



WP 3 | Quality Assurance and evaluation

Evaluation report for online study visits/trainings WP1

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Introduction

It is well known that institutions of higher education (HEIs) have significant economic, social and cultural impact on local level.

In case of Georgia they are often largest regional employers, tax payers and service consumers, at the same time assuring access to higher education for those who cannot afford living in another city.

Regional universities may and shall play the most important role as basis and centres of regional development, while linking their research and study programs (including training courses) to local needs.

Thus, the general aim of the project is to make Georgian regional HEIs more relevant to the communities and regions they are located.

The objectives of the project are:

- to develop mission and strategic development plans for regional universities based on SWOT analysis and local market research in cooperation with local authorities and social partners;
- to increase cooperation between Universities and Local Government Authorities to increase their capacity and enhance specification of each region;
- to improve and modernize the management structures in universities of Georgia and make their administrative structures compatible with those of the European universities.

Project activities include:

- Redefining mission and strategic development plans for regional universities based on SWOT analysis and local market research;
- Developing close collaboration with local authorities and other social partners, enhancing academia-labour market dialogue;
- Creating network of regional HEIs to build institutional capacity and sustainability through the sharing of best practice in educational delivery, training, research and organizational management, particularly with reference to regional contexts.

This report evaluates the three study visits conducted in the frame of WP1. Note, that the visits were held online due to the fact, that at the time of the meetings, traveling to Europe was not possible for the Georgian partners, due to travel restrictions because of COVID19. Following study visits took place:

- University of Santiago de Compostela (25/01-27/01, 04/02.2021)
- Vytautas Magnus University (04/03/2021-05/03/2021)
- FH JOANNEUM (25/03,29/03,30/03/2021)
- Masaryk University (05/05-07/05/2021)

Study visit University of Santiago di Compostela

The training for 35 participants was separated in three sessions:

- Efficient international cooperation
- Strategic planning
- Building university-industry relationship

Results

For each session participants needed to indicate, if they agree following 5 statements:

- The topic is interesting for me
- The level of complexity of the training material in this session is adequate for me
- The session is well structured and provides all information necessary
- The quality of the training material is adequate
- The chosen method supports the learning process well

The 5 possible items were

- strongly agree
- agree
- neutral
- disagree
- strongly disagree

The analysis shown in this report summarized all strongly agree and agree answers for each of the sessions (see Figure 1 below).

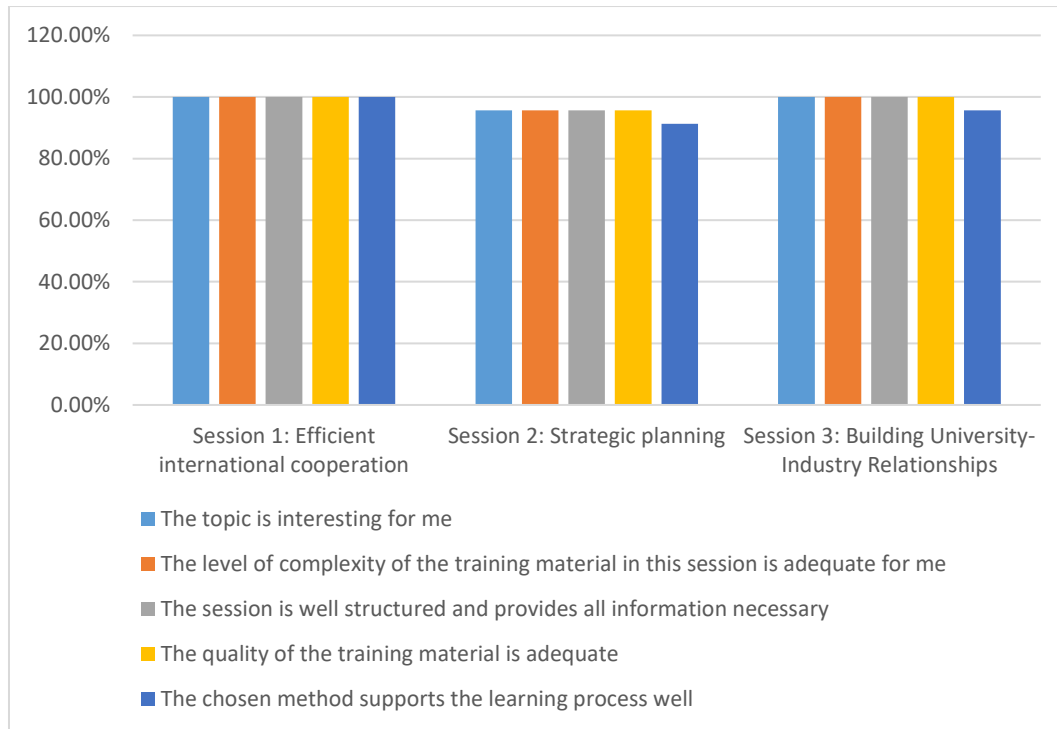


Figure 1

The diagram shows that all respondents agreed the statements of the Session Efficient international cooperation. In Session 3 (Building university-industry relationships) only one respondent answered neither strongly agree nor agree to the statement “The chosen method supports the learning process well. In session 2 (Strategic planning) there is one respondent not strongly agreeing or agreeing to the following statements

- The topic is interesting for me
- The level of complexity of the training material in this session is adequate for me
- The session is well structured and provides all information necessary
- The quality of the training material is adequate

and two non-agreement answers to “The chosen method supports the learning process well”.

For session 1 following possible improvements were given by the participants:

- It will be better if participants have more time for discussions.
- It would be nice if colleagues could add practical examples
- To show to the participants’ concrete materials, for example contracts, workloads during cooperation

For session 2 following possible improvements were given by the participants:

- It would be nice if colleagues could add practical examples
- the quality of training materials

For session 3 following possible improvements were given by the participants:

- It would be nice if colleagues could add practical examples how to analyse and overcome barriers between research organizations and industry (example).

For the trainings in general participants had to evaluate 6 different statements (see Figure 2 and Figure 3):

- The topics covered contributed to reaching the projected goals.
- The training design (i.e. materials used, methods applied) encouraged my participation in the course.
- The learning aids/material assisted my learning
- The training format and methods of delivery provided room for everyone to participate actively
- Overall I am satisfied with this training
- In general, the training was relevant to my needs and answered my expectations

The participants had to rate on a 5-Likert scale, if they agree or disagree to the statements.

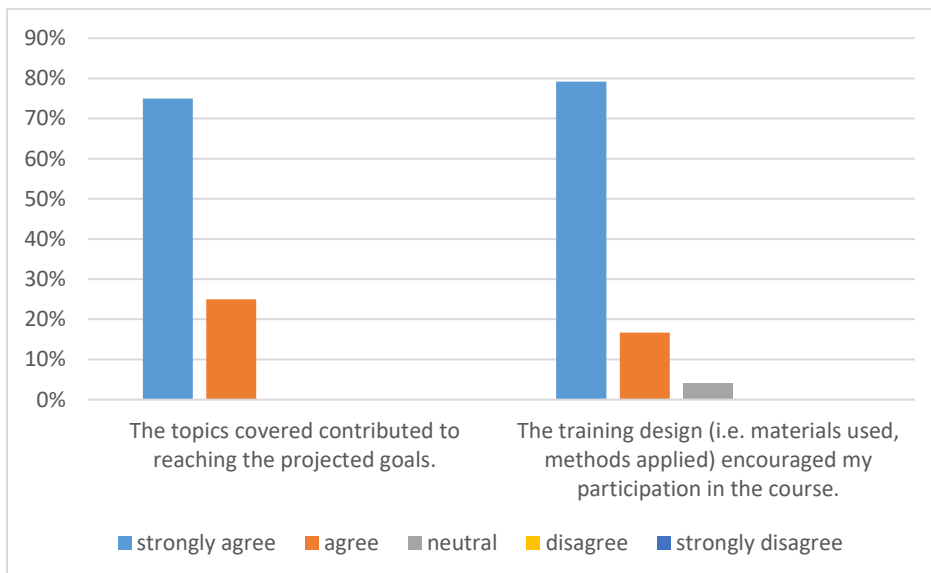


Figure 2

Figure 2 shows that everyone agrees to the statement “The topics covered contributed to reaching the projected goals.”. For the second statement “The training design (i.e. materials used, methods applied) encouraged my participation in the course.” all but one person agree.

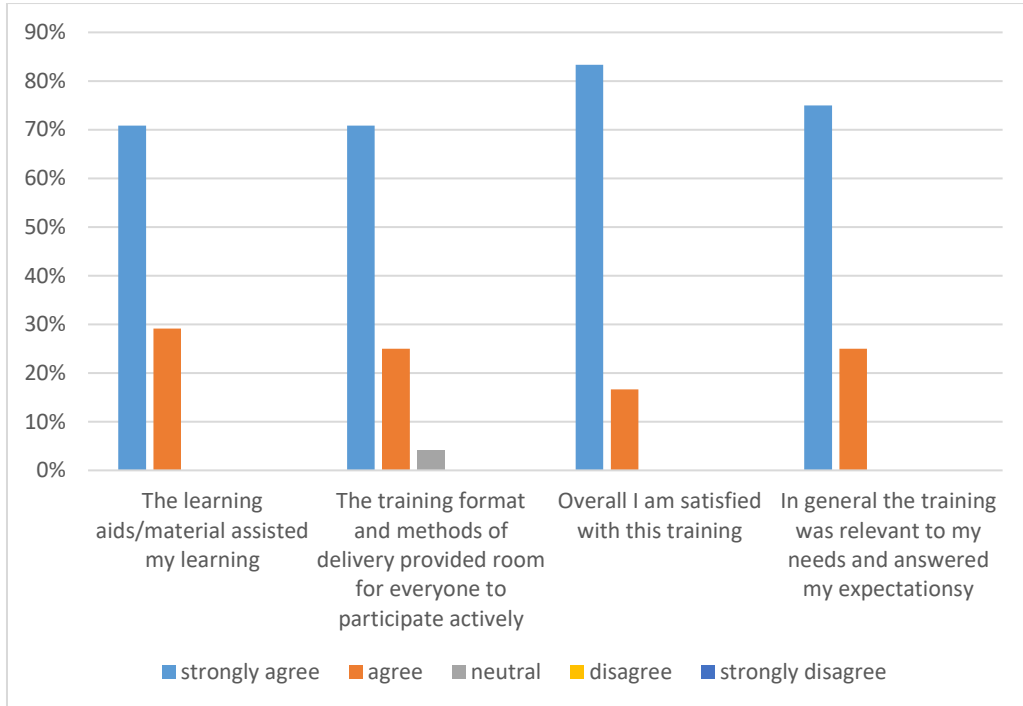


Figure 3

Figure 3 shows the feedback to the remaining 4 questions. The picture is similar.

All participants agree to the Statements “The learning aids/material assisted my learning”, “Overall I am satisfied with this training” and “In general, the training was relevant to my needs and answered my expectations”. All but one agree to “The training format and methods of delivery provided room for everyone to participate actively”.

In the questionnaire participants were also asked to give feedback to 5 questions concerning the total impression regarding the training. The questions were the following:

- What would you point out as redundant or missing?
- How is the overall training content relevant with regards to your practical / work related activities?
- The part that I found most relevant / useful was:
- The part I liked the most was:
- The training can be improved by:

The results of the first two questions can be seen in **Error! Reference source not found..**

Course content: What would you point out as redundant or missing?	How is the overall training content relevant with regards to your practical / work related activities?
nothing	yes
Courses are very important for us we learn a lot about modern methods of university planning and management, especially for me was interesting how you forming strategic planning process. regarding redundancy nothing.	Its absolutely relevant, regarding strategic planning almost same practice and methods we trying to use to form our university strategy.
I think all important topics were covered	I, as head of the IR office, am involved in the working out the university strategic development plan, attracting the international partners and working with the international funds. So all the content of the training was relevant to my everyday work activities.
It was nothing redundant but I missed the face to face communication that is generally disadvantage of online trainings.	I already shared the novelties with my colleagues and discussed what can be done in the future.
The content of the online course(due to COVID restrictions) covered the planned topics.	proposed training content was fully relevant with the activities and tasks
It would be nice if they could share their experience to build relationships with the government and companies	The content of the training is very close to our activities at the University
nothing, what is missing must be done by ourselves	fully relevant
presentations and materials were relevant and interesting.	overall training content contains useful information which will help us in internationalization.

Table 1

The results of the ladder three questions can be found in Table 2.

Table 2

The part that I found most relevant / useful was:	The part I liked the most was:	The training can be improved by:
all good	videos	nothing, already great
Practical activities	Sharing the best practices	Conducting the trainings face to face
Strategic planing		
N/A	N/A	N/A
Strategic plan for internationalization of our HEIs, How to find the partner,	How to find the partner, university - industry cooperation. Working on the	More involvement of the participants.

How to improve our international visibility, Working on the university mission, vision and values. How USC works on the international project proposals and scientific connections with the universities.	international project/ duties and responsibilities of the IR office staff.	
All proposed sessions were useful, as covered issues that will be taken into account while working on main results of the project	Mixture of theory and some practical tasks (in the most possible way taking into account online format because of COVID restrictions)	possibility to share EU best practice on site (not online) after the CODIV restrictions in order to have more flexible meetings and discussions and better opportunity for more practical tasks
How to plan the university vision; How to plan the university mission; How to define the values of our University;	SWOT analysis; How to prepare new and develop existed strategic plan;	practical cases
Mission formulation	Methods used to define the mission	The training was very helpful
planning	technical support	really it was great
international cooperation strategy	participants active engagement during the training with the help of mentimeter; practical part of the training.	the trainings were useful. thank you.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the survey one can say that the study visit/ training from USC was perceived as very helpful by all participants. Especially the session aiming at the development of the mission was seen as very helpful for the participants. There is also not much room for improvement according to the respondents. Apart from having the meetings face to face instead of online, they only other major concern was that there should be more practical examples.

Study visit Vytautas Magnus University

The study visit and training for 40 participants was separated in four sessions:

- Vytautas Magnus university (VMU)
- Strategies for better or for worse
- Internationalisation at home and abroad
- Social responsibility as part of university goals

Results

For each session participants needed to indicate, if they agree following 5 statements:

- The topic is interesting for me
- The level of complexity of the training material in this session is adequate for me
- The session is well structured and provides all information necessary
- The quality of the training material is adequate
- The chosen method supports the learning process well

The 5 possible items were

- strongly agree
- agree
- neutral
- disagree
- strongly disagree

The analysis shown in this report summarized all strongly agree and agree answers for each of the sessions (see below).

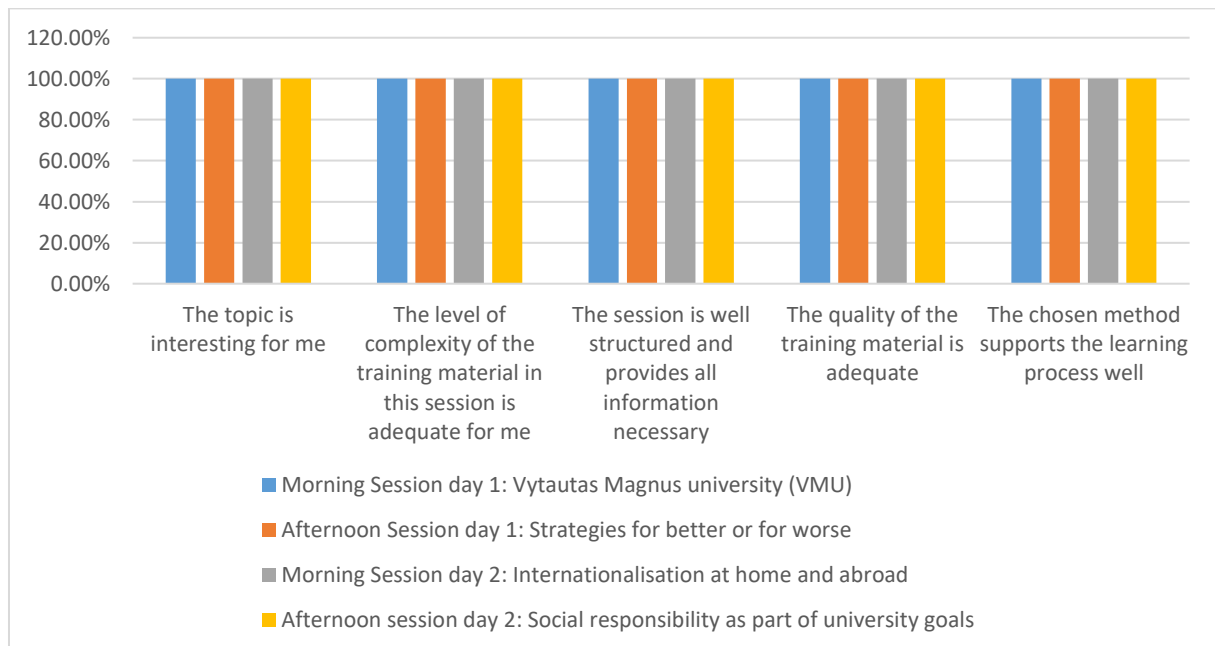


Figure 4

The diagram shows that all respondents agreed to the statements of all sessions, so it can be assumed that the participants were satisfied by the offers Vytautas Magnus University had to offer to them during the 4 sessions.

For Morning session day 1 following possible improvements were given by the participants:

- it will be better to talk about the roles of university in the regional development. Concrete examples will be better
- For me as head of international relations more detailed discussion of internationalization would be interesting. Due to lack of time it was limited

For afternoon session day 1 following possible improvements were given by the participants:

- For me as head of international relations more detailed discussion of internationalization would be interesting. Due to lack of time it was limited

For session day 2 following possible improvements were given by the participants:

- Career support services for students in more details would be good

For the trainings in general participants had to evaluate 6 different statements:

- The topics covered contributed to reaching the projected goals.
- The training design (i.e. materials used, methods applied) encouraged my participation in the course.
- The learning aids/material assisted my learning
- The training format and methods of delivery provided room for everyone to participate actively
- Overall I am satisfied with this training
- In general, the training was relevant to my needs and answered my expectations

The participants had to rate on a 5 Likert scale, if they agree or disagree to the statements.

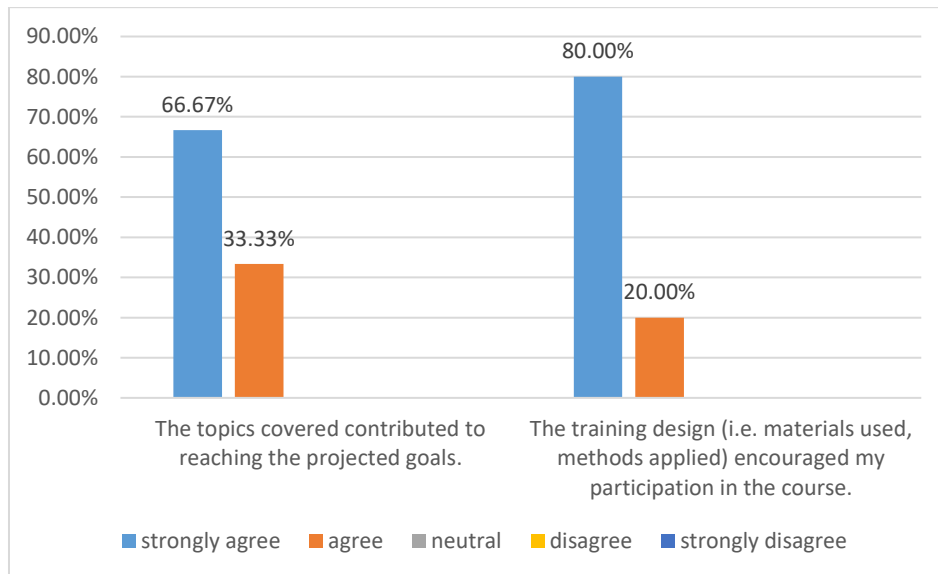


Figure 5

Figure 5 shows that everyone agrees to both statements “The topics covered contributed to reaching the projected goals.” and “The training design (i.e. materials used, methods applied) encouraged my participation in the course.”.

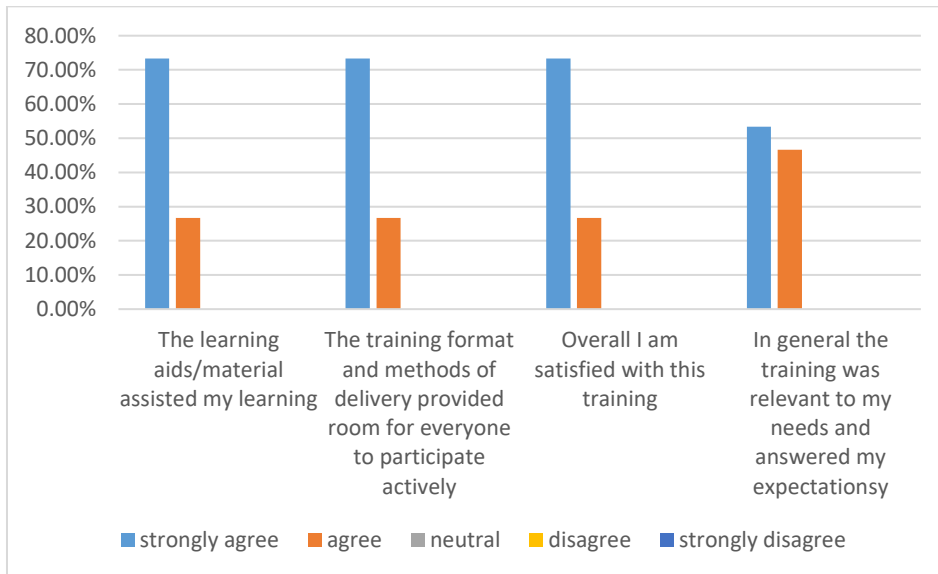


Figure 6

Figure 6 shows the feedback to the remaining 4 questions. The picture is the same.

All participants agree to all four statements” The learning aids/material assisted my learning”, “Overall I am satisfied with this training”, “In general, the training was relevant to my needs and answered my expectations” and “The training format and methods of delivery provided room for everyone to participate actively”.

In the questionnaire participants were also asked to give feedback to 5 questions concerning the total impression regarding the training. The questions were the following:

- What would you point out as redundant or missing?
- How is the overall training content relevant with regards to your practical / work related activities?
- The part that I found most relevant / useful was:
- The part I liked the most was:
- The training can be improved by:

The results of the first two questions can be seen in Table 3

Table 3

Course content: What would you point out as redundant or missing?	How is the overall training content relevant with regards to your practical / work related activities?
more about project aims	The training content was relevant to my practical work. Thank you for such an interesting meetings
Nothing specific	good understanding of the mission and vision and internationalization strategy
Maybe practical training would help too	It is useful as right now I am in process of writing strategic development plan

nothing is missing. Planned topics are covered	The content is relevant, share of experience regarding recent changes/edition in Strategic Plan that took place at VMU is beneficial
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The results of the ladder three questions can be found in Table 4

Table 4

The part that I found most relevant / useful was:	The part I liked the most was:	The training can be improved by:
mission and vision of the university	social responsibility	details more relevant to the project aim
providing the Specific in the practice other higher educational institutions.	The structure of the trainings and the content.	
Internationalization	Social responsibility	Practical exercises
Presentations about Strategy development (Rita Bendaraviciene)	Presentation about Internationalisation	In the given situation distance and online training did not allow me to have been fully engaged in the process (due to technical reasons which I cannot influence); I believe we will have opportunity to get introduced with the activities and the experience of this university on site.
sharing experience on: recent new strategic plan approved at VMU and the process before the approval; rectors Conference	the whole content	delivering it in live in the frame of study visit and not having it fully online (do hope situation related to COVID pandemic will give this opportunity)

Conclusion

The trainings/study visit in VMU were perceived as very fruitful for the respondents of the questionnaire. Especially the content related to strategy development was perceived as relevant and interesting for the respondents. Some of the respondents especially liked the part about social responsibility. Room for improvement is seen in more practical examples as well as face to face meetings instead of online visits.

Study visit FH JOANNEUM University of applied Sciences

The study visit and training had 37 participants. The training was separated in four sessions:

- Session 1: Internationalisation of universities
- Session 2: Strategic planning and strategic management for regional development
- Session 3: Operational implementation of university strategy
- Session 4: The university ecosystem of a regional university

Results

For each session participants needed to indicate, if they agree following 5 statements:

- The topic is interesting for me
- The level of complexity of the training material in this session is adequate for me
- The session is well structured and provides all information necessary
- The quality of the training material is adequate
- The chosen method supports the learning process well

The 5 possible items were

- strongly agree
- agree
- neutral
- disagree
- strongly disagree

The analysis shown in this report summarized all strongly agree and agree answers for each of the sessions (see below).

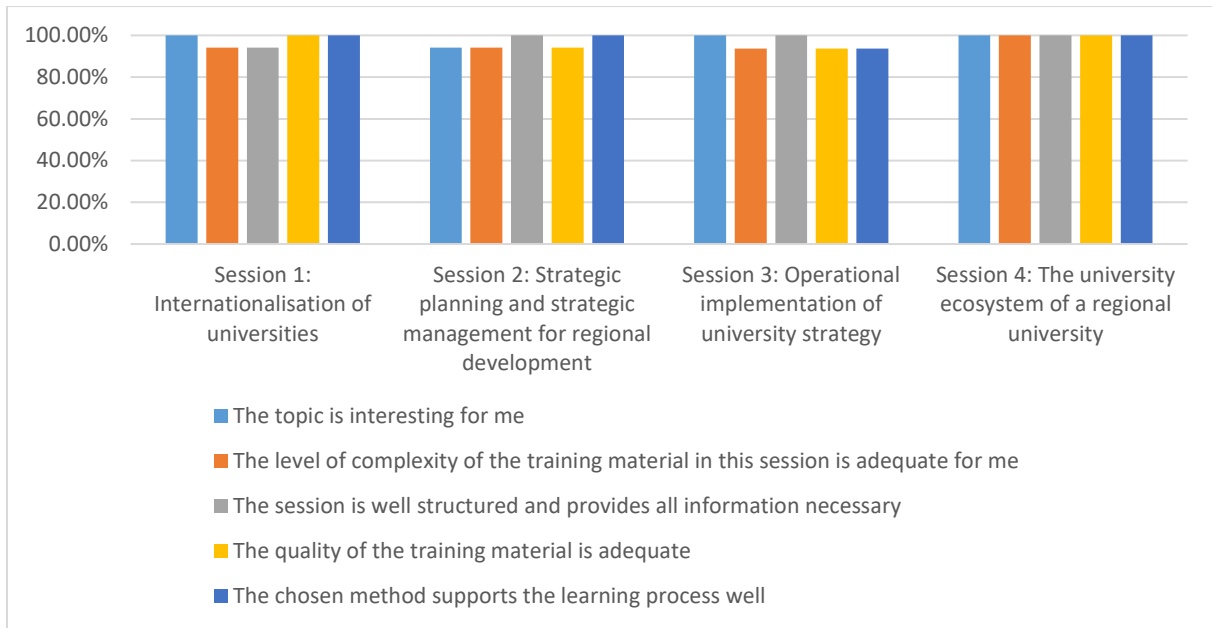


Figure 7

The diagram shows that in total all sessions were perceived very well by the participants.

There was agreement among all participants for following statements concerning Session 1:

- The topic is interesting for me
- The quality of the training material is adequate
- The chosen method supports the learning process well

For the other two statements one respondent did not fully agree.

For session 2 all participants agreed to following statements:

- The session is well structured and provides all information necessary
- The chosen method supports the learning process well

One participant did not agree to the other three statement.

In session 3 all respondents agreed to following statements:

- The topic is interesting for me
- The session is well structured and provides all information necessary

One participant did not agree to the other three statement.

All respondents agreed to the statements of all session 4.

For session 1 following possible improvements were given by the participants:

- "The training would be more effective if it was face to face. In online there many factors that do not allow fully involve audience in process. More detailed work on examples would help a lot. "
- I think the session was very useful and well-structured, just a bit more materials could be provided to get more advices.

- technical issues with the 'flipchart platform' of google. It didn't work for our group, but thank you for this amazing tool.

For session 2 following possible improvements were given by the participants:

- I think, it might be better, if participants would be asked about the topics of their concrete interests, considering on the problems they're facing at the places.
- I think if the level of complexity were simpler, it would be more interesting and adequate for me.
- The topic was extremely interesting for me. Face to face training would have been much productive
- Practical examples and experience, descriptive methods, step by step illustration of how relations have been building with the authorities, stakeholders etc.

For session day 2 following possible improvements were given by the participants:

- Group activities could be improved
- it would be better if you could meet face to face

For the trainings in general participants had to evaluate 6 different statements:

- The topics covered contributed to reaching the projected goals.
- The training design (i.e. materials used, methods applied) encouraged my participation in the course.
- The learning aids/material assisted my learning
- The training format and methods of delivery provided room for everyone to participate actively
- Overall I am satisfied with this training
- In general the training was relevant to my needs and answered my expectations

The participants had to rate on a 5 Likert scale, if they agree or disagree to the statements.

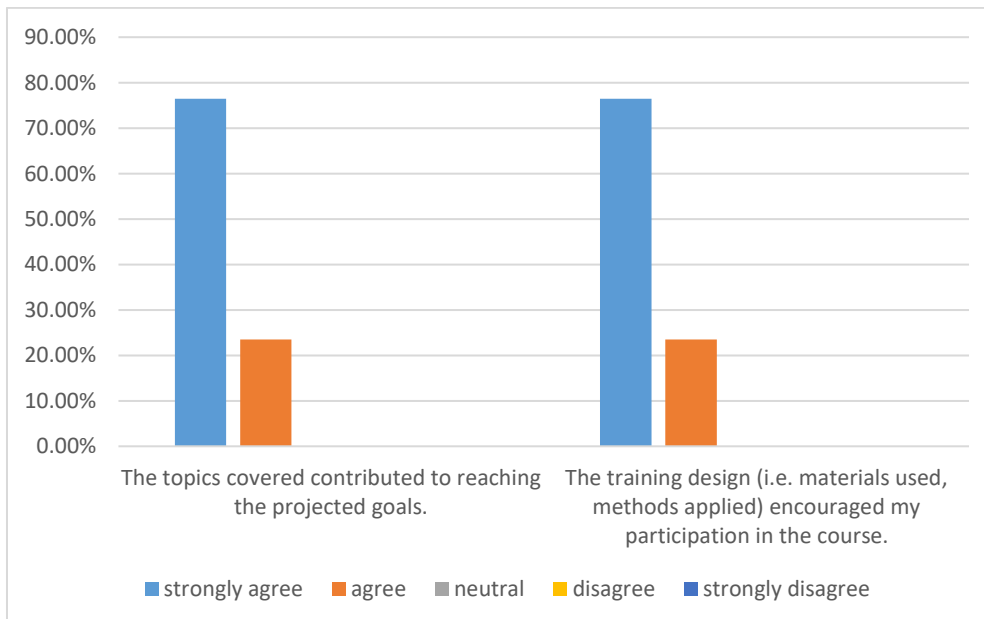


Figure 8

Figure 8 shows that everyone agrees to both statements “The topics covered contributed to reaching the projected goals.” and “The training design (i.e. materials used, methods applied) encouraged my participation in the course.”.

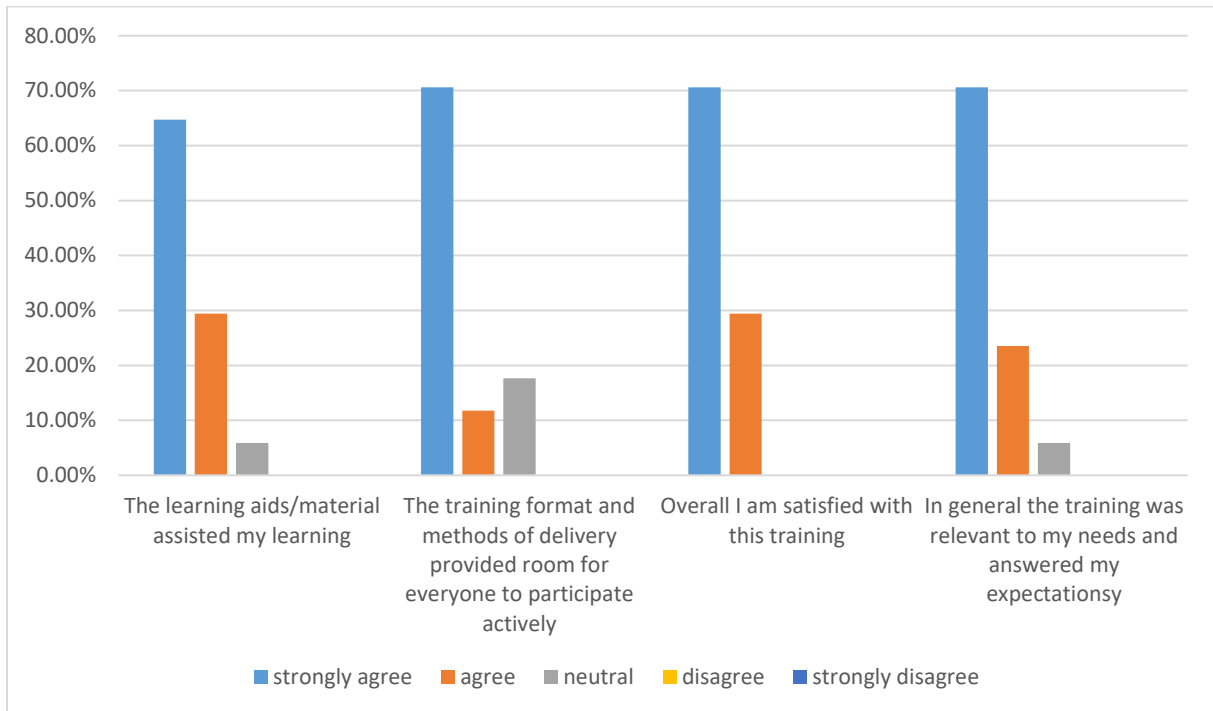


Figure 9

Figure 6 Figure 9 shows the feedback to the remaining 4 questions.

All participants but one agree to statements” The learning aids/material assisted my learning”, “Overall I am satisfied with this training” and “In general, the training was relevant to my needs and answered my expectations”.

For the statement “The training format and methods of delivery provided room for everyone to participate actively” three respondents were neutral.

All participants agreed that they were satisfied with this training.

In the questionnaire participants were also asked to give feedback to 5 questions concerning the total impression regarding the training. The questions were the following:

- What would you point out as redundant or missing?
- How is the overall training content relevant with regards to your practical / work related activities?
- The part that I found most relevant / useful was:
- The part I liked the most was:
- The training can be improved by:

The results of the first two questions can be seen in Table 5

Table 5

Course content: What would you point out as redundant or missing?	How is the overall training content relevant with regards to your practical / work related activities?
Every important topic was covered	The activities were relevant towards the training topic.
It will be nice to present the stakeholders attitude to the universities	We are now working on the strategic plan of internationalization of the university and the materials and experience shared are really helpful
	The training is just in time, as we are working on strategy in the university. Having opportunity to see how EU partners work in this field is very important. Now there is a massive information that we have and a lot of reflection needed
more discussions about concrete problems and the cases of Georgian Universities	very good
nothing	It is fully relevant
more materials could be provided	This was quite adequate for my work related activities.
	Content will be useful and could be used while planning strategic plan and mechanisms of cooperation with stakeholders
	I'm working at a local DMO, which aside the tourism development is focused on improving the living environment of local people as well. So the topics related to the University's role in regional development are extremely interesting for me. After the training, some new ideas came to me on this matter, some existing ones strengthened, and I hope I can realize them in my region.
HEIs mission and strategic planning seem redundant. 1. Details of EU projects, competitive application preparation from the stretch, considering national priorities; 2. Cooperation with the authorities - details, approaches and more examples would be better.	It is relevant

The results of the ladder three questions can be found in Table 6.

Table 6

The part that I found most relevant / useful was:	The part I liked the most was:	The training can be improved by:

Operational Implementation of university strategy was very useful to my point of view.	There were the live samples and cases. I liked it very much.	
Examples from differe	the presentations	Planning group activities
I think detailed explanation of the stakeholders involvement was most relevant part	how the university's role can be increased in regional development	if we will have the possibility of face to face meeting
Examples of how university attracts stakeholders; how they involve students into the process	Stakeholders	More practical examples
All parts was very useful nd relevant	I liked all the part , I have listened to.	The training can be improved with more activities done by participants
the internationalization process which was explained by the hos University was quite interesting and useful for me.	The interaction and exchanging the information based on our University	adding more illustrative materials to clarify the issues.
Topics on Internationalisation, Management, Cooperation	enough space for discussion	
Strategic planning and strategic management for regional development from a university perspective	Competitiveness of cities/regions	
	Discussions	

Conclusion

The study visit/training in FH JOANNEUM received also a good feedback by the respondents of the survey. The participants perceived the 4 meetings as fruitful. It is difficult to identify a topic that was exceptional well perceived, as almost all respondents answered differently regarding relevant topics, and content they liked very much. Room for improvement was identified with more practical examples, face to face instead of online and more interactivity during the meetings.

Study visit Masaryk University

The study visit and training had 40 participants. The training was separated in 6 sessions:

- 1st Session day 1: Introduction, Masaryk University
- 2nd Session day 1: External relations of MU and external relations of the Faculty of Arts
- 1st Session day 2: Technology and Knowledge Transfer at the MU
- 2nd session day 2: MU as the institution open to students with special needs
- 1st session day 3: Linking students/university with employers
- 2nd session day 3: University of the 3rd Age alias MU as Age friendly university

Results

For each session participants needed to indicate, if they agree following 5 statements:

- The topic is interesting for me
- The level of complexity of the training material in this session is adequate for me
- The session is well structured and provides all information necessary
- The quality of the training material is adequate
- The chosen method supports the learning process well

The 5 possible items were

- strongly agree
- agree
- neutral
- disagree
- strongly disagree

The analysis shown in this report summarized all strongly agree and agree answers for each of the sessions (see below).

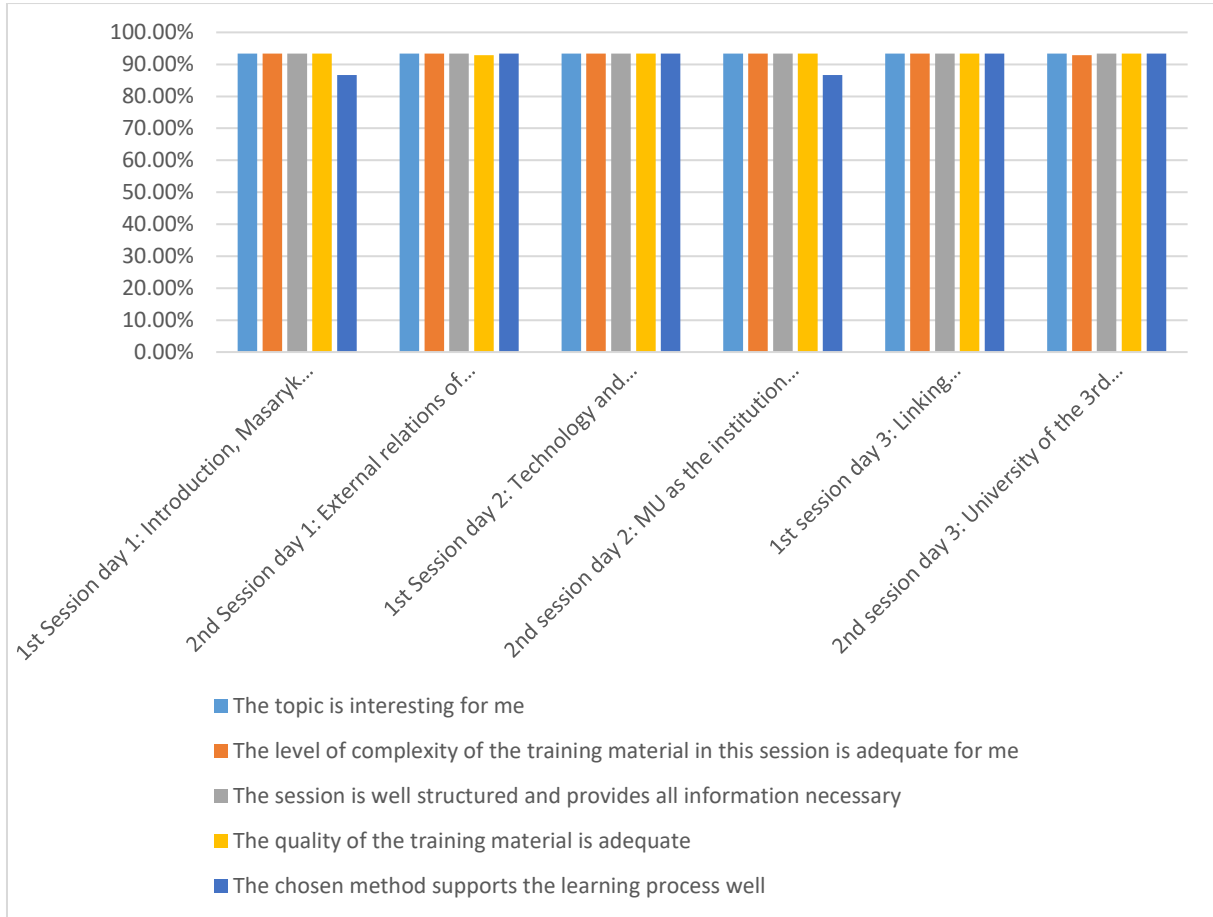


Figure 10

The diagram shows that in total all sessions were perceived very well by the participants. One participant answered all answers with strongly disagree, so it is assumed that he or she answered by mistake.

There was agreement among all other participants for following statements concerning Session 1 day 1:

- The topic is interesting for me
- The quality of the training material is adequate
- The session is well structured and provides all information necessary

For the other one statements one other respondent did not fully agree.

For session 2 day 1, session 1 day 2, session 1 day 3 and session 2 day 3 all other participants agreed to all statements.

In session 2 day 2 all other respondents agreed to following statements:

- The topic is interesting for me
- The quality of the training material is adequate
- The session is well structured and provides all information necessary

One other participant did not agree to the last statement.

For session 1 following possible improvements were given by the participants:

- Meet in Person

For session 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 no improvement was proposed.

For the trainings in general participants had to evaluate 6 different statements:

- The topics covered contributed to reaching the projected goals.
- The training design (i.e. materials used, methods applied) encouraged my participation in the course.
- The learning aids/material assisted my learning
- The training format and methods of delivery provided room for everyone to participate actively
- Overall I am satisfied with this training
- In general the training was relevant to my needs and answered my expectations

The participants had to rate on a 5 Likert scale, if they agree or disagree to the statements.

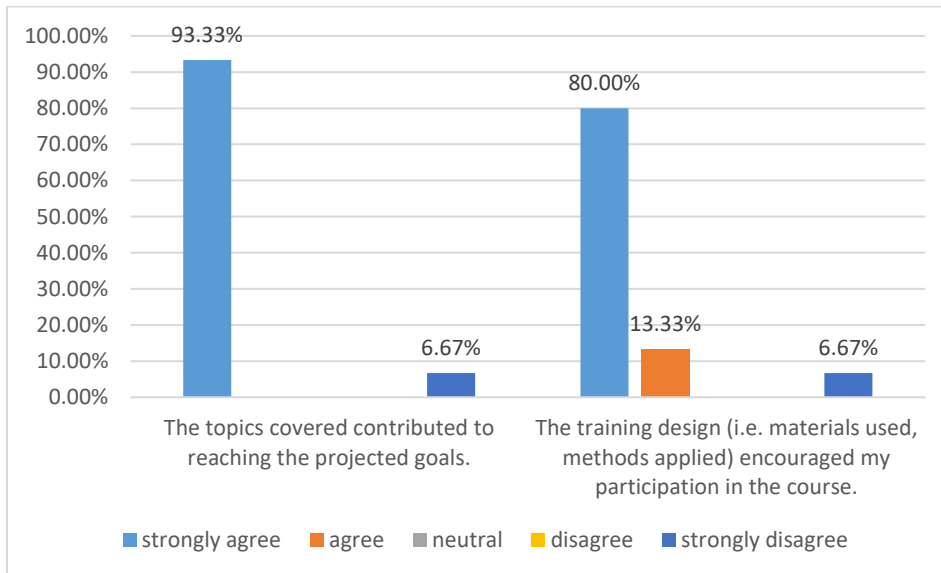


Figure 11

Like in the previous questions one participant answered with strongly disagree, so the same assumption is made for these questions. Assuming that the figure above shows that everyone agrees to both statements “The topics covered contributed to reaching the projected goals.” and “The training design (i.e. materials used, methods applied) encouraged my participation in the course.”.

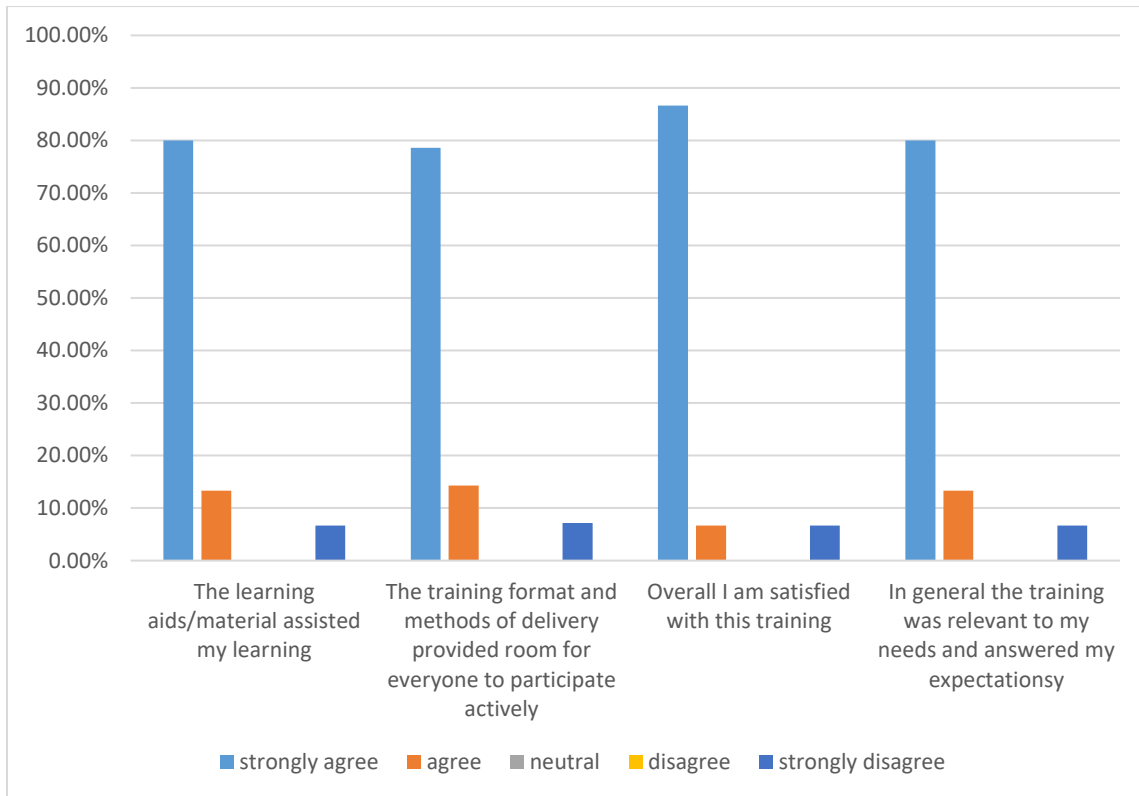


Figure 12

Figure 12Figure 6 shows the feedback to the remaining 4 questions. All participants but one agree to all the four statements.

In the questionnaire participants were also asked to give feedback to 5 questions concerning the total impression regarding the training. The questions were the following:

- What would you point out as redundant or missing?
- How is the overall training content relevant with regards to your practical / work related activities?
- The part that I found most relevant / useful was:
- The part I liked the most was:
- The training can be improved by:

The results of the first two questions can be seen in Table 7.

Table 7

Course content: What would you point out as redundant or missing?	How is the overall training content relevant with regards to your practical / work related activities?
nothing	the content was exactly related to our university activities and plans.
	The training was very interesting, there was topics related to 3rd age education and it was preety new for us and might be used in the related format. The sessions regarding the support mechanisms of disabled students was also noteworthy to mention. In overall the training was very beneficial for me.
The trainings were well planned. It was technically well maintained. The information conveyed was interesting. The regulations of the time were observed. The material provided was relevant to the topic.	All three sessions were very important. We will share the information received during the training with the university community. Innovative approaches were interesting. Especially the principles of knowledge commercialization and continuing education services.
All topics and materials were relevant and useful.	The experience of the faculty of Art of Masaryk University is very useful for our university as we are art university too.
	This training was very usefull for me, a good experience, particularly internationalisation of regional universities.
	relevant to the project needs and activities that the university will be involved in

The results of the ladder three questions can be found in Table 8.

Table 8

The part that I found most relevant / useful was:	The part I liked the most was:	The training can be improved by:
career support activities	the practical examples given by university from their own activities	If we had chance to see everything on place it would be more clear. In a very short time and online regime university have done its maximum. But this does not depend on project or university. In this reality that was the only solution. But I hope that we will have chance to visit
The session regarding university international affairs		

	<p>All the sessions were very interesting, but the innovative approaches of the Faculty of Technology were especially important.</p> <p>Services for people with special needs.</p> <p>Continuing Education Services.</p>	<p>Thanks to the training organizers and implementers.</p> <p>Special thanks to Mr. Milan for creating a positive, and business-like environment. All questions were answered succinctly.</p> <p>For me the training was impressive. I will share the experience with my colleagues, we will discuss their implementation.</p>
external relations of the Faculty of Arts, age-friendly university, MU as the institution open to handicapped people	MU provides handicapped people with all conditions to feel comfortable and get high-quality education.	all was well-organized.
External relations of MU and of the Faculty of Arts	Linking students/University with employers	
All, including external relations, knowledge transfer, linking students with potential employers	openness to handicapped people	by a live site visit

Conclusion

As in the trainings before also the study visit was perceived as a very interesting, informative one by the respondents. Presumably one respondent filled the closed question wrongly, as he or she answered with “strongly disagree” to every answer, but did not explain, why. Besides that, the feedback of the participants is again very positive. Participants were impressed by the different activities of the university and the openness to handicapped people. The only major point for improvement is again that live visits would be much better in order to get a better understanding of everything.

Summary

Though planned face to face one year before they actually happened, the study visits in the frame of WP1 of the RURD project were perceived as very helpful for the respondents of the 4 surveys. Because of the pandemic they all needed to be postponed and finally had to be conducted online in all European partner universities. This is also the major point mentioned that can be improved. Online study visits, no matter, how good they are organised can't replace an on-site visit, where participants can see the implementation of the things presented to them. It would also be easier to show the participants practical examples, as this is the second point that was mentioned throughout the surveys.

Though the project plan does not foresee study visits to Europe in the later part of the projects, it is evident, that the Georgian as well as the European project partners could still benefit, if face to face study visits can happen before the end of the project.