly from the national recommendations.

Recommendation 1 - Treat wellbeing and burnout prevention as a strategic, preventive function. This is the largest shared gap in the partnership and the most urgent priority. Wellbeing should be an organisational responsibility, not an individual one, and a preventive function rather than a reaction to crisis.

- regular workload monitoring and realistic planning, with early-warning mechanisms for overload;
- recovery periods after intensive activities and wellbeing check-ins in team meetings;
- access to professional mental-health support and a confidential reference person or wellbeing contact.

Recommendation 2 - Institutionalise supervision, mentoring and reflective practice. Move supportive leadership from individual goodwill to stable, planned structures - for volunteers as well as paid staff.

- protected, regular supervision and reflective-practice sessions (for example, monthly);
- structured onboarding and mentoring pathways, with consistent feedback on tasks;
- particular attention to practitioners exposed to emotionally demanding work.

Recommendation 3 - Invest in supportive leadership development. Leadership behaviour shapes organisational culture, yet many leaders lack formal preparation in people management and wellbeing-oriented development.

- training in supportive and inclusive leadership, emotional intelligence, conflict management and coaching;
- psychosocial-risk awareness and the ability to balance delivery with wellbeing;
- support that reduces dependence on individual leadership style.

Recommendation 4 - Make participation and feedback-to-action a routine. Communication is generally good, but practitioners want genuine influence over decisions, and feedback must visibly lead to change.

- periodic consultation and staff / volunteer representation in decisions;
- feedback rounds before major decisions, with transparency on how input shaped them;
- a visible feedback cycle: collect, analyse, decide, communicate back and monitor.

Recommendation 5 - Formalise psychological safety and inclusive cultures. Turn a strong climate of respect into explicit mechanisms so that safety does not depend on personalities or hold up only in calm periods.

- confidential or anonymous feedback channels and codes of conduct;
- anti-discrimination and conflict-resolution procedures and safeguarding for staff and volunteers;
- regular discussions on inclusion, respect and wellbeing, with visible follow-up when people speak up.

Recommendation 6 - Formalise recognition and appreciation. Recognition is highly valued but usually occasional; making it systematic strengthens motivation and counters the sense that emotional and invisible work is taken for granted.

- structured recognition of individual and team achievements and volunteer contributions;

- acknowledgement of innovation, learning and contributions to team wellbeing;
- recognition that is regular and transparent rather than ad hoc.

Recommendation 7 - Build organisational learning and adaptability. Adaptive organisations are better placed to respond to fast-changing youth needs while sustaining supportive practices.

- monitoring, evaluation and lessons-learned reviews;
- periodic readiness self-assessment and strategic planning informed by staff and volunteer feedback;
- evidence-based organisational decision-making.

Recommendation 8 - Strengthen capacity and align growth with internal sustainability. Many weaknesses are structural; expansion that outpaces internal capacity erodes supportive practice.

- internal systems, succession planning, knowledge management and handover documentation;
- clear roles and task division to reduce key-person dependence;
- alignment of organisational growth with realistic staffing capacity.

Recommendation 9 - Protect support functions in funding, and engage funders. Positive cultures cannot be sustained on goodwill; support functions need to be resourced and recognised beyond the organisation.

- dedicated budget lines for supervision, wellbeing, leadership development, mentoring, organisational learning and mental-health support;
- realistic staffing assumptions in project planning, treating wellbeing as a necessary and eligible cost;
- funders, municipalities and sector partners recognising practitioner wellbeing as part of youth-work quality.

Recommendation 10 - Collaborate and share tools across the sector. No single organisation needs to build everything alone; sector-level cooperation multiplies limited resources.

- networks, communities of practice, peer learning and shared or collaborative supervision;
- jointly developed practical tools - wellbeing-policy templates, burnout-risk tools, supervision and onboarding guides, feedback tools, codes of conduct and good-practice examples.

Overall recommendation

The central conclusion across the partnership is that youth organisations are rich in values but uneven in infrastructure. Positive and supportive cultures already exist, but their sustainability still depends on informal support, personal commitment and goodwill. The decisive strategic

step - common to Poland, Romania, Spain and the Netherlands - is to transform supportive practices from informal behaviours into formal organisational systems, backed by leadership, dedicated resources and sector-level cooperation. Moving from goodwill-based support to system-based support is what will allow these organisations to become, and to remain, genuinely positive and supportive environments for practitioners in youth work.

Section X: Limitations and lessons learned

The findings should be read in the light of several limitations - some shared by all four national studies, and some specific to combining them into a single transnational analysis.

Limitations of the national studies

- Self-reported perceptions: all four studies rely on self-report. Responses reflect how respondents perceive their organisations rather than an external audit, and may be shaped by role, expectations and individual interpretation.
- Point-in-time snapshot: data were collected within a defined period and capture readiness at that moment; organisational cultures, leadership practices and wellbeing systems evolve over time.
- Social desirability: some respondents, especially when assessing their own organisation, may have given more favourable answers; anonymity and confidentiality were emphasised throughout to reduce this risk.
- Exploratory, non-representative samples: the national samples (42-57 respondents) are modest and were not designed to be statistically representative. Participants may have had a particular interest in organisational wellbeing, and in Spain the two groups differed in profile (practitioners concentrated in mature organisations, leaders more varied).
- Recruitment under pressure: reaching participants - leaders especially - was difficult because of workload and busy schedules. In Spain, despite contacting more than 500 organisations, many staff could not take part; the Netherlands extended its data-collection period and found leaders hard to reach. This limitation itself reflects the very pressures the study examines.

Limitations specific to the transnational synthesis

- Different scales: absolute scores are not directly comparable across countries. Polish respondents rated on a markedly lower scale, so the analysis emphasises gaps and patterns rather than raw levels.
- Different aggregation: Romania and Spain reported combined all-respondent means, the Netherlands mainly overall figures, and Poland separately by target group. Poland's combined figures and all partnership figures in this report are sample-size-weighted means computed for comparison and flagged accordingly.
- Uneven reporting granularity: the Netherlands reported typology and fields qualitatively and did not publish item-level gaps; the general readiness item was reported only by Romania; and the Q15/Q16 support-needs analysis was not available for Poland. Missing values are marked "not reported".
- Approximate harmonisation: response categories (age bands, education tiers, roles) were aligned across countries where wording differed, and fields of activity were measured differently (multi-select in Spain, single-select in Poland, rank only in the Netherlands), so cross-country field comparisons are indicative rather than exact.

Strengths and lessons for future work

Despite these limitations, the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, two complementary target groups and four national contexts provides a solid basis for assessing organisational readiness - and the consistency of the patterns across very different ecosystems

strengthens confidence in the core findings. In several countries, including Romania, such an analysis had not been conducted before.

For future studies, the partnership could make the common reporting template set out in the Study no. 2 Methodology even more detailed, or have one partner draft its national report first as a model for the others, so that the template and aggregation method (including a combined mean in every country) are applied more consistently across countries; harmonise response categories and the fields-of-activity item; ensure that item-level results and the general readiness question are reported everywhere; and continue to support partners in reaching participants under heavy workload, so that the people under the most pressure are not the least able to take part. These adjustments would make the next transnational comparison more precise, without changing the central and robust conclusion of this study: that youth organisations across the partnership are ready in values and in relationships, and now need to build the systems that make support sustainable.

Section XI: Self-Analysis Tool

Self-Analysis Tool for positive and supportive organisations
A reflective organisational self-assessment tool based on the 5 readiness dimensions/indicators of Study no. 2

Purpose of the Tool
The Self-Analysis Tool helps youth organisations and organisations working with young people reflect on how supportive, inclusive, healthy, and sustainable their internal environment is for practitioners, staff members, volunteers, facilitators, coordinators, and youth workers. The tool is designed for self-reflection, organisational learning, internal dialogue, and identifying development priorities. It operationalises the exact 5 analytical indicators of Study no. 2 into a practical organisational self-assessment instrument.

How to use the tool
For each reflection statement, discuss together and select the score that best reflects your organisation's current reality.
Recommended use:

- once per year
- during strategic planning
- during team reflection meetings
- after intensive project periods

General Organisational Readiness Scale

Score	Level	General Meaning
1	Limited / Rarely Present	This aspect is largely missing, inconsistent, informal, or happens only occasionally.
2	Emerging / Partially Present	Some positive practices exist, but implementation is uneven, reactive, or dependent on specific people or situations.
3	Functional / Mostly Present	This aspect generally functions well in everyday organisational practice, although some gaps remain.
4	Strongly Embedded / Consistently Present	This aspect is deeply integrated into organisational culture, systems, and daily practice.

Dimension 1 — Leadership, Supervision and Professional Development

Focus: How the organisation supports practitioners' growth and guidance through leadership and learning.

Sub-dimension A – Organisation provides regular mentoring, guidance, and professional support to practitioners

Score	Meaning
1	Practitioners receive little or no structured guidance. Support is offered only occasionally, usually when problems arise. New staff or volunteers are often expected to manage challenges independently, with

	limited access to mentoring or professional advice.
2	Some mentoring and guidance practices exist, but they are informal, inconsistent, or dependent on specific individuals. Certain practitioners receive support, while others may have limited access to it.
3	Practitioners generally receive guidance and support when needed. Managers, coordinators, or experienced colleagues are available to provide advice and assistance. Mentoring occurs regularly, although it may not yet be fully structured across the organisation.
4	Mentoring, guidance, and professional support are fully integrated into organisational practice. All practitioners have access to appropriate support mechanisms, and professional guidance is provided proactively rather than only when difficulties emerge.

Sub-dimension B – Organisation offers continuous learning opportunities, training, and skills development

Score	Meaning
1	Learning opportunities are very rare. The organisation invests little time or resources in staff development, and practitioners are generally responsible for their own learning.
2	Training opportunities are available occasionally, usually linked to specific projects or external requirements. Access to learning opportunities may be uneven across the organisation.
3	The organisation regularly encourages participation in training, learning activities, exchanges, or professional development opportunities. Most practitioners have reasonable access to skills development.
4	Continuous learning is a clear organisational priority. Professional development is actively planned, supported, and resourced. Practitioners are encouraged to continuously strengthen their competences and explore new areas of growth.

Sub-dimension C – Organisation provides supportive supervision and constructive feedback

Score	Meaning
1	Supervision and feedback are largely absent, irregular, or focused mainly on mistakes and problems. Practitioners often receive little guidance regarding their performance or professional growth.
2	Feedback and supervision occur occasionally, but practices are inconsistent. The quality and usefulness of feedback may vary depending on the supervisor or situation.
3	Practitioners generally receive constructive feedback and supportive supervision. Feedback helps improve performance and encourages reflection, although practices may not yet be fully standardised.
4	Supportive supervision and constructive feedback are embedded in organisational culture. Feedback is regular, respectful, development-oriented, and contributes directly to learning, confidence, and

	professional growth.

Sub-dimension D – Organisation encourages innovation, creative thinking, and idea-sharing in daily practice

Score	Meaning
1	New ideas are rarely encouraged. Practitioners may feel that innovation is risky, unnecessary, or unlikely to influence organisational decisions.
2	Some opportunities exist for sharing ideas, but innovation is supported inconsistently. Certain teams or leaders may encourage creativity more than others.
3	Practitioners generally feel comfortable proposing ideas and improvements. Creative thinking is welcomed and sometimes incorporated into projects, programmes, or organisational activities.
4	Innovation and creative thinking are actively encouraged throughout the organisation. Practitioners are empowered to experiment, propose solutions, and contribute ideas that influence organisational development and decision-making.

Dimension 1 score interpretation
Average score = (A + B + C + D) ÷ 4

Score Range	Interpretation
1.0 – 1.9	Leadership and professional support structures are weak, inconsistent, or largely absent. Practitioners receive limited guidance, learning opportunities, supervision, and encouragement for innovation.
2.0 – 2.9	Some positive leadership and development practices exist, but implementation remains uneven. Support depends heavily on individuals, projects, or circumstances rather than organisational systems.
3.0 – 3.5	The organisation generally provides effective leadership, learning opportunities, supervision, and support for innovation. Most practitioners benefit from a positive professional development environment.
3.6 – 4.0	Leadership, supervision, learning, and innovation are deeply embedded in organisational culture. The organisation demonstrates a strong commitment to practitioner growth, empowerment, and continuous development.

Dimension 2 — Organisational Culture, Inclusion and Psychological Safety

Focus: The quality of the work environment and organisational values.

Sub-dimension E – Organisation creates and maintains a safe, inclusive, and respectful work environment

Score	Meaning
1	The work environment is often perceived as unsupportive, exclusionary, or inconsistent. Respectful behaviour is not actively promoted, and practitioners may experience tension, unfair treatment, or exclusion. Concerns related to respect

	and inclusion are rarely addressed.
2	The organisation generally promotes respectful behaviour, but practices are inconsistent across teams or activities. Some practitioners feel included and respected, while others may experience barriers to participation or belonging. Efforts exist but are not yet embedded in organisational culture.
3	The organisation provides a generally respectful, welcoming, and inclusive environment. Most practitioners feel accepted, valued, and treated fairly. Issues related to inclusion or respect are usually addressed appropriately when they arise.
4	Respect, inclusion, and dignity are fully integrated into daily organisational practice. Practitioners consistently experience a safe and welcoming environment where diversity is valued, differences are respected, and everyone feels a genuine sense of belonging.

Sub-dimension F – Organisation develops and enforces inclusive, anti-discrimination, and equal-opportunity practices

Score	Meaning
1	The organisation has few or no visible practices addressing inclusion, diversity, discrimination, or equal opportunities. Expectations regarding respectful and equitable behaviour are unclear or poorly communicated.
2	Some inclusion and anti-discrimination measures exist, but implementation is inconsistent. Policies or principles may be discussed, but they are not always translated into everyday practice. Awareness varies across teams and activities.
3	The organisation actively promotes inclusion, diversity, and equal opportunities. Anti-discrimination principles are reflected in organisational practices, and most practitioners understand and support these values.
4	Inclusion, diversity, equal opportunities, and anti-discrimination are embedded throughout the organisation. Clear practices, procedures, and expectations ensure that these values are consistently applied and regularly reviewed. Practitioners actively contribute to maintaining an inclusive culture.

Sub-dimension G – Organisation maintains organisational stability, psychological safety, and a secure work climate

Score	Meaning
1	Practitioners often feel uncertain, unsupported, or hesitant to express concerns, ideas, or mistakes. Organisational instability, poor communication, or lack of trust negatively affect the working environment.
2	Some elements of psychological safety and stability are present, but experiences vary considerably. Practitioners may feel comfortable expressing themselves in certain situations but remain cautious in others. Trust and security are not yet consistently

	established.
3	Most practitioners feel psychologically safe and generally comfortable sharing opinions, concerns, questions, or mistakes without fear of negative consequences. Organisational stability supports trust and constructive working relationships.
4	Psychological safety is a defining feature of the organisational culture. Practitioners feel consistently safe to speak openly, challenge ideas respectfully, admit mistakes, and seek support when needed. Trust, transparency, and stability create a secure and supportive work climate.

Dimension 2 score interpretation
Average Score = (E + F + G) ÷ 3

Score Range	Interpretation
1.0 – 1.9	The organisation demonstrates significant weaknesses in creating an inclusive, respectful, and psychologically safe environment. Practitioners may experience barriers to participation, limited trust, and inconsistent support.
2.0 – 2.9	Positive elements of inclusion and psychological safety exist, but they are not yet consistently implemented. Organisational culture depends heavily on individual behaviours rather than well-established practices and systems.
3.0 – 3.5	The organisation generally provides a respectful, inclusive, and psychologically safe environment. Most practitioners feel valued, supported, and able to participate meaningfully in organisational life.
3.6 – 4.0	Inclusion, respect, trust, and psychological safety are deeply embedded in organisational culture. The organisation demonstrates strong readiness to function as a positive and supportive environment where practitioners can thrive and contribute fully.

Dimension 3 — Wellbeing, Mental Health and Burnout Prevention

Focus: Organisational capacity to protect staff wellbeing and mental health.

Sub-dimension H – Organisation provides emotional and practical support during challenging or high-pressure situations

Score	Meaning
1	When practitioners experience stress, emotional difficulties, or high-pressure situations, support is largely absent or left to individuals to manage independently. Requests for help are rarely addressed in a timely or meaningful manner.
2	The organisation provides some support during difficult situations, but responses are inconsistent and often depend on individual managers or colleagues. Support tends to be reactive rather than planned or systematic.
3	Practitioners generally receive emotional and practical support when facing challenging situations. Managers and colleagues are available to offer guidance, flexibility, or assistance when needed. Support mechanisms are present, although not

	always fully structured.
4	Supporting practitioners during challenging periods is an established organisational practice. Emotional and practical support are provided proactively, consistently, and in ways that help practitioners remain resilient, engaged, and effective.

Sub-dimension I – Organisation ensures fair and adequate workload distribution to prevent burnout

Score	Meaning
1	Workload is frequently excessive, poorly distributed, or difficult to manage. Practitioners regularly experience overload, unrealistic expectations, or prolonged periods of work-related stress. Burnout risks are rarely acknowledged or addressed.
2	The organisation attempts to manage workload fairly, but challenges remain common. Some practitioners experience excessive pressure, particularly during busy periods. Workload adjustments occur occasionally but are not consistently applied.
3	Workload is generally distributed in a fair and manageable way. Managers monitor responsibilities and make adjustments when necessary. Burnout risks are recognised and addressed in most situations.
4	The organisation actively manages workload as a key wellbeing priority. Responsibilities are allocated realistically, workload is regularly reviewed, and preventive measures are used to reduce burnout risks. Practitioners are encouraged to maintain healthy work boundaries.

Sub-dimension J – Organisation offers access to mental health resources and wellbeing support services

Score	Meaning
1	The organisation provides little or no access to mental health or wellbeing support. Practitioners are expected to seek support independently, and organisational responsibility for mental wellbeing is minimal.
2	Some wellbeing resources or support opportunities are available, but access is limited, irregular, or dependent on specific projects. Mental health support exists, but it is not systematically integrated into organisational practice.
3	The organisation provides access to wellbeing-related resources, information, activities, or support mechanisms. Practitioners are encouraged to use available support, and mental health is recognised as an important organisational concern.
4	Mental health and wellbeing are treated as organisational priorities. Practitioners have regular access to appropriate support resources, wellbeing initiatives, or professional services. The organisation actively promotes mental health awareness and prevention practices.

Dimension 3 score interpretation
Average Score = (H + I + J) ÷ 3

Score Range	Interpretation
1.0 – 1.9	The organisation demonstrates significant vulnerabilities regarding wellbeing, mental health, and burnout prevention. Practitioners may face high levels of stress with limited organisational support or protection mechanisms.
2.0 – 2.9	Some wellbeing-related practices are present, but they remain inconsistent and largely reactive. Support depends more on individual efforts than on systematic organisational approaches.
3.0 – 3.5	The organisation generally supports practitioner wellbeing and recognises the importance of mental health. Most practitioners have access to reasonable support and workload management practices.
3.6 – 4.0	Wellbeing, mental health, and burnout prevention are deeply embedded within organisational culture and systems. The organisation demonstrates strong readiness to protect practitioner resilience and sustain long-term engagement in youth work.

Dimension 4 — Communication, Participation & Interpersonal Support

Focus: How people connect, collaborate, and participate inside the organisation.

Sub-dimension K – Organisation ensures clear, consistent, and transparent communication

Score	Meaning
1	Communication inside the organisation is often unclear, delayed, fragmented, or incomplete. Practitioners may not receive relevant information on time, expectations may be unclear, and important decisions may be communicated too late or not explained properly. This can create confusion, frustration, duplication of work, or mistrust.
2	Some communication channels exist, but they are not always used consistently or transparently. Information may reach some people faster than others, and communication may depend on specific managers, projects, or informal conversations. Practitioners are sometimes informed, but not always clearly or early enough.
3	Communication is generally clear, consistent, and timely. Most practitioners receive the information they need to do their work, understand organisational expectations, and are informed about relevant decisions or changes. Some gaps may still appear during busy periods, but communication usually supports effective work.
4	Clear, consistent, and transparent communication is strongly embedded in organisational practice. Information flows effectively across teams and roles, decisions are explained openly, expectations are clear, and practitioners feel well-informed, included, and able to ask questions when clarification is needed.

Sub-dimension L – Organisation fosters collaboration, teamwork, and peer support among practitioners

Score	Meaning
1	Collaboration is weak, fragmented, or mostly absent. Practitioners often work alone, without sufficient coordination or peer support. Teamwork may be affected by competition, poor communication, unclear roles, or lack of shared responsibility.
2	Collaboration and teamwork exist in some situations, but they are inconsistent or depend on certain people, teams, or projects. Peer support may occur informally, but it is not actively encouraged or structured by the organisation.
3	The organisation generally encourages collaboration, teamwork, and peer support. Practitioners usually work well together, share information, help one another, and cooperate in planning and implementing activities. Teamwork functions well in most situations, although it may still be uneven during periods of pressure.
4	Collaboration, teamwork, and peer support are central to the organisational culture. Practitioners actively cooperate, share responsibilities, exchange knowledge, support each other in difficult moments, and contribute to a strong sense of collective work and solidarity.

Sub-dimension M – Organisation builds strong interpersonal support systems (peer networks, supportive relationships, team cohesion)

Score	Meaning
1	Interpersonal support systems are weak or absent. Practitioners may feel isolated, disconnected, or unsupported in their daily work. There are few opportunities for peer exchange, team reflection, or mutual support, and team cohesion is low.
2	Some supportive relationships exist, but they are mostly informal and depend on personal connections rather than organisational practice. Peer networks or team cohesion may be stronger in some groups, but weaker or absent in others.
3	The organisation generally supports positive interpersonal relationships and team cohesion. Practitioners usually know whom to ask for help, peer exchange happens regularly, and supportive relationships contribute to a better working climate.
4	Strong interpersonal support systems are intentionally developed and maintained. Peer networks, supportive relationships, and team cohesion are visible across the organisation. Practitioners consistently feel connected, supported, and part of a reliable professional community.

Sub-dimension N – Organisation involves practitioners in meaningful decision-making processes

Score	Meaning
1	Practitioners are rarely involved in decision-making processes. Decisions are usually made by leadership

	without consultation, and staff or volunteers may feel that their experience, needs, or opinions do not influence organisational choices.
2	The organisation sometimes consults practitioners, but participation is inconsistent, limited, or symbolic. Practitioners may be asked for input, but they do not always see how their contributions influence final decisions.
3	Practitioners are generally involved in decisions that affect their work, activities, or beneficiaries. Their opinions are usually considered, and there are reasonable opportunities to contribute ideas, feedback, or practical recommendations.
4	Meaningful participation is embedded in organisational decision-making. Practitioners are regularly and genuinely involved in shaping activities, internal processes, priorities, and improvements. Their voices are valued, and their input has visible influence on organisational decisions.

Dimension 4 score interpretation
Average Score = (K + L + M + N) ÷ 4

Score Range	Interpretation
1.0 – 1.9	The organisation shows significant weaknesses in communication, participation, collaboration, and interpersonal support. Practitioners may feel poorly informed, insufficiently heard, isolated, or excluded from meaningful decisions. This can reduce trust, team cohesion, motivation, and perceived organisational support.
2.0 – 2.9	Some positive communication and participation practices exist, but they remain inconsistent, informal, or dependent on specific people or projects. Collaboration and peer support may function in some contexts, but they are not yet strong organisational systems.
3.0 – 3.5	The organisation generally communicates clearly, encourages teamwork, supports interpersonal relationships, and involves practitioners in relevant decisions. Most practitioners experience a collaborative and participatory environment, although some improvements are still needed.
3.6 – 4.0	Communication, participation, collaboration, and interpersonal support are strongly embedded in organisational culture. Practitioners feel informed, listened to, connected, supported, and genuinely involved in shaping organisational life and practice.

Dimension 5 — Organisational Resources, Systems and Adaptability

Focus: Structural and systemic capacity to support practitioners effectively.

Sub-dimension O – Organisation allocates necessary resources (time, tools, space) to support practitioners' work effectively

Score	Meaning
1	The organisation rarely provides the necessary time, tools, space, materials, or working conditions

	needed for practitioners to do their work effectively. Practitioners often have to improvise, use personal resources, or work under pressure because basic organisational support is insufficient.
2	Some resources are available, but they are limited, unevenly distributed, or dependent on specific projects. Practitioners may have access to certain tools or spaces, but not consistently enough to support stable and effective work.
3	The organisation generally provides the time, tools, space, and materials needed for practitioners to carry out their work effectively. Most practitioners have access to adequate resources, although some gaps may still appear during busy periods or under financial pressure.
4	Resource allocation is planned, transparent, and clearly connected to practitioners' needs. The organisation consistently ensures that staff and volunteers have the time, tools, space, and practical conditions required to work effectively, safely, and sustainably.

Sub-dimension P – Organisation continuously assesses, reflects on, and adapts organisational practices based on staff feedback

Score	Meaning
1	The organisation rarely collects feedback from practitioners, or feedback is collected only formally without being used. Organisational practices remain largely unchanged even when staff or volunteers identify problems, needs, or improvement areas.
2	Feedback is sometimes collected, but reflection and follow-up are inconsistent. The organisation may listen to staff input, but changes are not always visible, timely, or clearly connected to the feedback received.
3	The organisation generally collects and uses staff feedback to improve internal practices. Reflection and adaptation happen in most situations, and practitioners can usually see that their input contributes to organisational learning and improvement.
4	Continuous reflection, feedback, and adaptation are embedded in organisational culture. Staff feedback is regularly collected, seriously analysed, and translated into concrete improvements. The organisation learns from experience and adapts proactively to practitioners' needs.

Sub-dimension Q – Organisation recognises, values, and celebrates practitioners' contributions and achievements

Score	Meaning
1	Practitioners' work, effort, and achievements are rarely recognised or appreciated. Contributions may be taken for granted, and people may feel invisible, undervalued, or emotionally disconnected from the organisation.
2	Some recognition exists, but it is occasional, informal, or limited to certain people, roles, projects,

	or visible achievements. Appreciation is not yet consistent across the organisation.
3	The organisation generally recognises and values practitioners' contributions. Most staff and volunteers feel that their efforts are noticed and appreciated, even if recognition could become more systematic or intentional.
4	Recognition and appreciation are strongly embedded in organisational practice. Practitioners' contributions, efforts, learning, and achievements are regularly acknowledged and celebrated in meaningful ways, strengthening

Dimension 5 score interpretation

Average Score = (O + P + Q) ÷ 3

Score Range	Interpretation
1.0 – 1.9	The organisation shows significant structural vulnerabilities. Resources, systems, feedback mechanisms, and recognition practices are weak, inconsistent, or largely absent. Practitioners may feel unsupported, under-resourced, and insufficiently valued.
2.0 – 2.9	Some organisational resources and adaptive practices exist, but they remain uneven, informal, or dependent on specific projects or individuals. The organisation shows some capacity to support practitioners, but systems are not yet stable or sufficiently responsive.
3.0 – 3.5	The organisation generally provides adequate resources, uses feedback reasonably well, and recognises practitioners' contributions. Organisational systems mostly support effective work, although further improvement is still needed for long-term sustainability.
3.6 – 4.0	Resources, feedback, adaptability, and recognition are strongly embedded in organisational systems and culture. The organisation demonstrates strong structural readiness to support practitioners effectively and sustainably over time.

Self-Analysis Tool – Addition: "Readiness Balance Check"

A positive and supportive organisation is not defined only by a high overall score, but also by balance across all five dimensions. Significant differences between dimensions may indicate organisational imbalances that affect sustainability and staff wellbeing.

Example of profile interpretation

Dimension	Score	Interpretation
1	3.4	Functional supportive leadership
2	2.2	Emerging inclusive culture
3	1.9	Priority area requiring immediate attention
4	3.1	Generally collaborative environment
5	2.5	Developing organisational systems

Overall score: 2.6
Overall interpretation: "Emerging Development Stage"
Priority area: "Wellbeing, Mental Health and Burnout Prevention"
Strongest dimension: "Leadership, Supervision and Professional Development"

From reflection to action
Discuss together within organisation:

1. *What should we continue doing?*
2. *What should we improve first?*
3. *What small action could realistically be implemented in the next 3 months?*
4. *Which dimension needs the most attention?*

Main sources of transnational report

- POSITIVE - Wellbeing&Resilience in Youth Work for Social Change. Study No. 2 Methodology/general framework.
- POSITIVE - National Report - Study no. 2 - COUNTRY POLAND
- POSITIVE - National Report - Study no. 2 - The Netherlands
- National Report - Study no. 2 - COUNTRY: Romania
- National Report1 - Study no. 2 - SPAIN