

# EPESS

European healthy Pupils and skilled Educators  
via integrated School food Systems

## Final Evaluation Report

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## Executive Summary

The current food system is producing major negative impacts for our health and the environment. Recent international research evidence - from the dietary burden of disease, to climate change and biodiversity loss, to nutritional insecurity and the breakdown of culinary traditions - show that the urgency for action is escalating. In this context, schools are well recognised as important locales for action to change the food system, not least because they provide a population-scale platform to transform how younger generations engage with food.

A wide-range of research studies have explored the role of school-based interventions in changing the attitudes and behaviour of children and young people towards issues such as dietary health, food culture, food and environmental sustainability, and animal welfare. These studies point towards the importance of experiential education that is integrated into the formal and informal curriculum. Research also shows the potential for a whole school approach that brings together the connections between core educational activities, school meals and other food in schools, and the food-related interactions between schools and their local community context.

For schools to act effectively, they need supportive conditions in the forms of clear policy guidance, financial resources, and the opportunities to build capacity over time. However, the political processes to bring these conditions are unlikely to be forthcoming unless key actors can demonstrate the ability to deliver promising work under real-world conditions. This is a problem because few exemplars are derived from studies of 'everyday practice': they concentrate on interventions designed for research purposes, or programmes supplementary to the mainstream of educational practice. Given the current and impending scale of the issues, there is an urgent need to better understand how educational practitioners develop innovative work with the complex challenges of food system education. This is particularly the case with regard to action framed around holistic and systems-based perspectives, and where practitioners are working under everyday circumstances, as opposed to those driven primarily as a consequence of research-driven interventions or special funding arrangements.

Therefore, the main question for this study was: *What are the key issues involved in embedding a whole system approach towards food from the practical perspective of educationalists?*

The setting for this study was an Erasmus Plus funded European programme called EPESS. This consisted of an exchange programme between three countries, involving two schools and one leading food-in-schools NGO in each country (LOMA in Denmark; Food for Life in the UK; Skutecne Zdrava Škola in Czechia). The group consisted of a range of educational practitioners from Early Years, Primary and Secondary sectors; NGO programme coordinators and development leads; and academic and independent researchers. A leading goal of the programme was to increase the skills, confidence and competences of education practitioners with regard to food-related activities, and to enable implementation of new or enhanced approaches contributing to good food culture in schools. The programme was informed by Community of Practice principles.

The programme took place over 24 months and consisted of one exchange to each of the three participating countries. Including host country representatives, the number of participants for each visit was: 29 for Denmark; 32 for UK; and 27 for Czechia. The exchanges included visits to core participating schools and additional schools, participation in experiential food education activities, presentations, and group critical reflections. The periods between exchanges involved a series of webinar learning events and ongoing group communications on best practice through a closed social media platform. The programme, and the associated research process, was informed by systems thinking and the World Health Organisation's whole settings conceptual framework for health promotion.

For the research-based study of the programme, we adopted a mixed methods and action-oriented approach. This drew upon 21 interviews, 20 critical reflection group exercises, observational exercises, semi-structured baseline-follow up surveys, reflective logs, and programme record analysis. We undertook combination of framework and thematic analysis of the data.

We obtained survey responses from 17 core members of the programme group. These showed that the majority of participants had over 9 years of experience in the field, and the group covered areas of expertise ranging from secondary, primary and nursery sectors in teaching, leadership, administration, catering and research. All respondents reported that the programme had fulfilled their expectations for personal professional development and there were strong majorities for self-reported improvements in knowledge, skills and confidence mapped against the Integrated School Food System domains measured through the survey tool.

The feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive about the EPESS programme in terms of its organisation, delivery and opportunity to obtain an insight into a wealth of innovative practices in school food education. The programme helped build a community of practice with a group of educationalists with many common interests and shared commitments. The hands-on experiential learning during the exchange visits were seen as vital to feel inspired, obtain depth of understanding and to see practice from the 'inside'. The programme enabled participants to have dialogue with experts with experience, to take a step back and see the wider educational and social importance of food education, and to be surprised and sometimes challenged by different ways of working. An important feature of the programme has been to enable schools to share what they do, to be more confident to do so, and – despite a range of obstacles - to show what they can achieve.

As part of the taking part in the programme, participants identified a number of opportunities for enhancing and developing these forms of exchanges. Some of the greatest challenges revolved around finding shared understanding of the core elements of whole settings approaches to food in schools. This was particularly complex given the diversity of schools taking part (nursery through to secondary), and diverse national policy and societal contexts. Nevertheless, these challenges had a beneficial role in getting participants to think laterally and strategically about the overall pedagogical mission of school food initiatives.

Analysis of the critical reflections and feedback showed that participants identified a considerable number of micro-level actions to address common pedagogical challenges and create innovative solutions in real-world practice settings. We organised and classified these using the whole settings conceptual framework for food in schools. Further analysis identified a number of higher order themes. These included:

- “Persistence, passion and belief”: the scale of the tasks involve a high level of personal commitment
- “Deeply embedding practice into organisational memory”: it is important to plan and anticipate staff, organisation and policy changes
- “Enthusiasm and fun”: innovative practice can only be sustained where there is a generative culture that feeds staff enjoyment and a sense of achievement in their work
- “Bending the rules”: innovative practice often involves creative interpretation of guidance and rules, and positive risk taking
- “Curiosity and the search for new issues and ideas”: in a rapidly changing context, there is a constant flow of new and interesting pedagogical opportunities to apply whole settings approaches for good food in schools
- “Giving practitioners the chance to experiment”: staff need the opportunities to try out new ways of working
- “Having a holistic vision”: it is essential to keep a bigger vision across the whole educational journey for student learning
- “Supportive, respectful and united teams”: whole settings approaches require high levels of coordination and shared understanding of purpose
- “Real leadership”: leaders need not only to support and authorise, but to encourage innovation and experimentation
- “Resistance”: some outside forces – such as the large corporate food industry – need to be challenged and resisted
- “Making do”: it is important to act with discretion around funding, the allocation of resources, and the scope for drawing upon pupil, parent and community assets

Overall, these themes illustrate the potential for innovation at the school level, and the opportunities for scaling-up the transfer of learning at national and cross-national levels. The feasibility of such work shows the way for greater proactive policy in a key field for societal and environmental action.

## 1. Introduction

The current food system is producing major negative impacts for our health and the environment. Recent international research evidence - from the dietary burden of disease, to climate change and biodiversity loss, to nutritional insecurity and the breakdown of culinary traditions - show that the urgency for action is escalating (Swinburn *et al.*, 2019). In this context, schools are well recognised as important locales for action to change the food system, not least because they prove a population-scale platform to transform how younger generations engage with food (e.g. WHO, 2012; Story *et al.*, 2009; Hawkes *et al.*, 2015).

A wide-range of research studies have explored the role of school-based interventions in changing the attitudes and behaviour of children and young people towards issues such as dietary health, food culture, food and environmental sustainability, and animal welfare. These studies point towards the importance

of experiential education that is integrated into the formal and informal curriculum (Jarpe-Ratner *et al.*, 2016; Diker *et al.*, 2011). Research also shows the potential for a whole school approach that brings together the connections between core educational activities, school meals and other food in schools, and the food-related interactions between schools and their local community context (Jones *et al.*, 2012; Ruge *et al.*, 2016; Mogren *et al.* 2019). In this study, we refer to this type of approach as one that draws attention to the need for an “Integrated School Food System” (ISFS). ISFS is a whole-school approach, which involves all parts of the school working together and being committed to healthier, more sustainable and socially beneficial food practices. ISFS places an emphasis on school settings as ‘systems’ that have multiple points of engagement with food issues. Therefore, an integrated and coordinated approach is needed to create organisational and behavioural change.

For schools seeking to adopt an ISFS approach, they need supportive structural conditions in the form of clear policy guidance, financial resources, and the opportunities to build capacity over time (Oostindjer *et al.*, 2017). However, the political processes to bring these conditions are unlikely to be forthcoming unless key actors can demonstrate the ability to deliver promising work under real-world conditions. This is a problem because few exemplars are derived from studies of grass roots practice: they concentrate on interventions designed for research purposes, or programmes supplementary to the mainstream of educational practice. Given the current and impending scale of the issues, there is an urgent need to better understand how educational practitioners develop innovative work with the complex challenges of food system education. This is particularly the case with regard to action framed around holistic and systems-based perspectives, where practitioners are working under everyday circumstances, and are likely to benefit from professional development (Wang and Stewart, 2013; Story *et al.*, 2009). A focus on the current work of educational practitioners not only offer a basis for disseminating real-world learning, but also a platform for advancing teacher training and competency development in this field (Bürgener & Barth, 2018; Sutter *et al.*, 2019)

**Photo 1: The first EPESS group exchange visit in Denmark, UCL March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018**



## **2. EPESS Programme**

### **2.1 Programme overview**

The aim of this programme was to develop and reinforce networks within the area of **European healthy Pupils and skilled Educators** via integrated **School food Systems [EPESS]**. Through exchange of good practice activities, the participants shared ideas, practices and methods across whole school food culture, school food education and teacher training. The collaboration brought together expertise from across the UK, Denmark and the Czech Republic and intended to disseminate work to schools, organisations and communities across Europe.

Funded through the European Commission's Erasmus Plus, EPESS responded to the two key funder priorities of "achieving of relevant and high quality skills and competences" and "promoting the acquisition of skills and competences - and - strengthening the profile of the teaching profession".

The main route towards achieving these goals was through inspiring and motivating school staff to collaborate and share learning regarding whole school approaches to good food and food-related education across the curriculum (cooking, growing food and farm knowledge). This was intended to increase the skills, confidence and competences of school staff and build the profile of the teaching profession in this area. The project led to the development and enhancement of approaches and resources that can be used now and in the future by schools. The project built on the existing evidence associated with food in schools and supported the UN Sustainable Development Goals, especially the goals for health, food and equality.

Knowledge and experience was disseminated through a range of methods including the national e-twinning platform and via school media. Participation with other teachers with different experiences and teaching backgrounds was intended to provide unique access to new skills and competences. The programme team anticipated that sharing experiences and putting new learning into practice would

inspire and motivate teachers to further engage in these types of activities, and build self-esteem in teachers, strengthening the profession.

## 2.2 The programme goals

The EPESS programme had two overall goals:

1. To inspire and motivate education practitioners to collaborate and share learning regarding ISFS approaches to good food and food-related education, building the profile of the teaching profession within this subject
2. To increase the skills, confidence and competences of education practitioners with regard to food-related activities, to enable implementation of new or enhanced approaches contributing to good food culture in schools

## 2.3 The programme theory and stages of change

The programme theory leading to these areas of success involved six stages as set out in box 1.

**Figure 1. EPESS programme stages of change**

1. Participants meet and learn about each other and become inspired and motivated to collaborate on the aims of the project.
2. Participants initiate transfer of knowledge of good practice and obtain social learning through project activities, including experiential learning.
3. Participants engage in mid-term evaluation and share critical reflections on the learning gained.
4. Participants attain new knowledge, awareness, competences and understanding. Communities of practice and interest are developed.
5. Participants implement new learning from EPESS activities in their own practice.
6. Participants disseminate their learning to wider audiences and colleagues.

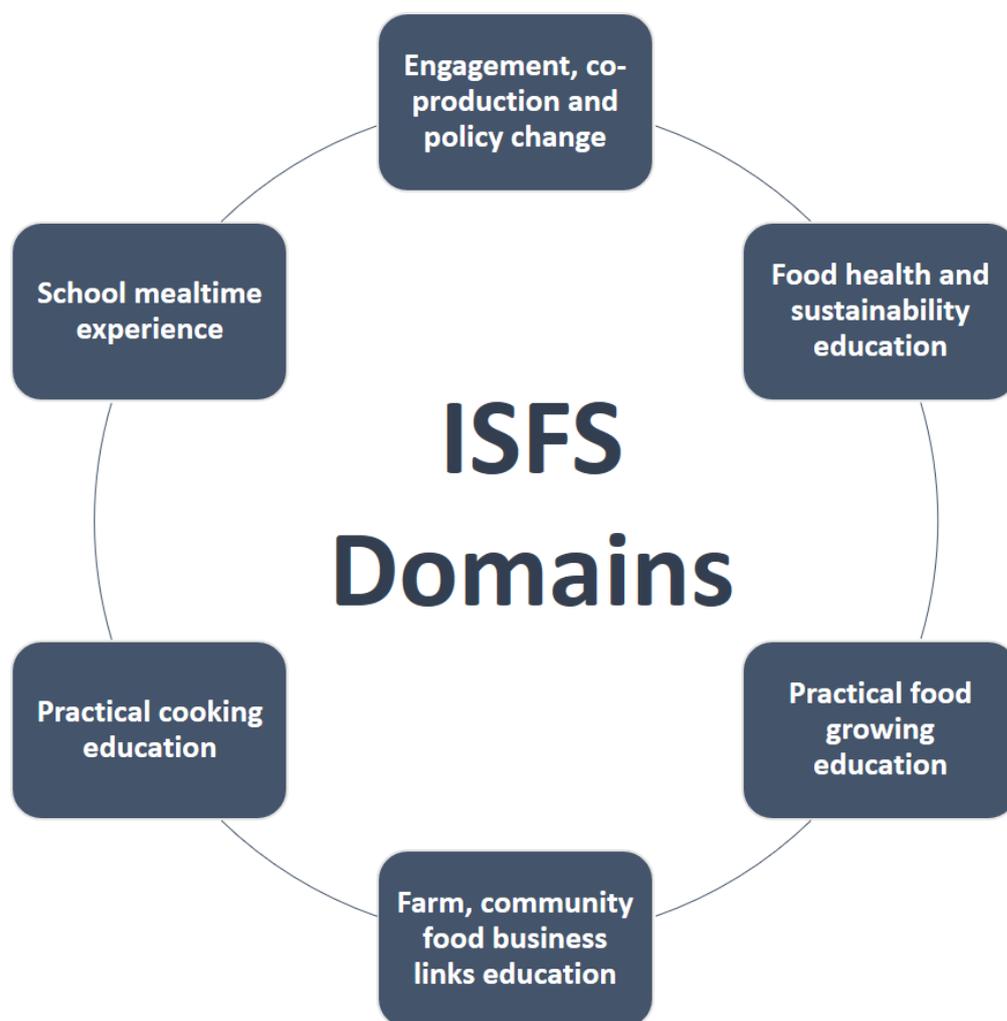
## 2.4 The Integrated School Food Systems (ISFS) model and the EPESS programme

Drawing upon the national school food programmes participating in EPESS (described more fully below), at an initial stage of the EPESS programme, we compiled a description of a comprehensive range of activities that form the basis for whole school setting approaches to food. These are set out in **Table 1**. **Figure 1** summarises these in the form of six overarching domains for action. This ISFS model was used as a point of reference for the EPESS programme goals, learning outcomes for participants, and the evaluation framework

**Table 1: Activities that characterize the Integrated School Food System (ISFS) model**

Domain	Activity
Practical cooking education	Practical cooking education within school hours
	Practical cooking education outside school hours (extra-curricular)
Practical food growing education	Practical food growing (gardening) within school hours
	Practical food growing (gardening) outside school hours
Farm, community and food business links education	Educational visits to farms or other food businesses
	School or community-based markets for food produced by farmers, local businesses or the school community
Food health and sustainability education	Education on healthy nutrition and diet
	Education on food, sustainability and environmental issues (such as organic, fair trade, animal welfare, waste, local food issues)
	Work to involve school cooks or catering staff in mainstream educational activities
School mealtime experience	Work to improve the meal-time experience of school students
	Work to procure school meal ingredients from local, organic or other food producers with high standards for sustainability
	Breakfast clubs and out of school hours provision of food
Engagement, co-production and policy change	Engaging with parents and families on food related-issues in school (e.g. surveys, consultations, working groups)
	Engaging with students on food related-issues in school (e.g. surveys, consultations, working groups)
	Developing school policies, rules and guidance on food in schools (such as rules on high sugar drinks in school)
	Developing a 'whole school' and 'integrated' strategy for healthy and sustainable food in school
	Using digital tools such as iPad, computer and online platform in food education and planning

**Figure 1: Domains of the ISFS model**



These domains reflect the areas of focus in FFL (UK), LOMA (DK) and SZS (CZ) programmes

## **2.5 The programme partners**

The programme consists of a total four voluntary and higher education sector partners and six school partners:

- Soil Association Food for Life (FFL), UK
- University College Lillebaelt (UCL), Denmark
- Skutečně zdravá škola, z.s. (SZS), Czechia
- University of the West of England (UWE), UK
- Washingborough Academy, UK
- Newland St John (Primary), UK
- Nymarkskolen, Denmark
- Ørkildskolen, Denmark
- ANGEL school, Prague, Czechia
- Maternity and Family Centre Mateřinka Brno, Czechia

The **Soil Association** was the lead Erasmus Plus fund-holder reporting agency. The Soil Association is the UK's leading organisation promoting sustainable and organic food and farming and employ over 120 staff. It is a membership charity campaigning for healthy, humane and sustainable food, farming and land use. At the time of the programme initiation, the Soil Association's work was organized with a focus on:

- “Good food for all” where everyone should have the right to food that is organically grown, minimally processed, fairly traded, fresh and seasonal.
- “Innovation” in organic systems to secure a durable and humane solution to the environmental, social and economic challenges facing.
- “Enabling change” with pioneering farmers, growers and businesses who deliver practical change through technical support and advice, and through the trading subsidiary, Soil Association Certification.

The Soil Association's **Food for Life** (FFL) has a major role in the EPESS. FFL is an award-winning national programme in England to transform food culture <http://www.foodforlife.org.uk/> The aims are to make good food the easy choice for everyone, wherever and whenever they are. FFL have worked with over 5000 schools, early years, hospitals, workplaces, care homes, local authorities, and caterers providing support, training and resources to give people the skills and motivation to cook, grow food, and engage in good food culture. FFL provides expertise in implementation of whole school approaches to good food culture, along with training and resources to foster high quality skills for teachers and support staff in schools. This approach, training and the associated resources were developed by expert partners and through close working with schools for more than 10 years.

In Denmark, there is currently no national school food programme and therefore educational initiatives that apply a whole school and integrated approach only occur in dedicated networks, such as the LOMA schools. However, experiences and knowledge from these schools on 'what-works' is of high value for all Danish Schools. The **LOMA-local food project**: <http://lomaskole.dk/forside/in-english/> is a programme under the **University College Lillebaelt** (UCL) that works to improve the food served and food culture in schools. The project was supported by Nordea-fonden from 2015-2017, where 6 schools and 2470 pupils participated. The schools established a network that intend to expand to schools and kindergartens and collaborate as 'communities of practice'.

LOMA holds sessions on cooking, growing, supports integration in subjects for teachers and works with school caterers to improve the healthiness of the food served. UCL are currently supporting research in the LOMA project, where preliminary results indicate a positive development in food and health related action competence among pupils (Ruge, Puck & Hansen 2017). These results have been confirmed in an external evaluation report published by Danish Evaluation institute (EVA, 2017). UCL and partners are currently developing a joint LOMA-training supplementary training course for teachers, social educators and kitchen staff from LOMA schools. This is based on experiences from the LOMA-EDU courses that included pedagogy, didactics, local food geographies and collaboration with local and regional farms.

In the Czech Republic, **Skutecně zdravá škola** (SZS) is a non-governmental organization that manages an educational, awareness raising and information programme for schools, school canteens, educators and pupils in order to raise awareness of the healthy food culture, local food and the relationship between consumed food and the state of the environment. SZS's vision is to encourage lasting and sustainable change to the way we all think about food, our communities, our environment and our health. SZS goal is to improve the state of the school food and food culture: using more fresh seasonal and sustainably produced products from local farms, making good food the easy choice for everyone, reconnecting pupils

with where their food comes from, teaching them how it's grown and cooked, and championing the importance of well-sourced ingredients.

Essential parts of the programme and participating schools' curricula is education on school garden, cooking classes, farm visits and involvement in the local community. By the end of November 2019, 382 schools with 62 000 pupils were involved in the program. All schools in the programme receive resource packs and access to a personalised portal for the school. For teachers, cooks, pupils and parents SZS offers practical training workshops and excursions.

Six school partners - two from each country - contributed to the EPESS project through sharing of established and practical experience of food-related activities in schools. These schools have common challenges with regard to child health and learning, especially challenges related to inequality in health and learning among pupils.

The **Washingborough Academy** is slightly larger than the average-sized primary school (275 pupils) and became an academy on 1 April 2012. The school is just outside Lincoln where 29% of children live in poverty. A recent Ofsted inspection highlighted "Leadership and management are good. The head teacher's commitment has been at the heart of the continuing improvements to teaching and pupils' achievement. It is reported that pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is above average." Washingborough (primary) is an FFL ambassador school. The head-teacher's commitment has been at the heart of the continuing improvements to teaching and pupils' achievement. They are extremely active on social media and make video tutorials by the children on food activities. They have an extensive growing programme and carry out great 'small space' gardening, including keeping bees. They are currently part of another Erasmus partnership with a Polish organisation and regularly correspond with international schools.

**Newland St John**, is an average size primary school (253 pupils) part of Sentamu Academy Learning Trust is based in Hull. Hull is the 15th most deprived local authority in the UK with 35% of children living in poverty. The number of pupils on roll has risen rapidly, with a 16% increase in the school population in the last two years. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is above the national average. The pupil premium funding is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families, and those children who are looked after by the local authority.

Newland St John have carried out a lot of work to inspire other schools in Hull. They have a great school farmers' market programme, community links and the whole school has been galvanised. The Head teacher and over 50 staff, have a clear view about what the school does well, and where it could do even better. They drive the quality of teaching, achievement, and the school purposefully forward. As a result, the school continues to improve.

**Nymarkskolen** is a secondary school with children ranging from ages 13-16. The school runs the standard national curriculum with an additional focus on LOMA school meals and physical activity. Nymarkskolen has 93 staff and 732 students. It is situated in a large town in southern Denmark in an area marked by lower social economic conditions and low employment. There has been a recent effort to increase intake from more affluent families with the aim to make a positive influence on all students.

Nymarkskolen was the first LOMA school in Denmark and initiated the development project in 2011. Nymarkskolen provide best practice for other LOMA-schools in the pilot-stage. Students participate in planning, cooking and serving a healthy school meal with professional staff. This takes place on a daily

basis as part of educational activities. The menu includes products from local farms as an element in the whole-school approach. LOMA-educational activities are integrated in curriculum from several subjects, such as math, science, language and home-economics. In 2019 the school was awarded with a silver-award for development of green and sustainable educational materials.

**Ørkildskolen** has 700 pupils (age 6-12 years). Preschool and 1st-6th grade. They have 100 staff, which includes management, teachers and social-pedagogy staff and kitchen managers. Apart from being an ordinary Folkeskole in an urban area, this school also has classes for reception of children from immigrant families. Therefore, several teachers are experienced in teaching pupils from families with other ethnic backgrounds than Danish and more vulnerable families with respect to socio-economic conditions.

Ørkildskolen has been participating in the LOMA-project since 2015. Based on experience from educational activities, this school would be able to contribute to the exchange of good practice within the area of EPESS in primary schools.

During 2016-2017 all classes participated in LOMA activities including subjects of home economics (cooking and nutrition), science (growing, sustainable development and experiments), language, arts, health (development of food-and health related action competence), maths and physical activity. Classes also regularly visit local farms in the area as an element in LOMA-educational activities.

When pupils finish at Ørkildskolen after 6th grade, pupils continue for 7th grade at Nymarkskolen, which is the initial LOMA-school in Denmark. As we are currently developing and expanding the LOMA approach to more schools the collaboration between these two schools provides an example of what we are calling the 'dynamo-principle' where knowledge and experience is disseminated from one school to another. As we are aware of the general challenges in 'scaling up' of successful interventions this collaboration has the potential to have transfer quality in other countries as well.

**Angel** is an elementary school and kindergarten in Prague. A large school with 961 students in the elementary school and 112 in the kindergarten with 100 staff. The school has been involved in the pilot project Skutečně zdravá škola since 2015 and was awarded a silver medal for its activities in the field of healthy eating and life style.

Angel is one of the biggest schools in Prague based on number of pupils and staff. It has a very engaged parent group, which is helping in implementing the healthy food culture. This offers a working example of how large schools in urban centres can be successful in bringing positive change to children.

The school has been involved in the pilot project Skutečně zdravá škola since September 2015. The school was awarded the silver certificate as it met the required criteria: using mainly fresh ingredients, low sugar cooking, offering fresh fruits and vegetables, providing a wide range of drinks – including natural juices. The cooks participated in a workshop about healthy cooking and the cafeteria manager has participated in a series of training events.

All project activities involve close cooperation with parents. Parents formed a dietary committee that with responsibilities such as: tasting lunches in the school cafeteria once a month, communicating with other parents, talking about the project aims – healthy school eating, culture of healthy eating, students' awareness about food, etc.

**Maternity and Family Centre Mateřinka Brno** is a non-profit non-governmental organization founded in 2011 to support the return of parents to work from maternity leave and extended preschool education.

Since 2014 they have been engaged in a program of Health Promotion under the Ministry of Education and the National Health Institute. Their education plan meets all the requirements for preschool education and uses principles of Montessori pedagogy. They educate and care for children from 18 months to 6 years. There are 11 staff, 5 learners and 6 members of the group.

Materinka are the first certified Healthy kindergarten with Montessori program in the Czech Republic, under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and the National Health Institute. Education in the school meets the needs and goals of the Framework educational program for preschool age and children are fully prepared for entry into primary education. The goal is to offer children a stimulating environment and help them develop to their full potential. Their aim is to offer a meaningful education that respects children's personality, talents and needs. A small number of children in the classroom, the prepared environment and an experienced team of teachers provides children with incentives for learning experience. The programme has a focus on human health and everything associated with it, including children getting acquainted with all the senses. The family environment of the school is a friendly, stimulating, safe and positive one. The school is member of the SZS programme and is offering nutritious and high quality food to children; it uses a garden for educational purposes, and provides children with healthy food culture. It has been awarded the silver certificate in the program.

## 2.6 The programme delivery

The EPESS programme was delivered over a 25-month period between September 2017 and September 2019. A management group met periodically over the course of the programme. The programme was centred on three major exchanges: one for each participating country. These were preceded and followed up with subsidiary activities. **Table 2** provides a summary of the activities.

**Table 2: Summary of EPESS Project Activities**

Date	Activity
Oct 2017	Programme planning meeting
	Training webinar on "School farmers markets"
Feb 2018	Exchange visit in Denmark
	Distribution of educational materials after Denmark exchange visit follow-up webinar (video, power-point, text)
	Follow-up webinar after Denmark exchange visit
	Training webinar on "Pupil participation in cooking"
Oct 2018	Exchange visit in United Kingdom
	Distribution of educational materials after United Kingdom exchange visit follow-up webinar (recording of skype-webinar, video, power-point, text)
	Follow-up webinar after United Kingdom exchange visit
	Training webinar on "Involvement of parents in integrated school food"
Apr 2019	Video-log before the exchange visit to Czech Republic
	Exchange visit in Czech Republic
	Receiving educational materials after Czech Republic exchange visit follow-up webinar (recording of skype-webinar, video, power-point, text)

Date	Activity
	Follow-up webinar after Czech Republic exchange visit
	Dissemination to colleagues about learning and outcomes from the EPESS project
Sept 2019	Final project meeting and dissemination

Each exchange consisted of a series of visits to schools, introductory tours and talks, participatory activities, and observations of activities. In addition, the exchanges included visits to other educational settings such as educational farms, community gardens, and food businesses.

The number of core participants in each visit was as follows:

Denmark Exchange Visit:	29 core participants
UK Exchange Visit:	32 core participants
Czechia Exchange Visit:	27 core participants

**Photo 2: Students preparing food at Ørkild school, DK**



## 3. Methodology and methods

### 3.1 Summary

The evaluation was primarily a process-based study of the delivery of the EPESS programme, with additional outcome evaluation activities to understand the impacts of the programme for key participants. The research involved participatory action-research and made use of mixed methods including qualitative research (reflection groups, interviews and document analysis) and quantitative research (surveys, monitoring).

### 3.2 Research questions and objectives

The main evaluation research question was:

*What are the key issues involved in embedding the ISFS model in schools?*

Under which there were three subsidiary questions:

- *How was the EPESS programme organized and delivered?*
- *How did participating practitioners and agencies obtain and apply learning from the EPESS programme?*
- *What are key crosscutting themes for schools when putting ISFS approaches into practice?*

The objectives were:

1. To examine the implementation of the programme in terms of the type, delivery, engagement and context of activities
2. To assess changes in the knowledge, skills, confidence and competence of participants regarding whole school approaches to good food and food-related education
3. To explore participants' perceptions of their learning from - and contributions towards - the programme
4. To identify the groups' perceptions of the wider learning to arise from the programme including the implications for new or enhanced approaches contributing to good food culture in schools

### 3.3 Data collection tools and processes

**Documentary analysis** of the context for the EPESS education delivery partners included the national school food systems and relevant programmes associated with the participating EPESS schools.

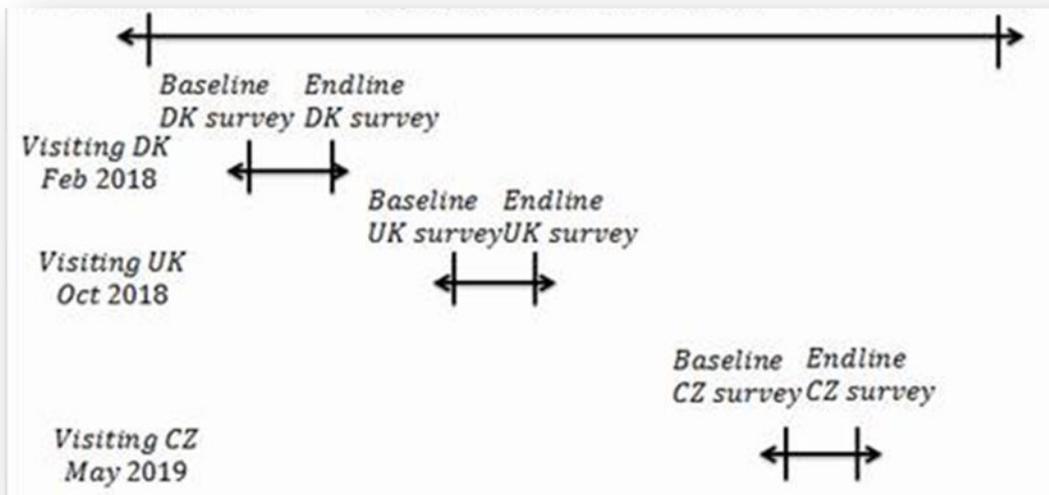
**Monitoring of the programme outputs** included:

- delivery of and progress against project activities in the timeline
- participant engagement i.e. numbers of people taking part in project activities and additional activities related to the project

**Surveys (baseline, follow-up and endline)** with programme participants. The surveys covered the following areas:

- changes in motivation and inspiration to engage in the project and in the sharing of learning associated with good food culture and food-related activities in schools
- changes in knowledge, skills and confidence with regard to implementing learning associated with good food culture and food-related activities in schools.

Figure 2: Survey Design



**Group reflections, reflective logs and vlogs** with programme participants to understand attitudes to participation in the project, motivation to engage in sharing of learning, and personal outcomes through engagement in the project.

**Interviews** with programme participants to understand attitudes to participation in the project, motivation to engage in sharing of learning, and personal outcomes through engagement in the project.

### 3.4 Sampling and Participant Case Selection Framework

All programme participants were asked to complete the survey questionnaires.

All programme participants were invited to take part in the group reflection exercises. Over the course of the programme a total of 20 group reflections were completed, with a range of three to six individuals participating in each group.

We sought to obtain interviews with all leading participants in the final exchange: 21 individuals took part, with representation from all countries and practitioner groups.

Further qualitative data was collected from ten blog posts, reflective diaries and group presentations,

### 3.5 Data analysis

We used descriptive statistical analysis to explore the quantitative survey data obtained through SurveyXact.

We selectively transcribed the reflective logs, open text survey responses, focus groups and interviews and analysed with the use of a thematic analytical framework and with the assistance of NVivo12.

Following our participatory approach, we asked participants to review and feedback on interim and final stage draft findings.

### 3.6 Ethical issues and Data Management

EPSS participants were asked for consent to complete surveys, reflective logs and interviews after being given written and verbal information about the evaluation. Data was held in secure password protected environments in the universities of UWE and UCL, and the Soil Association. Individual-level research data and group-level data (such as focus groups) was confidential to within the context of the EPSS group. Unless participants give active consent, we assumed that all reporting of results would be anonymized. The personal risks and harms associated with the study were minimal and UWE Research Ethics Committee confirmed that as an evaluation, the work did not require elevated panel approval.

**Photo 3: Food for a meal at Materinka Brno (CZ)**



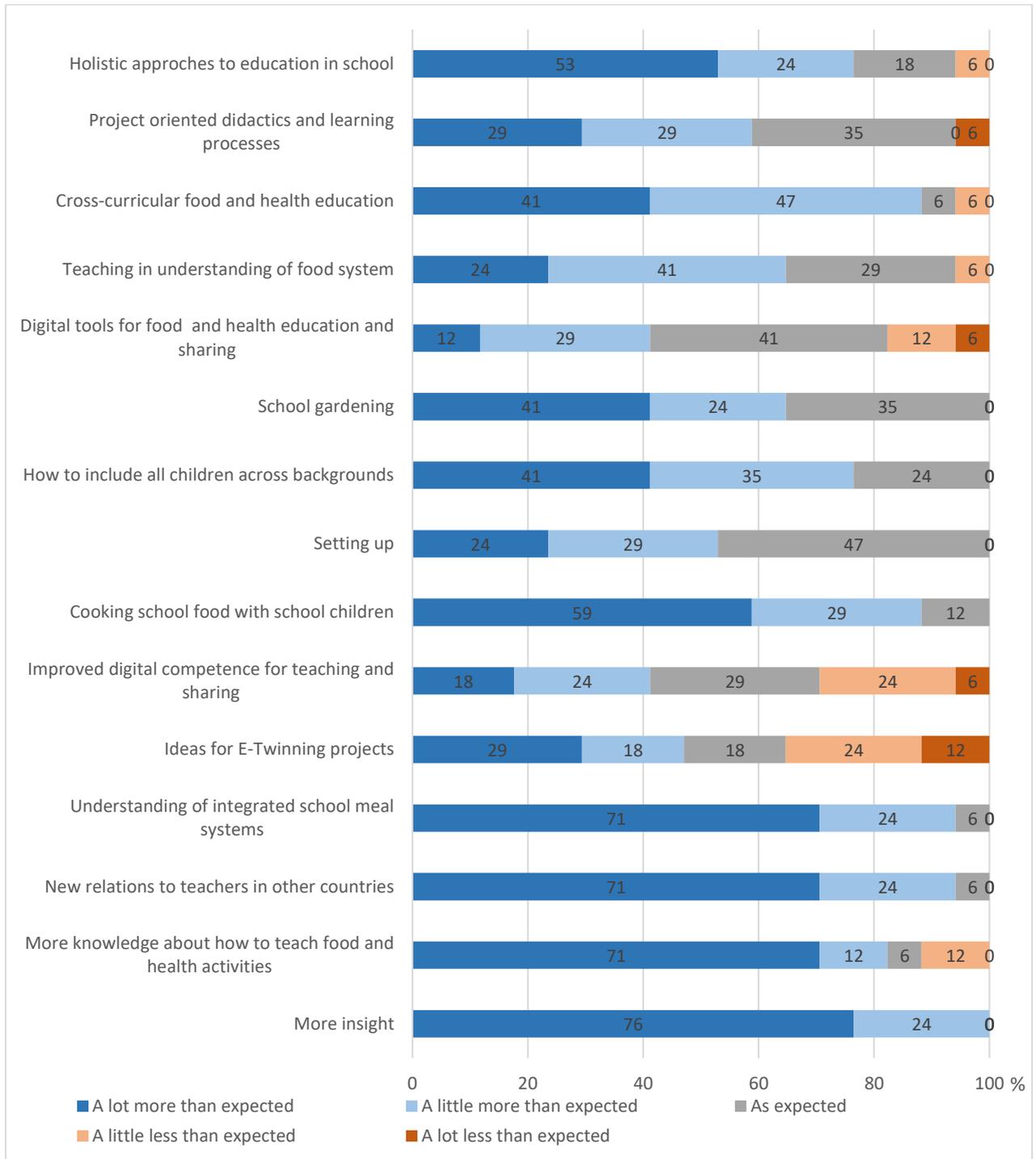
## 4. Survey Findings

### 4.1 Descriptive analysis of endline survey

Towards the end of the programme, participants were asked to complete a survey on their perceptions and experiences. We obtained responses from 18 participants representing a range of professional backgrounds in the school and education research field. The respondents were highly experienced, with nine having worked 10 or more years, and seven having worked five years or more in the education sector. Of the 18 respondents, 17 had taken part in the programme from the point of the initial visit to Denmark, and in the UK and Czechia visits. These respondents also participated in webinar training and received educational materials based around each visit. The survey responses therefore reflect engagement from those most centrally involved through the course of the initiative. The 17 respondents gave very positive feedback [majority 'strongly agree'] on their enjoyment of all visits, and positive feedback [majority 'strongly agree/agree a little'] on webinars and training materials.

The following chart shows that respondents were very positive about the role of the programme in meeting expectations with regard to the main components of the ISFS model.

**Figure 3: Participants' evaluation feedback on different aspects of EPESS mapped against the ISFS model (N= 17).**



Drawing upon the survey report, Appendix 1. EPESS Participant Survey: Results at Endline provides further details on participant's feedback in the endline survey.

## 4.2 Statistical analysis of survey results

In this section, the evaluation team has applied statistical analytical methods in order to obtain a broader picture. Based on the survey findings, the analysis investigates possible relations between the participant learning outcomes, the ISFS domains and the exchange visits. After the background information, **Table 3-Table 6** present results from analysis of selected topics. Following this, the analysis focused on participant motivation to change their own practice based on new learning and insights.

### 4.2.1 Background information

The EPESS Erasmus+ project included three exchange visits, where the program incorporated components from the ISFS model **Table 1**. After each exchange visit, the evaluation team distributed a questionnaire to each participant via a survey-exact link. The exchange visit questionnaire can be seen in Appendix 2. Questionnaire from each exchange visit. The quantitative evaluation was based on data collection from five rounds of data collection: baseline, endline and three exchange visits to Denmark, UK, and Czechia. The collection of data spans from January 2018 to October 2019, with the exchange visit questionnaires placed between these dates. During the project period, participants had the opportunity to leave and attend the EPESS project. Therefore, there is no fixed number of respondents during all of the five questionnaires.

The evaluation team distributed a minimum of 51 questionnaires. However, the number of respondents, after each visit was between 18-31. The participant rates vary across the questionnaires, where the lowest participant rate is 71% and the highest is 94%. Even though the program for each exchange visit varied to some extent, the evaluation questionnaires were identical. This facilitated evaluation of which topics within the ISFS model participants 'learned something from' in the respective countries. Furthermore, this may facilitate observations of indicators for 'change across time' in relation to the exchange visit combined with the program.

### 4.2.2 The populations of interest for evaluation

The evaluation team has analysed the different groups of interest for statistical analysis. The core population is the panel-group, consisting of the nine respondents that have participated in all questionnaires. Additionally, there is an extended group that completed the baseline and endline questionnaire and a minimum of one of the exchange visit questionnaires. This is the panel-group of six respondents. A group of 11 respondents has been identified as 'the exchange visit group'. In this group, participants attended all exchange visits and answered all exchange visit surveys. This group consists of the panel-group + 2 respondents, who only participated in the exchange visit questionnaires. The evaluation team will present and discuss results from 'the exchange visit group' in the following sections. Since the size of the population is small, we are not able to make generalizable comments.

## 4.3 Results from statistical analysis

### 4.3.1 Different levels of learning compared to different exchange programs

This evaluation focuses on participant learning in 'the exchange visit group'. Results are illustrated in four tables showing selected topics and different levels of learning according to the exchange visit program. The four tables have been selected from 17 different activities that characterize the ISFS model. The four selected tables represent possible key learning results, that show different patterns of learning from exchange visits.

The exchange visits were organized by the partner countries in the following order:

Denmark (DK)            January 2018  
 United Kingdom (UK)    October 2018  
 Czechia (CZ)            April 2019

**Table 3: ISFS topic: ‘Practical cooking education within school hours’**

In percentage	In Denmark	In United Kingdom	In Czechia
A lot	27.3	0.0	0.0
Some	54.5	45.5	9.1
A bit	18.2	45.5	45.5
Nothing at all	0.0	9.1	45.5

Table 3 illustrates that 27.3% respondents learned ‘a lot’ and 54.5% respondents learned ‘some’ about ‘Practical cooking education within school hours’ during the visit in Denmark. 45.5% learned ‘some’ about this during the visit to UK and Czechia. A possible explanation for these results is that it is only Denmark that allows students to participate in cooking ‘their own’ school food together with professionals in professional kitchens. However, cooking education as an integrated subject in ‘food technology’ and traditional training sessions in classrooms are common in all three countries.

**Table 4: Educational visits to farms or other food businesses.**

In percentage	In Denmark	In United Kingdom	In Czechia
A lot	54.5	0.0	9.1
Some	45.5	54.5	54.5
A bit	0.0	27.3	27.3
Nothing at all	0.0	18.2	9.1

**Table 4** illustrates that 54.5 % learned a ‘lot’ in DK , 54.5% learned ‘some’ both from visits in UK and in CZ about ‘Educational visits to farms or other food business’. These results indicate that majority of respondents has experienced new ways to realize the learning potential in educational visits to farms and other food business for students. These results correspond with results in **Figure 4** about intentions to change own practice.

**Table 5: Initiatives to engage with parents and families on food related-issues in school (e.g. questionnaires, consultations, working groups)**

	Initiatives to engage with parents and families on food related-issues in school (e.g. questionnaires, consultations, working groups)		
In percentage	In Denmark	In United Kingdom	In Czechia
A lot	18.2	27.3	9.1
Some	9.1	27.3	63.6
A bit	63.6	27.3	9.1
Nothing at all	9.1	18.2	18.2

**Table 5** illustrates that during the visit in Czechia, 9.1% learned ‘a lot’ and 63.6% learned ‘some’ about engaging parents and families. During the visit in UK, 27.3% learned ‘some’ and 27.3% ‘a lot’ during UK visit. These results correspond with results in **Figure 4** about intentions to change own practice. These

results indicate that the way parents were engaged in food-related issues in school in Czechia was a huge inspiration to participants, compared to the lower levels of engagement in Denmark and UK. These results correspond with results in **Figure 4** about intentions to change own practice.

**Table 6: Practical food growing (gardening) within school hours**

	Practical food growing (gardening) within school hours		
In percentage	In Denmark	In United Kingdom	In Czechia
A lot	0,0	45,5	45,5
Some	45,5	27,3	36,4
A bit	18,2	18,2	9,1
Nothing at all	36,4	9,1	9,1

**Table 6** illustrates that 45.5% learned ‘a lot’, 36.4% learned ‘some’ about ‘Practical food growing (gardening) within school hours’ during the visit in Czechia. During the visit in UK, 45.5% learned ‘a lot’ and 27.3% learned ‘some’ about the topic. Whereas the visit in Denmark had 36.4% that learned ‘nothing at all’. These results indicate that ‘practical food growing within school hours’ is a well-established educational activity in UK and Czechia, but not in Denmark. Following this, the learning opportunities for the participants in the EPESS program were best in Czechia and UK.

#### 4.3.2 Concluding remarks to tables

The results indicate that even if the exchange visits were organised according to topics in the ISFS field, there were fruitful variations between the programs in the respective countries. These variations had been agreed upon in the project management group during the planning stage of the visits. In addition, variations depended depending on season of the year (winter in Denmark, fall in UK, spring in Czechia) and the different people, who were in charge of planning. Results from visits in UK and in Czechia results seem to be more similar, compared to results from Denmark. Possible explanations for this result could be that 1) Denmark is the only country where pupil participation in cooking school food is allowed 2) Czechia and UK have national school food programs and Denmark has none. In total, the respondents regarded as ‘a social learning group’ have acquired increased knowledge about the various topics in the ISFS field. Due to the small number of respondents, evidence is low for these results obtained by survey-data. However, results seem to be supported by qualitative data, see 5. Qualitative Findings.

#### 4.4 Results regarding 'Intentions to change own practice'

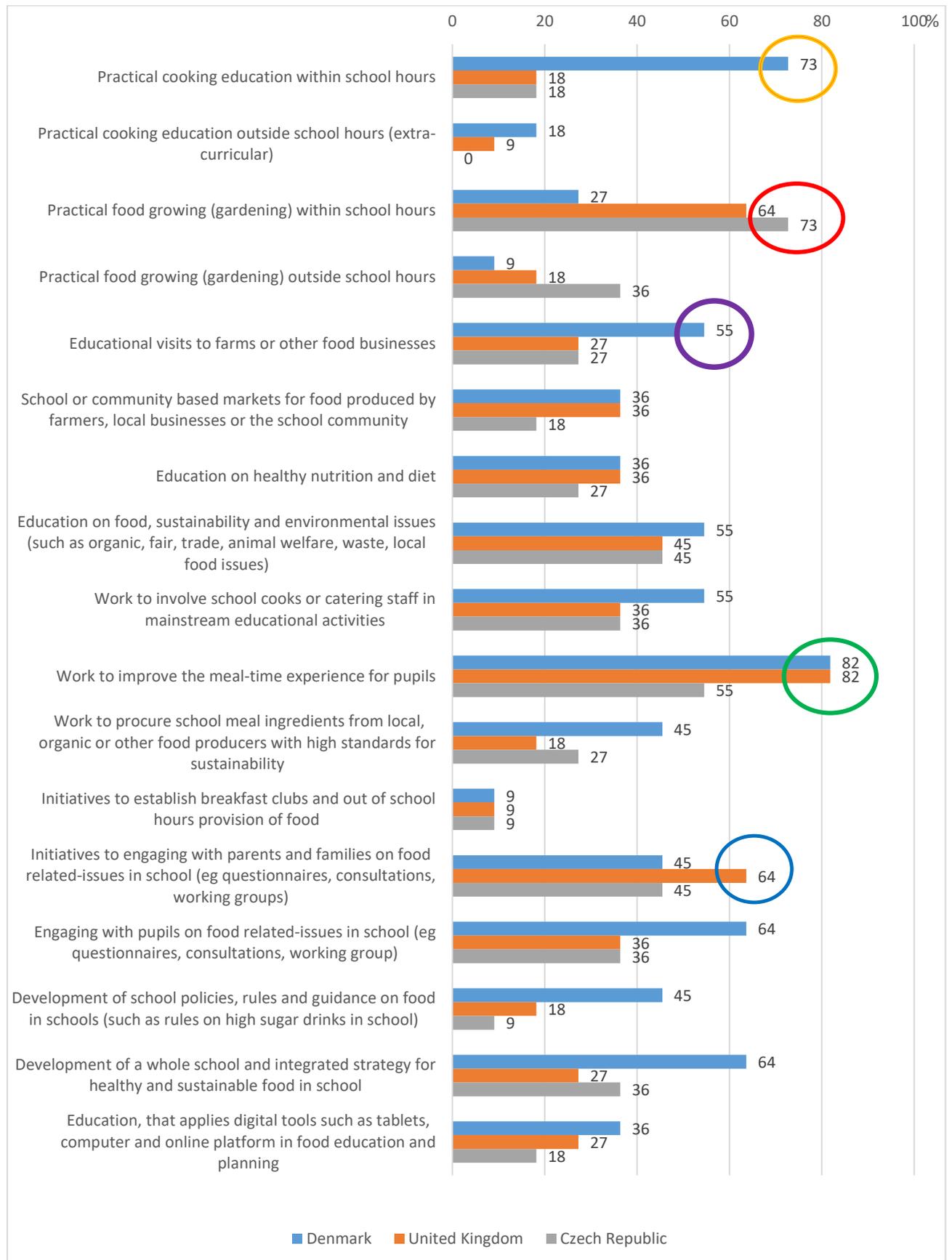
This section concerns the transferability of new learning from exchange visits to own ISFS practice. **Figure 4** provides an overview of the percentage of participants who intend to change their practice according to experiences and learning after the exchange visits. **Figure 4** is based on results from answers in the ‘exchange visit group’. Participants answered the question: “Would you change your practice regarding the following topics based on your experience from the exchange visit?”

Even though **Figure 4** only includes the ‘exchange visit group’ with 11 respondents there are still some valuable insights marked with an orange circle: 73% of the participants intend to change their practice regarding ‘practical cooking education within school hours’ after the exchange visit in Denmark, and only 18% after the exchange visits to the UK and Czechia. This corresponds with results in **Table 3**.

55% marked with a purple circle intend to change practice regarding educational visits to farms and other issues, which corresponds with results in **Table 4**. Furthermore marked with a blue circle, 64% intend to change practice after the exchange visit in the UK, regarding 'initiatives to engaging with parents and families on food related-issues', which corresponds with results in **Table 5**. When looking at the topic regarding 'practical food growing within school hours', marked with a red circle 73% want to change their practice after the exchange visit in the Czechia, which corresponds with results in **Table 6**.

The green circle in **Figure 4** focuses on the intention to change own practice regarding 'the meal situation for students'. The result shows that the visits in Denmark and in the UK seem to have supported an intention to change own practice regarding 'the meal situation for students' based on the new learning and insights. It should be noticed here, that participants in Denmark only visited Nymarkskolen, which is the first 'LOMA-school' in Denmark, where students on a daily basis share a meal that they participated in cooking, together with professionals. However, this is not mainstream in Denmark, where there is no national school food programs, only some local level initiatives to improve the situation. This should be seen in comparison to Czechia, where school food is a standard element at all public schools and the meals are mostly cooked from fresh food at the school or in the nearest school.

**Figure 4: Answers based on the question: “Would you change your practice regarding to the following topics based on your experience from the exchange visit?” (N=11)**



## 4.5 Summary of survey findings

In the descriptive overview of participant answers in the end-line survey **Figure 3** results showed that respondents were very positive about the role of the programme in meeting expectations with regard to the main components of the ISFS model. The statistical analysis provided a more precise picture of selected outcomes among participants in the 'exchange visit group' (N = 11) that is regarded as representative for the whole participant group. The group is interesting because they participated in all exchange visits and answered all questionnaires. The evaluation team finds that results show the aim of conducting 'exchange visits to see best practice' between the three countries has been a knowledgeable experience for most of the participants. Not only does the majority of respondents in the 'exchange visit group', respond that have learned ISFS methods from each other during the visits, they also intend to change their own practice at home according to the new knowledge and insights from these visits.

This result indicates that it is possible to transfer the ISFS model in the form educational ideas, methods and practices across countries - despite geographical, cultural, educational policies and other socio-cultural differences. Furthermore, the results document, that these participants have shown excellence in sharing methods and ideas about ISFS instead of focusing on the things that appeared to be 'different' or 'strange'. This picture may refer to the basic values that underline the EPESS project, where all contributions are seen as equally valuable and deserving to be discussed and met in a respectful and democratic way.

In summary, based on the survey findings, there is some evidence to conclude that the EPESS project has reached the overall goals:

5. To inspire and motivate education practitioners to collaborate and share learning regarding ISFS approaches to good food and food-related education, building the profile of the teaching profession within this subject
6. To increase the skills, confidence and competences of education practitioners with regard to food-related activities, to enable implementation of new or enhanced approaches contributing to good food culture in schools

The following section of the report, presents the qualitative findings. In section 6, the evaluation team concludes and comments on the combined result from qualitative and quantitative findings.

## 5. Qualitative Findings

### 5.1 EPESS Process: Participant reflections on participating in the programme

#### 5.1.1 Overall value of taking part in the EPESS programme

All participants interviewed were overwhelmingly very positive about their overall experience of the programme. The exchange visits were well organised, and the host agencies were very hospitable and included a range of contributions from different practitioners. There was a relaxed feeling and process, which helped with sharing ideas. The programme had 'something for everyone'. Overall, it was an experience hard to replicate by another route:

If I had tried to do this on my own, I would have to have done a lot of footwork to get these kind of connections. I would not have known where to start. K-DK vCZ<sup>1</sup>

I can't emphasize enough the benefit to us and our partner organisations these trips to give us to push forward with our good food work. M-UK vCZ

It's so interesting to go and see a completely different way of thinking and working. C-UK vCZ

### *5.1.2 Common interests and shared commitments*

The programme was an opportunity to meet people with common interests and outlooks.

Meeting everyone from different countries with the same passion and enthusiasm for the health and wellbeing of children. Gp5 vUK

The programme helped bring people together as a community of practice to focus on food in school issues. This was a process that evolved over time.

The first visit was more formal but the second one you could ask questions you didn't dare to the first time. J-DK vCZ

### *5.1.3 Hands-on experiential learning*

Many participants commented on the role of the visits in enabling participants to take part in practical activities, particularly food preparation and cooking. This helped participants get a closer understanding of how to deliver these activities in educational settings, and formed a basis for further discussion amongst the group.

We all got involved in filleting flat fish, peeling and cooking vegetables and preparing a mayonnaise based salad. M-UK vDK

### *5.1.4 Getting inspired*

The role of the visits to inspire participants was a substantial theme, with 31 counts of the words 'inspired' or 'inspiring'. The areas of learning and action arising from this feeling are discussed more fully below.

### *5.1.5 Seeing things on the inside*

The visits enabled participants to obtain a close understanding of how the host schools work and to see how staff resolved particular issues

[Regarding school lunches] I was very pleased that they showed us a wide range of aspects – it felt like the school had opened up. E-DK vCZ

### *5.1.6 Building up trusting relationships over time*

The visits gave participants time to think and ask questions. As relationships built up over time they were also able to discuss issues in greater depth.

Members of the group have been keeping in touch on twitter and other social media platforms over the past year. However, it is vital that these opportunities to meet face to face and to discuss experiences exist. S-DK vCZ

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<sup>1</sup> Codes for quotations. K-DK vCZ: "K"=ID letter; "-DK" = country of respondent (in this case Denmark); "vCZ"=country visit (in this case Czech Republic). "Gp"=from group discussion.

### *5.1.7 Opportunities to learn from experts*

Participants valued the opportunity to talk to other practitioners about specific aspects of their educational work.

I was impressed by the 'know how' for example how to do outreach work to engage with parents, volunteers and community members L-CZ vCZ

### *5.1.8 Seeing the bigger picture*

Participants reported that the programme helped them take a step back and reflect on the wider issues and overall importance of the food in schools agenda.

I learnt more on the DK trip than I thought I would because it involved local suppliers. We don't usually have the time to do that kind of thing. We were able to see what was going on, rather than just talking about it in class. In this way I was able to look at my own practice. R-DK vUK

### *5.1.9 Being part of a diverse, but inclusive group*

The group had practitioners with a wide range of roles in the education systems of their countries. This included sharing learning with staff not directly involved in the programme.

When colleagues returned from DK J shared her blog on the school website. They shared the visit's findings in school staff meetings and have food staff meetings dedicated to this topic. Cth-UK vCZ

### *5.1.10 Being challenged and surprised by different ways of doing things*

Participants were often surprised by what they encountered. This was occasionally challenging, but often thought provoking:

It's so interesting to go and see a completely different way of thinking and working. C-DK vCZ

We went straight to the school kitchen, where to our surprise we saw pupils preparing the lunch for the whole school. Spicy chickpea samosas with a fresh salad were on the menu. C-DK UK

Initially S reflected that he was unsure what he would take into his practice from a visit to artisanal chocolate manufacturer. However, he then reflected on points he did not know about e.g. the clipper ship transporting the cocoa. He did not know that this was a possibility. He talked about the carbon impact of eating an avocado and how talking about the different ways of transporting food offers a way into discussing these topics. This then extends his subject knowledge S-DK

**Photo 4: Tomato plants on a classroom windowsill at Materska Skola, Czech Republic**



## **5.2 EPESS Process: Areas for improvement and development in the programme**

### *5.2.1 Complexity: gaps and differences in understanding about ISFS*

The whole school approach is complex, and there were differences in understanding between participants about how the approach translated into priorities for practice in schools.

### *5.2.2 Complexity: policy and organisational variations between countries*

Differences in the educational systems of each country made it hard to make simple comparisons. For example, mainstream schools in Denmark tend to have a packed lunch system, whereas the UK and Czechia have school meal systems.

### *5.2.3 Complexity: all stages of system from nursery to secondary/further education*

The EPESS programme included representative from nurseries, primary schools, secondary schools, and those with an interest in further education. This breadth of representation and interests made the programme complex to serve everyone's interests.

### *5.2.4 Packed and intensive exchange visits*

The visits were often busy and intensive. On occasions, this made it difficult to have space to fully explore the settings or reflect on learning.

We would have liked more time for evaluations and more structure. Focus for each visit i.e. what you are wanting us to see from each visit. 06DK vDK

We'd liked the time to look round the schools to see the context.

This was particularly the case when unanticipated problems, such as heavy snow in Denmark, made it challenging to keep to the schedule.

### *5.2.5 More opportunities to see 'ordinary' / 'average' schools*

Some participants would have liked to have visited more schools that exemplified 'ordinary' or 'average' practice.

It would be nice to have seen an average Kindergarten to compare too. A normal standard. Gp#2 vCZ

### *5.2.6 More opportunities to learn from key groups: head teachers, students, cooks etc*

At some school visits, there was not an opportunity to talk to key people, such as the head teacher or student representatives. This was felt to be a missed opportunity.

I was a bit disappointed we didn't get to talk any Czech students [at X school]. R vCZ

You can only really understand what's happening when you speak to the heads (which we didn't have the chance to do today) G-UK cCZ

### *5.2.7 Time and resource demanding for all parties*

Participation in the programme, especially the exchange visits, was a major commitment for most staff. Some individuals could not fully attend the programme due to other commitments.

### **Photo 5: EPESS visit to Mateřská škola Semínko, Czech Republic**



## 5.3 ISFS Impacts: Learning and actions arising from the programme

### 5.3.1 Practical cooking education

Participants stated that they had learned a variety of new approaches to deliver practical cooking education:

We have been inspired by the DK cooking classes preparing food for the classes. We immediately started talking to schools and the authorities – inspiring them not to be afraid to take students to the kitchens. At the beginning, it looked impossible and it now looks reasonably acceptable. The schools like it and are respecting the cooks (don't say much to the authorities). L-CZ vCZ

She talked about her experience in DK where the group went to an outside area where they fished for mussels and cooked on an open fire. M-UK vCZ

We were inspired by the potential to use baking and its role in the curriculum. We felt that it could help address a number of curriculum need. L-CZ vCZ

We all loved the trip to the nature school and could see the clear links children learn about where their food comes from. It was interesting to see that the children are catching and preparing fish. I'm not sure in the UK that we allow children the opportunity to see the direct link between live food being killed to eat. D01 vDK

LOMA boxes really inspiring - to take idea back to Czech Republic to support cooking with parents and children. Something similar happening in UK with equipment but dependent on teacher uptake as to if used. LOMA guide great idea to support this. D06 vDK

Surprised that the children made the lunch for all the children in the school. Idea that children make lunch for themselves is 'stunning'. Quality of the food was impressive. We've never seen this type of programme in the UK. D08 vDK

LOMA are taking the opportunity to change this, getting students to create menus and actually cooking them on a large scale. M-UK vCZ

Integrating educational food cooking with eating food at school was an area of concern for some interviewees, given a range of practical challenges. However, the examples, particularly in Denmark were very informative.

Managing hygiene training and risk management were additional areas of learning.

**Photo 6: Practical cooking education within school hours, Nymarkskolen, Svendborg (DK)**



### **5.3.2 Practical food growing education**

As well as practical approaches to cooking, food growing was a closely linked key area where participants felt that they were able to apply their learning:

J talked about the impact of the previous trips on DK practice to date. This was mainly with regard the development of the school gardens. As they are a city school with little room, they have been inspired to try deep beds with the teachers from these trips leading the project. J-UK vCZ

U wants to work with older children, however he still found aspects of this visit inspiring for example the bee keeping. “I am really interested in doing a bee project if that’s possible ... I will definitely bear that in mind.” S-DK vCZ

Some other areas of learning included: medium and longer term management and coordination of garden areas; the importance of the role of non-teaching staff; the role of advance planning vs being responsive to issues as they arise; and building up routines with children from an early point entering into the school.

### **5.3.3 Food, health and sustainability education**

The role of age appropriate resources was particularly important for sustainability education given the complexity of the subject:

Initially U reflected that he was unsure what he would take into his practice from this. However, he then reflected on points he didn’t know about e.g., the clipper ship transporting the cocoa. He did not know that this was a possibility. He talks about the carbon impact of eating an avocado and how talking about the different ways of transporting food offers a way into discussing these topics. This then extends his subject knowledge. U-DK vCZ

### **5.3.4 Farm, community and food business education**

Farm, community and food business education also featured in the areas for application following visits:

I loved the chocolate visit –it’s such an excellent example of how things should be done. It’s made us think about face time-ing a farmer overseas, to find out about farming practices elsewhere J-UK vCZ

The trip to the farmers market that the group did in the UK also inspired the LOMA school programme as the children visit a market at the end of the project. J thought that this market visit was ‘wonderful’. Jn-DK vCZ

### **5.3.5 School mealtime experience**

C reflected on the work they do in their school on food waste – how the school weighs and records food waste. However, the younger children may not understand what the purpose of this is as they are so young. She was inspired by Angel who had done a food waste campaign. She mooted the idea that they will get the year 6s to report back to the younger children and explain why we need to do this so it’s not just about ‘an adult saying, you’ve got to finish your dinner.’ C-UK vCZ

Like the idea that everyone sit together for the whole dining experience. D08 vDK

An example of where detailed observations were drawn upon for reflection was the visit to the nursery in Denmark where the following issues were felt to be important:

- Children serving themselves
- Holding cutlery as important as holding a pencil
- Telling children about the food
- Proper crockery
- Glass bowls
- Cultural aspects of food
- High parental trust
- High level of interaction between staff and children – specific technique applied
- Low sugar food – appeared to be rigorously applied
- Higher priority on nutrition and learning how to eat, as opposed to safety and hygiene

Similarly, there were aspects from the Czech nursery visit that were felt to be important:

One thing that really stood out was the children could have seconds, and followed a path of circles on the floor to either return their plate, or get more with a ‘STOP’ circle then a ‘THANK YOU’ circle. Je-UK vCZ

### **5.3.6 Engagement, co-production and policy change**

Participants reported a number of issues to do with engagement and co-production:

We thought that the chef inspiring at V school, and we thought about applying the approach to engaging parents. S-DK vCZ

Food waste was a reoccurring theme and it benefited from obtaining wider parental and community engagement. The schools had rather different cultures and expectations regarding parental engagement. An example was intervention vs freedoms with regard to packed lunches.

**Photo 7: Grain mill, Tved skole, Svendborg, Denmark**



#### **5.4 ISFS Impacts: areas of focus for participating countries**

Each participating schools identified key actions that they had implemented, or started to implement, as a result of taking part in the EPESS programme.

##### **5.4.1 UK schools and Food for Life**

- Mapping the student skills progression for students at each stage of their learning over the course of their school journey.
- Stronger focus on parental involvement as central to whole school approaches.
- Stronger focus on meal-time etiquette.

- Stronger focus on food waste at mealtimes, and the use of motivational techniques to promote change.
- Greater use of pedagogical approaches that encourage independent thinking and action, particularly through the use of outdoor activities.
- Use of fire pits as outdoor cooking and wider educational resources.
- Use of a wider set of ingredients in educational cooking, in particular fish and shellfish.

#### *5.4.2 Czech schools and Skutečně zdravá škola*

- Reaching out to other nurseries to become more strongly allied to a movement for whole-nursery approaches to food.
- Lobbying the Ministry for Health to develop more supportive guidance on hygiene and eating food prepared by children in educational cooking activities.
- Applying the school garden model that makes greater use of volunteer and parental engagement.

#### *5.4.3 Danish schools and LOMA*

- From 7<sup>th</sup> grade, develop projects and resources to link food-based activities to mental wellbeing and physical activity.
- Develop the model in which community gardens are closely partnered to local schools.
- A stronger focus on the use of outdoor spaces, for example, bee keeping as a new educational resource.
- Apply 'Montessori' pedagogical techniques to educational cooking.
- Forming a national association based on interest and voluntary work.
- Lobbying the Ministries for Education, Health and Food to support a national school food program. Inspired by the Czechia model: for example, the state pays wages, municipality installs kitchens and facilities, parents only pay for ingredients and maximum 1 EURO per meal.

Photo 8: Sugar advice board at Newland St John's CE Academy



## 5.5. Challenges and barriers to adopting ISFS model and activities

Participants identified a range of restrictions and obstacles to taking on the ISFS approach. These are summarized below.

### 5.5.1 Funding restrictions

A scheme like LOMA would be very unlikely to be funded on the basis of student numbers in England. Gp1 vDK

Our [Czech] economy at the school is poor at the moment to do what we want so we need some long-term strategies to think about that. Gp9 vCZ

### 5.5.2 Organisational restrictions

Some of the challenges translating what I've seen are the design of the school and the spaces available, the scale of the school and the size of classes – and notably being a school of 900 students, the garden area and the challenges involved in maintaining the area over, concerns about the garden space being unprotected L-CZ vCZ

In the UK, many schools have had their kitchens turned into classrooms to accommodate extra children and there is no space to rebuild the kitchens. Gp3 vDK

### 5.5.3 Unsupportive policy and political context

We would like to see all schools value food education in the way we all do. But this needs to be more strongly supported in all countries from the government level. It is great to see the funding

that LOMA has received and it is a shame that the same is not available for Czech and U.K. Schools. Gp5 vDK

Czech schools do have catering kitchens but hygiene laws would not allow children to use them. In our schools home economics lessons have been dropped and there are little or no facilities available for teaching cooking skills. Gp3 vDK

#### ***5.5.4 Marginalisation in the curriculum***

We felt that there is a lot of pressure on secondary schools to cover many subjects and that food education gets little attention. Within primary schools in the UK food education is desirable but not always given the time or recognition we feel it deserves. Gp4 vDK

#### ***5.5.5 Difficulty developing an integrated approach***

We've been impressed by [seeing the integration of educational cooking and school meals]. We're still struggling to do it ourselves, I would say that a third of the children eat the food they make. If the children cook before lunch they won't want lunch and if it's ready after then they're already full. It is partly about getting the message out to parents about expectations... J-UK vCZ

We've found that external caterers don't always let the children into kitchens. CZGrp2-vUK

#### ***5.5.6 Parental support and engagement***

It looks like Czech teachers have similar challenges to the UK regarding parental engagement, for example a very good number 'sign up' to the group, but only a 'few' are actually active. P-UK cCZ

#### ***5.5.7 System complexity***

A challenge is the complex preparation of food, growing vegetables for immediate use in the school kitchen. Gp5CZ vDK

#### ***5.5.8 Disappointment with some of the examples of 'good practice'***

The meal system was admirable with such a high uptake and choice was good but the children were not learning practical skills through cooking (understand the restrictions but a way round these would be helpful) there would be so much benefit. Gp7 vCZ

Surprised that the meal didn't come with vegetables or that there was a fruit option. It made me question whether the system was as effective as it could be. J-UK vCZ

**Photo 9: Lunchtime at Byparkens Nursery, Svendborg, Denmark**



## **5.6 Cross-cutting themes for ISFS**

### **5.6.1 “Persistence, passion and belief”**

Persistence over time was considered essential and it was noted that there are always forces at work that can dismantle any progress.

Z has maintained the allotment project in Hull over the course of several head teachers with mixed levels of support. Gp1 vUK

‘Perseverance, just don’t take any ... you know ... if you know it’s right, do it. Just make sure you can follow it through. You’ve got to be passionate. If you’re half hearted, it’s not going to work. M-UK vCZ

Her final remarks refer to having to have ‘patience in everything’ . By way of example she talks about Z when hearing it took 10 years for the Steiner school to get their bees. She had only been trying for 6 months so was determined to keep trying and go back to school and try again. K-DK vCZ

Involvement of everyone in the project across the whole school was key.

### **5.6.2 “Deeply embedding practice into organisational memory”**

Some participants emphasised that many initiatives come and go in school settings. Therefore, it was important to plan from the outset for contingencies, such as succession for staff changes.

You need to adjust program and expectations to the individual setting. The aim is that the programme will eventually run itself within the schools Gp5 vUK.

You have to have to have an expectation that all good things come to an end – especially importance of planning for staff changes and cascading best practice G-UK vUK

Similarly it was important to anticipate and address changes in ‘fashions’ around hot topics in food.

### **5.6.3 “Enthusiasm and fun”**

Whole school setting food initiatives rarely persist over time unless those most closely involved feel enthusiastic and are able to enjoy themselves.

At the primary schools you can see the enthusiasm, inspiration of the staff and positivity. Gp4 vDK

### **5.6.4 “Bending the rules” Creative interpretation of guidance and rules, and positive risk taking.**

This was a substantial theme. Participants felt that many rules and norms in school settings tended to obstruct rather than facilitate practice. Therefore, breaking conventions - even in a small way – was seen to be part and parcel of implementing innovative work in school settings.

We just go ahead and ask for forgiveness later on. So our cookery teacher just goes ahead and follows the general guidance on delivering hygiene training. EI-DK vUK

She talked about how the most significant one was in the [UK] school – the teacher was told he couldn’t have children in the kitchen because of the knives. He went to the authority to see if it could be bended about it couldn’t. He asked if he could take responsibility of the children until they had grasped the skills required. This was okay- it was his personal responsibility. As a result this meant the children to cook for others. She reflects it would have been good to see the children actually cooking in this setting. K-DK vUK

I was very happy to hear in X school they gave the waste food to a farmer, even though it’s not allowed. I could see ...they were in doubt ... if it was a good idea to say it. But I think that this is the way forward ... bend the rules if it makes the sense. D-UK vCZ

She felt that in DK the rules would be bent with regard the eating of the children eggs from the first kindergarten. In CZR they were not allowed to be eaten due to possible health consequences. In DK she believes that these rules would have been bent because ‘this does not make any sense’. K-DK vUK

You should take responsibility as long as you can defend it afterwards.’ K-UK vCZ

Life does not revolve around a risk assessment ... at the end of the day the kids were there and they were stir frying I was there. The other teacher was there. There was an adult there all the time. You know, so you’ve got to give them the chance and they thoroughly enjoyed it’ M-UK vCZ

### **5.6.5 “Curiosity and the search for new issues and ideas”**

Participants felt that having a curious and enquiring drive underpinned much of the more innovative practices that they had encountered over the course of the programme.

You need to think outside the box. Ct-UK vDK

### ***5.6.6 “Giving practitioners the chance to experiment”***

There is a need for flexibility and experimentation. For example in one of the Danish primary schools a chef had been employed to undertake educational work in classroom. Similarly, there were many other instances where participants reported experimental practices.

She talked about the impact of outside eating and preparing food. She has put this in place at the allotment the school has. She started this last July, as a pilot. “It was a bit ‘cowboyish’ but it worked and the children loved it.” M-UK cCZ

It’s been interesting to see that teaching teams in Denmark have more choice in when to do subjects Gp1 vDK

Sometimes these approaches involved crossing typical practitioner role boundaries and creating alternative professional identities.

### ***5.6.7 “Having a holistic vision”***

It was important to have a vision of the full trajectory of the food learning journey through the educational system.

It is essential to engage children from youngest to juveniles, and to adopt comprehensive learning through the whole educational process. Gp13CZ vCZ

We’re developing a food curriculum which details what each year group will learn ensuring all areas are covered by end of primary education J-UK vCZ

### ***5.6.8 “Supportive, respectful and united teams”***

School teams – all positions- need to be able to work together to create and consolidate change.

Respectful and united teams. The way all LOMA teams from all schools meet to discuss is important. I feel I don't get to speak to other teachers in FFL schools. This would help as we have so much to share. Why is there no FFL co-ordinator in Lincolnshire? Or is there and I just don't know? It would be good to see this level of discussing between schools in Czech Republic and UK. D01 vDK

There needs to be coordination between teachers at different levels. High level of communication and cooperation. Compared to England where there are many barriers esp between primary and secondary. D04 vCZ

### ***5.6.9 “Real leadership”***

While school leadership was often raised, there was a specific point about ‘real leadership’ involving getting a good synergy between leaders and frontline staff to develop a coherent and coordinated whole school approach

I think this only happens with leadership – it needs to be seen as something that’s worth doing G-UK vCZ

There was general discussion that this was not necessarily the case and that it’s interesting to see the role of class teachers and others as well (not necessarily about just the role of the leader)

There need to be coordination between teachers at different levels. High level of communication and cooperation. Compared to England where there are many barriers esp. between primary and secondary. Gp3 vDK

Czech context – links between kindergarten and primary work best when co-located. Gp4 vDK

#### **5.6.10 “Resistance” Corporate food interests and narrow professional interests**

Practitioners reported that successful ISFS approaches involved pushing back and resisting food corporate and other corporate interests.

Both the UK and Czech packed lunches tend to include a lot of pre-packaged in healthy choices, which our societies have come to see as normal. Gp1 vDK

We discussed why we take such pride in providing our babies and toddlers a healthy start to food but then lose that by the time our children reach primary school. We felt that in the UK and Czech Republic convenience food marketed as packed lunch for children is very unhealthy but that children expect it: “my friend has this or that”... and that the pressure on parents to give our children what is normal in their society is high. We see packed lunch sections in UK supermarkets and the draw to just grab one of each is high as is the convenience of not having to prepare anything. Gp6 vUK

In Denmark one of the biggest players within school gardening is a commercial box-scheme company, that has conceptualised a ‘gardens-for-stomach’, approach according to their CSR strategy. They ask schools to attend 10-12 times a year and are quite strict about the ways to work with gardens and growing. In the LOMA project we are currently exploring a more resilient and less demanding way of establishing a ‘learning-space’ for growing in LOMA school, putting emphasis on what you can do at the school - instead of moving away from the school and working with gardening. In addition, to grow perennial plants such as fruit trees, berries, roots and herbs etc. Gp6 vUK

There was a narrow nutritional focus by some interest groups, which led to a restrictive vision about the role of food education in school settings.

#### **5.6.11 “Making do” Acting with discretion around funding, the allocation of resources, and the scope for drawing upon pupil, parent and community assets**

Several practitioners drew attention to the limited resources in schools and the need to act creatively with what was available.

It’s just utilising those resources that we have. It would be wonderful to have lots of money and buy all this equipment and things. But reality isn’t that and so it’s us looking at what we already have – we have the grounds and the time on the timetable so we need to pick up with what we have to start with.” C-UK vCZ

There were many examples of drawing upon parental and other community assets to make projects work. An example was Angel School CZ garden.

**Photo 10: Washingborough Academy use FaceTime Farmer to show children what happens on farms**



## 6. Discussion and Conclusions

From a dual perspective on quantitative and qualitative findings there seems to be a strong correspondence between the two kinds of result. Participants seem to have learned a lot about various components in the ISFS domains, furthermore they have been inspired and encouraged to transfer new learning and to change their own practice. In general, the feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive about the EPESS programme in terms of its organisation, delivery and opportunity to obtain an insight into a wealth of innovative practices in school food education. The programme helped build a community of practice (Wenger, 2011) with a group of educationalists with many common interests and shared commitments. The hands-on experiential learning during the exchange visits was seen as vital to feel inspired, obtain depth of understanding and to see practice from the 'inside'. The programme enabled participants to have dialogue with experts with experience, to take a step back and see the wider educational and social importance of food education, and to be surprised and sometimes challenged by different ways of working.

By taking part in the programme, participants identified a number of opportunities for enhancing and developing these forms of exchanges. Some of the greatest challenges revolved around finding shared understanding of the core elements of whole setting approaches to food in schools. This was particularly complex given the diversity of schools taking part (nursery through to secondary), and diverse national policy and societal contexts. Nevertheless, these challenges had a beneficial role in getting participants to think laterally and strategically about the overall pedagogical mission of school food initiatives.

Analysis of the surveys, the interviews and critical group reflections showed that participants identified a considerable number of micro-level actions to address common pedagogical challenges and create innovative solutions in real-world practice settings. An important feature of the programme has been to enable schools to share what they do, to be more confident to do so, and – despite a range of challenges – to show what they can achieve.

In conclusion, the overall goals of the projects seems to have been met and fulfilled with good results.

## 7. Perspectives and recommendations

Based on these good results from exchange of ISFS -best practice, it would be interesting for the EPESS partners to explore the ‘next step’ for collaboration. A step that might include the innovation of new pedagogical, didactical, educational and organisational tools based on the initial inspiration from ISFS ‘exchange of good practice’. This kind of innovation would support the development of the ISFS model to more schools in Europe and maybe other countries with similar conditions and needs. Recently, the EAT-lancet commission specified the important role of schools and integrated approaches in order to promote ‘healthy food from sustainable food systems’ (Willett *et al.*, 2019). The EPESS partners are in a very good position to contribute with concrete solutions to the huge challenges caused by the current food- and health systems in Europe. Furthermore, these challenges are addressed by the UN goals for sustainable development (UN, 2019) and in the current Erasmus+ call. The evaluation team recommends that the EPESS partners, after having finalized the EPESS project successfully, should contact more countries in order to form a larger consortium that could apply for ‘next step’ Erasmus+ funding, based on a solid platform of obtained results and project goals.

**Photo 11: Field trip to school garden with a poly-tunnel green house at Washingborough School.**



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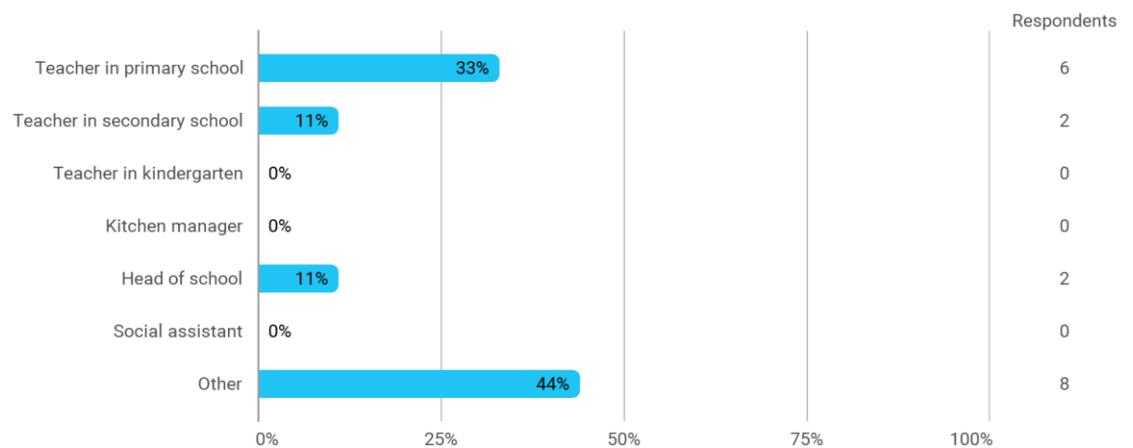
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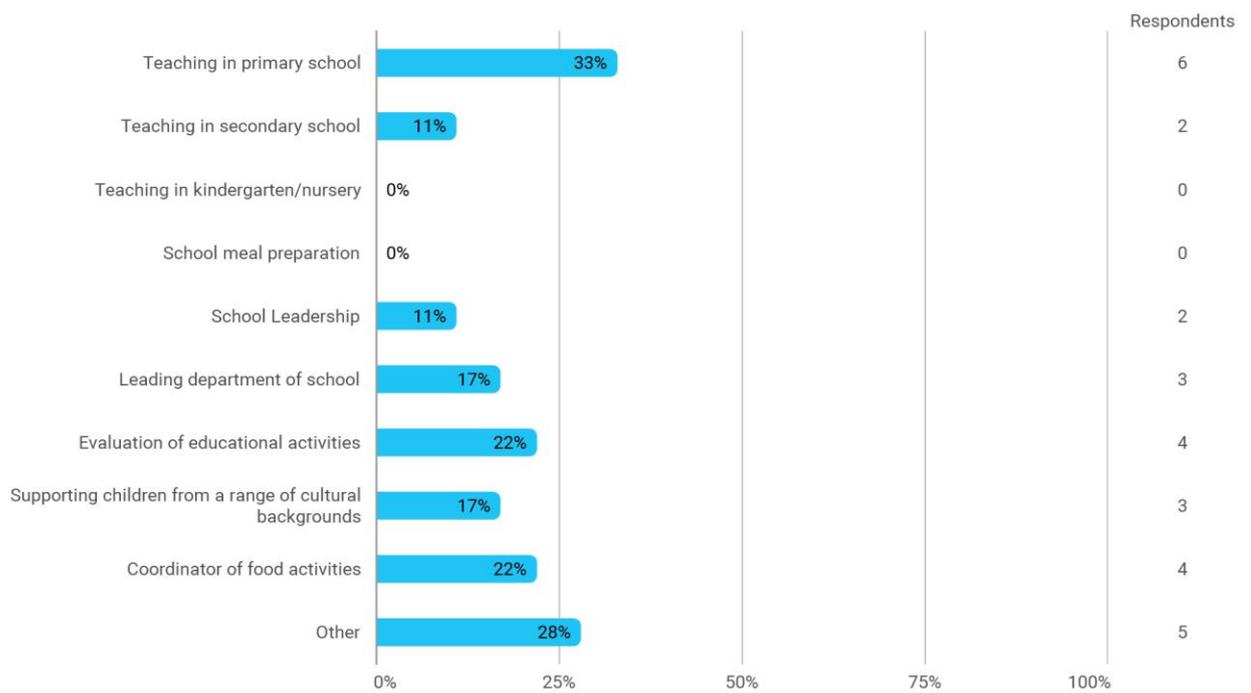
## Appendix 1. EPESS Participant Survey: Results at Endline

### Role of respondents



“Other” includes: administrator, learning support assistant, teaching assistant, nutrition specialist, manager of an education programme, researcher

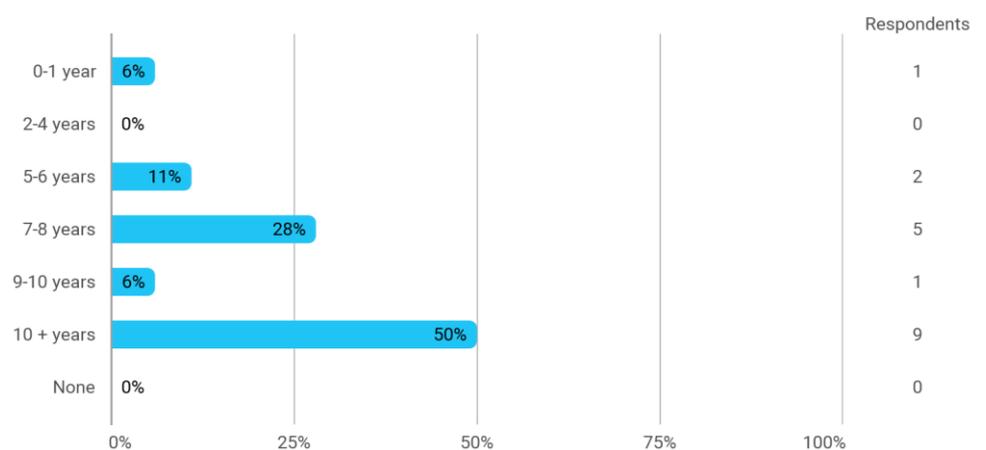
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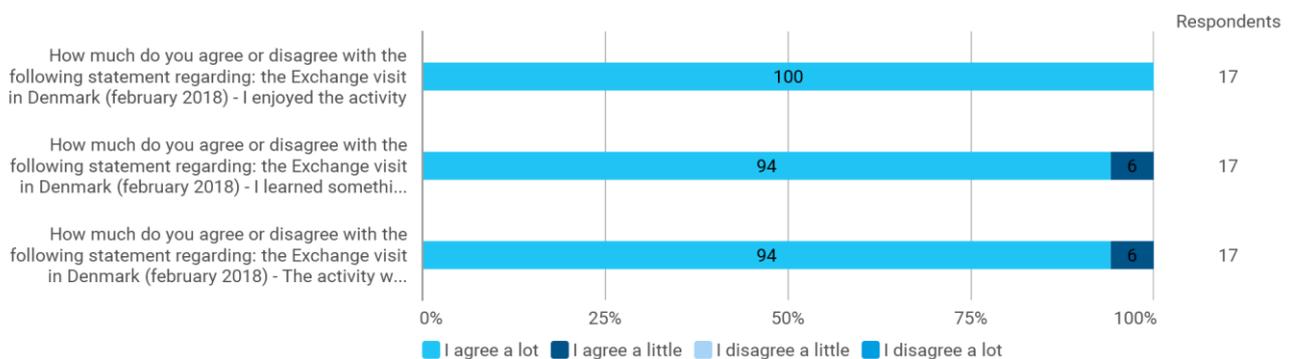
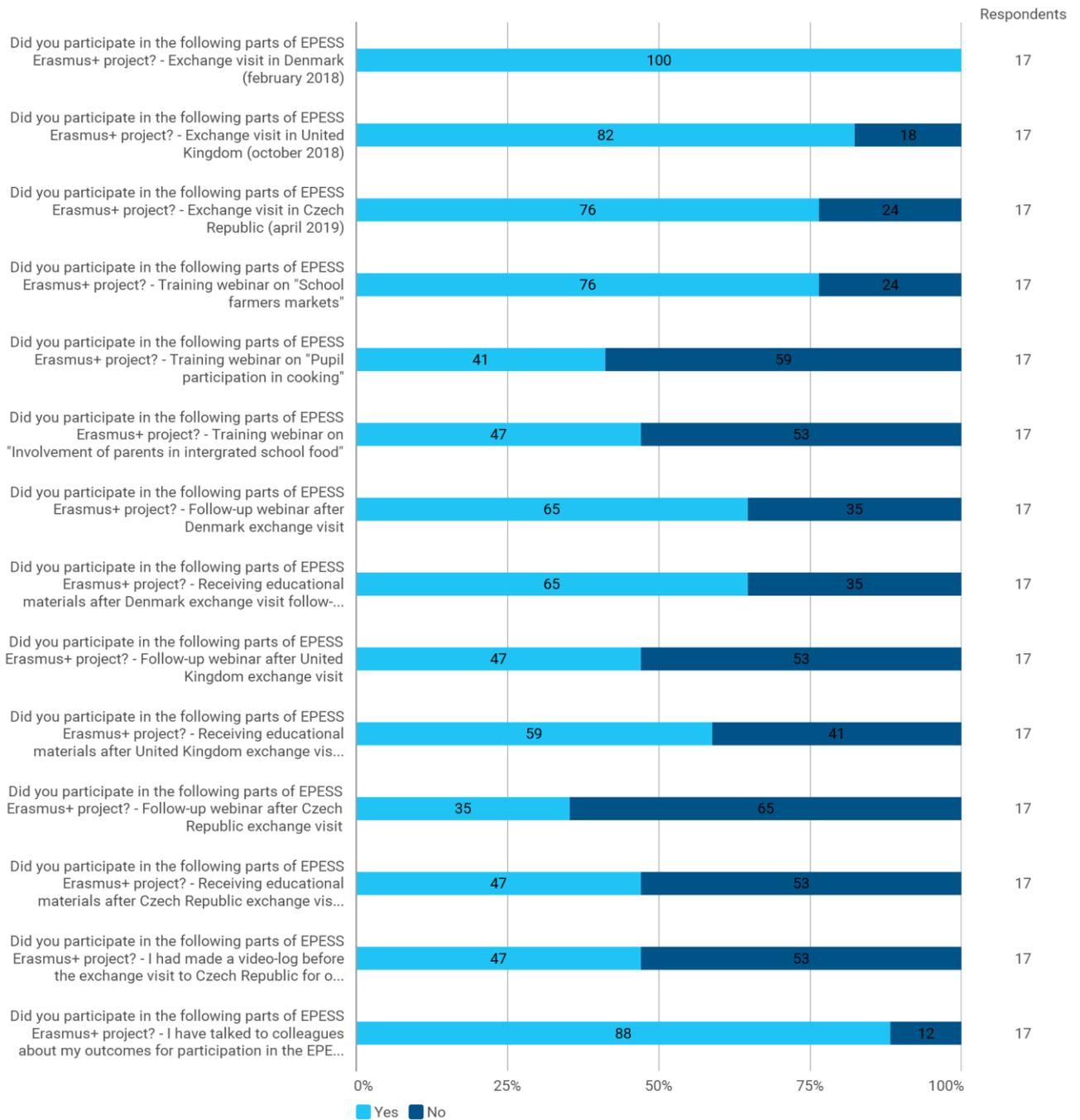


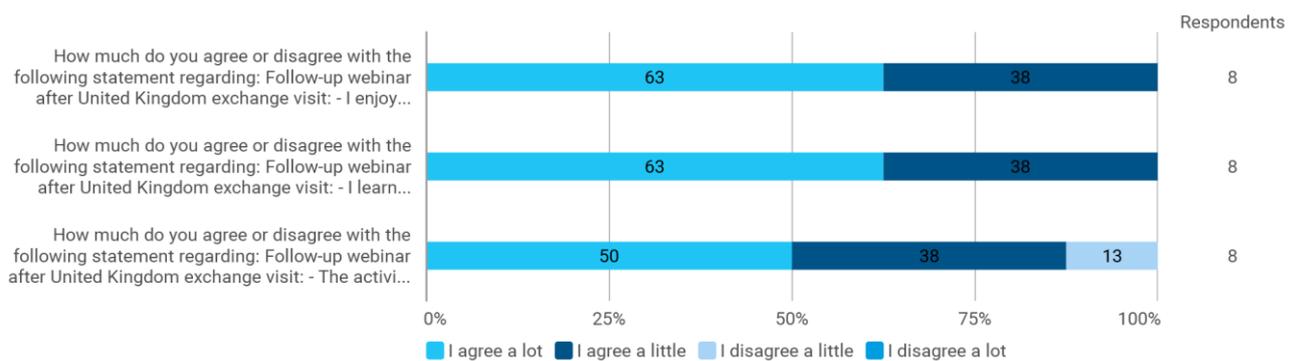
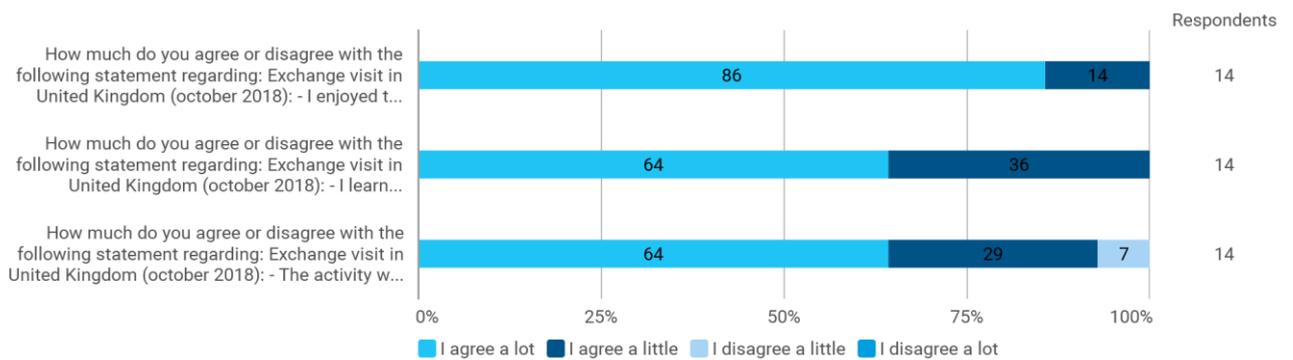
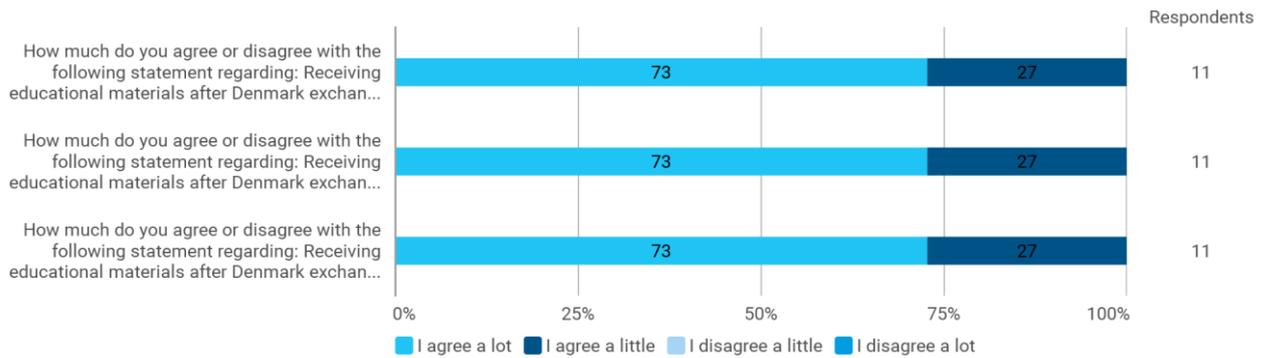
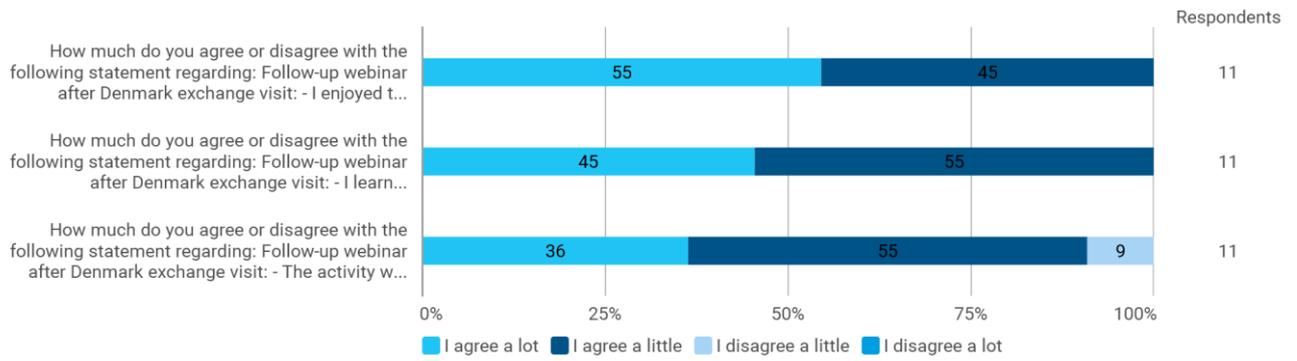
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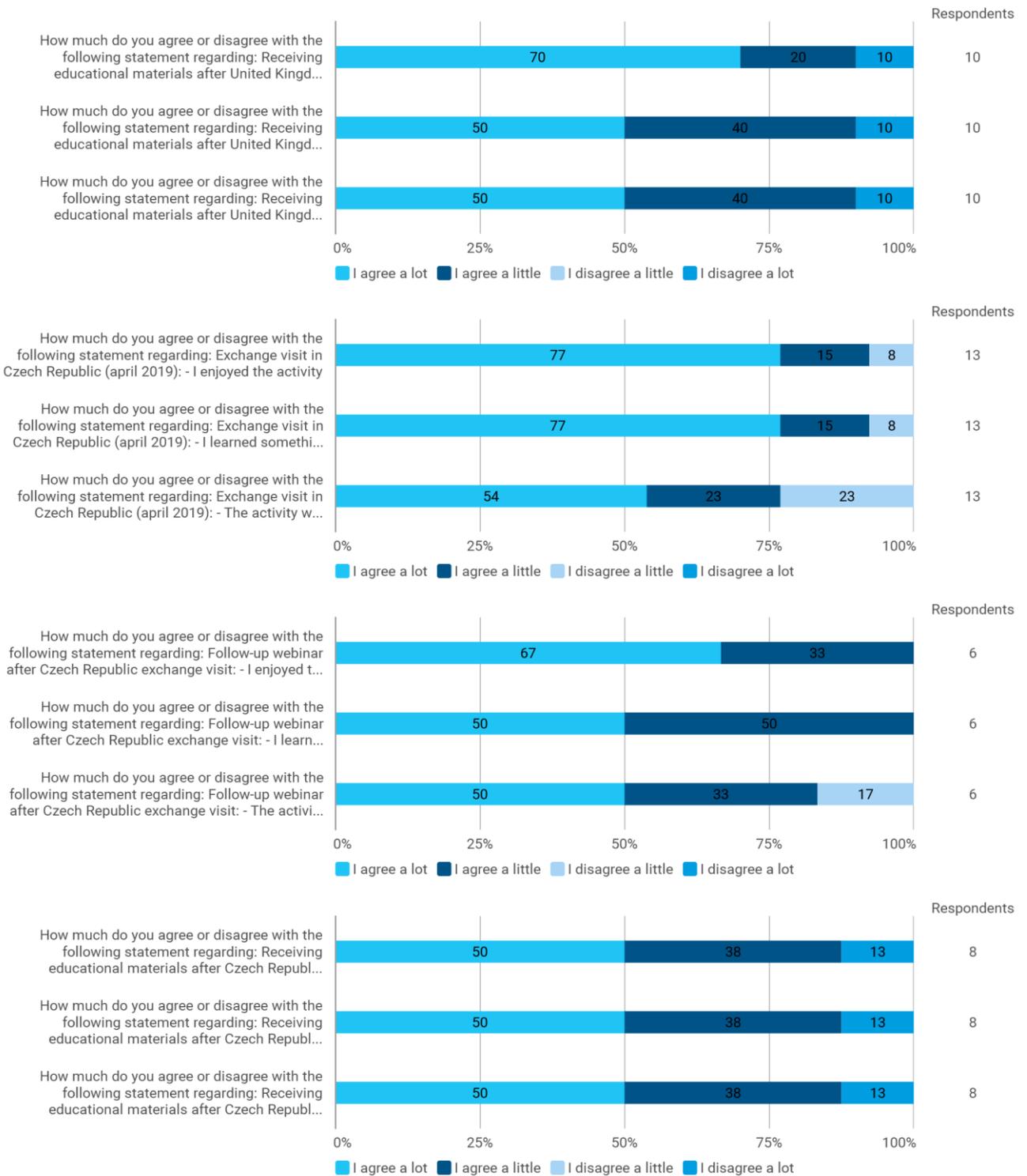
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- Research in integrated approaches to school food. Teaching at teacher education.
- LOMA coordinator
- Supporting children. Food for Life Lead
- Policy and programme development

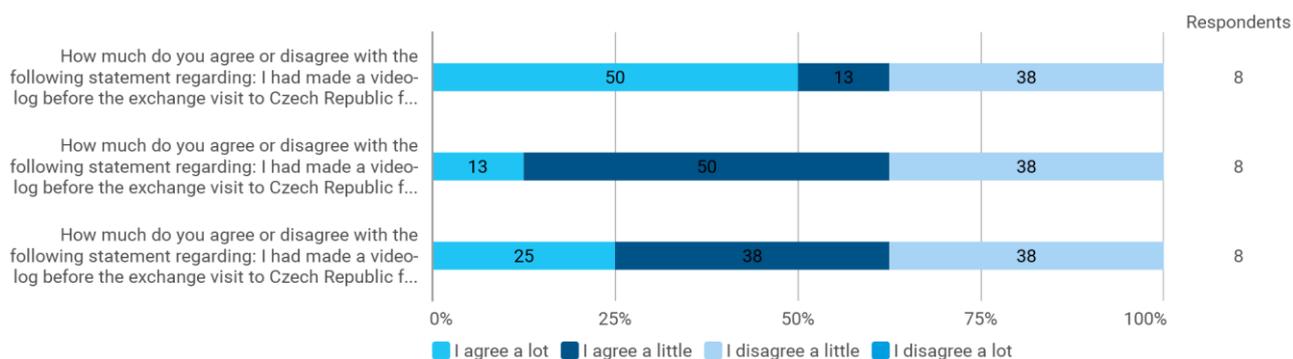
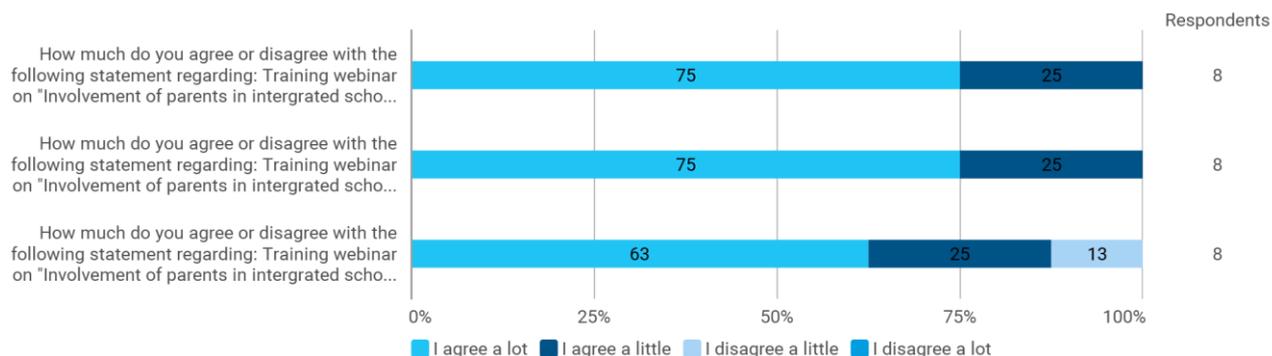
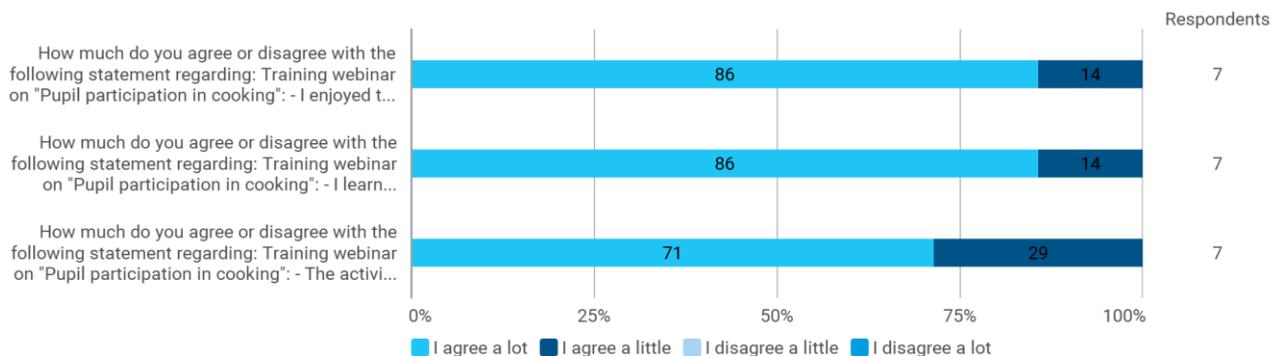
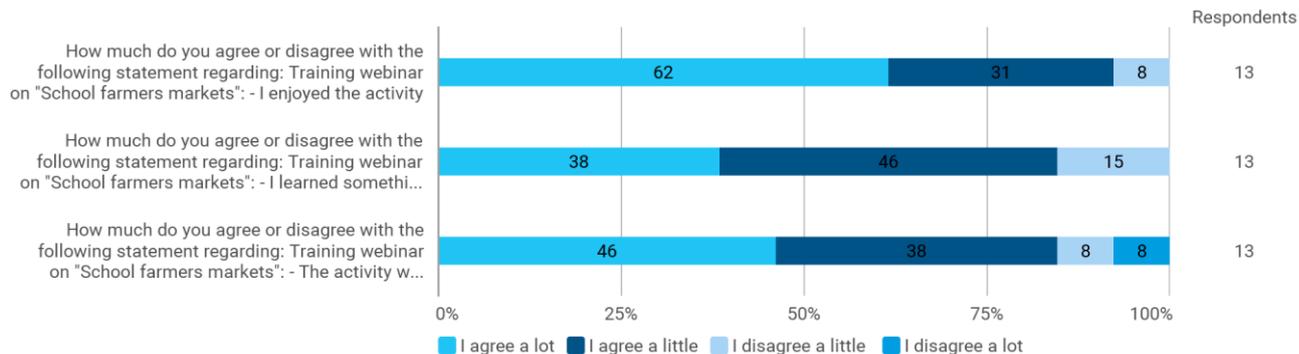
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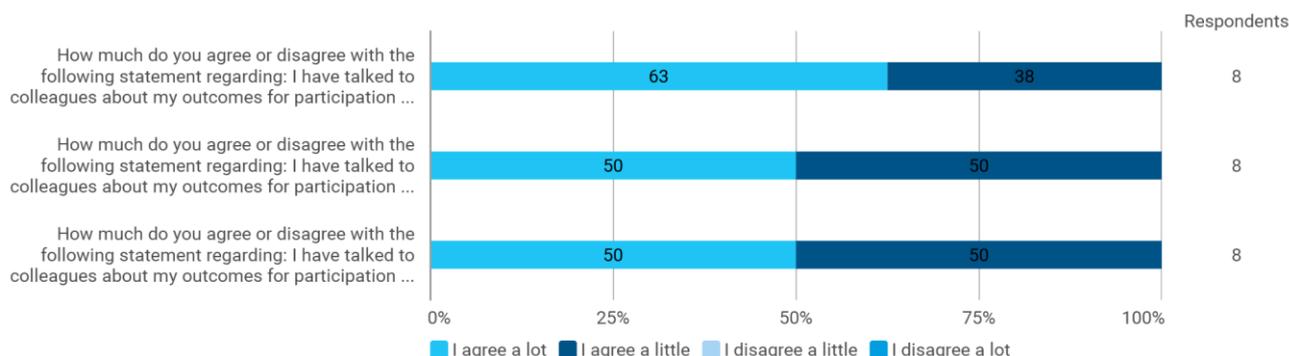












## Main challenges for the professional development of school staff in food-related activities

- Curriculum time
- Resources with a financial implication
- Parent involvement
- Time and money are the main challenges for the professional development.
- Resources that allows teachers to participate to a higher degree.  
This includes hours that are both allocated and paid.  
Possibilities for regional collaboration and for cross-professional collaboration.
- At projektet er et projekt/forstyrrelse, der kommer ude fra i forhold til lærere og pædagogers læse- og årsplaner, kræver lidt større opmærksomhed for at få det til at give mening, inden det kan gå i gang. Derfor har det taget rigtig lang tid at få det implementeret, men tiden har været givet godt ud. De fleste har efterhånden committet sig.
- *[The fact that the project comes from outside in relation to teachers and educators' reading and annual plans, requires a little more attention to make it make sense before it can start.]*
- *[Therefore, it has taken a really long time to get it implemented, but the time has been well spent. Most have gradually committed themselves.]*
- How to integrate food-related activities into the curriculum.
- Time for training amongst other pressures.
- Money and time
- Economy
- Cost of equipment and lack of space for facilities to be installed. Lack of structured schemes on food education within the primary setting. Confidence of staff in delivering food education/practical food lessons.
- Staff skills
- Finances
- Our current inspection framework
- Resources
- I would say the main challenges are Time, Human resources and designated food classroom kitchens.
- The lack of continuing professional development opportunities.  
The lack of initial training opportunities at the point of early career development  
The lack of rewards, incentives and recognition for staff.
- Time in the kitchen with the children. In addition, to develop teaching skills outside of the kitchen.
- I don't know what the challenge could be.
- To be more flexible and enthusiastic about it.
- Lack of time, more pressing activities.  
Lack of experience and competence of school staff.  
Not a priority for schools.
- I think that the main challenges are communication, practice demonstrations and motivation of employees to learn to think about eating differently.

## Main opportunities for the professional development of school staff in food-related activities

- Planning food related into the whole curriculum so that it is carefully thought out as opposed to an afterthought.  
Making lunchtime a proper mealtime with manners and etiquette and seeing the impact this has on children's eating habits and behaviours.
- Opportunities such as the EPESS visits are the main opportunities
- Erasmus+ program represents great opportunities for professional development of school staff in food-related activities - as long as it is integrated in pedagogy and didactical educational activities.  
There is a great opportunity - and also necessity - to include work with the UN development goals for sustainable development in future Erasmus+ activities.
- Mad giver mening for alle mennesker, så det er et vedkommende emne at sætte på dagsordenen helt oppe på værdiplan i forhold til ambitionen om at understøtte elevernes udvikling hin imod bevidste og kompetente deltagere i et demokratisk samfund.  
Den oplagte mulighed for at tilrettelægge udvikling og undervisning meget konkret giver deltagelsesmuligheder for flere børn - og voksne. Emnet lægger op til høj tværfaglighed. *[Food makes sense to all people, so it is a matter of putting the agenda at the top of the value plan in relation to the ambition to support students' development towards conscious and competent participants in a democratic society.]*

*The obvious opportunity to organize development and teaching very specifically provides participation opportunities for more children - and adults. The topic adds up to high interdisciplinarity.]*

- Some seminars for the teachers, programs for the whole classroom, available materials for children.
- Food for Life training is good, but the enthusiasm and expertise of our own staff is key.
- Interest
- Development of food education curriculum. Practical training in food prep/cooking techniques and how to teach these to a group of children. High quality resources and age appropriate recipes.
- Enjoyment  
Creating a curriculum relevant to children's needs  
Growing confidence
- We have Food For Life Training. However, the opportunity to see how other schools teach about food across Europe was an opportunity to clarify that our food practice is on a par with everyone else.
- The opportunity to create more integrated and holistic forms of educational development for students. In other words the opportunity to realize underpinning educational values for practitioners.
- Different teaching situations.  
To experience the pupils in other situations.
- It is important to see the learning processes in the food-related activities.  
It is also important that school staff support learning in the kitchen when teaching in LOMA related subjects.
- Supporting healthy lifestyles of children  
Supporting sustainable development and attainment of SDGs.  
Bringing more fun and practical topics to the educational process.  
Food is a great topic to learn about all kinds of important issues: health, environment, culture, economy, society.  
Learning practical everyday skills.
- I clearly think it is a chance to learn and inspire from other colleagues, schools. See how it otherwise works in practice.

### **Example of how participants made use of, or shared learning, from taking part in EPESS project**

- Fed back to staff at the school on the project and what we have learnt so they have an awareness of the aims of the project and what we are going to look at going forward. Have also fed back to our Food for Life representative on particular issues for our setting that came to light after the Denmark trip. This will feed into further work we do with Food for Life.
- We have made use of the cooking outside (learned from Denmark) and started cooking on the school allotment. The children picked food from the allotment and then cooked the produce in a wok and made a vegetable stir fry. They sat at the allotment and enjoyed their food there.
- I have shared knowledge and insight about the CZ school food system with Danish authorities and stakeholders. Especially the idea, that the cost of public school food should be shared between state, region, municipality and parents. This approach makes it possible for all parents to buy school food: 'One meal one Euro'.  
Also, I have shared knowledge and insight about cross-curricular educational methods with Danish schools and colleagues. Generally, I have become much more competent regarding 'integrated approaches to school food' in EU countries. This has made me even more curious about the situation in other European countries.
- Ved forberedelsen af besøget i Danmark blev jeg meget skarpere på, hvad vi gjorde og kunne af vigtige aktiviteter, og hvordan og hvorfor vi skulle organisere vores LOMA-madordning i vore nye skole-/industrikøkkener. Jeg opdagede, at vi i Danmark har en god tradition for at lade børnene deltage i mange ting (madlavning på bål), selvom det kan synes farligt.  
Ved besøget i England blev jeg inspireret af, at der var gjort meget ud af at vise, hvad man gør, ved lærernes indretning af klasselokalet med mange plancher og udstillinger.  
Jeg fornemmede også stort ejerskab for børnene. Den store inddragelse af frivillige - både i køkkener og med skolehaver, var inspirerende.  
Ved besøget i Tjekkiet var jeg optaget af, at så mange spiste på skolen, og at de tilsyneladende var vant til at spise det, der var. Der synes at være et stort forspring i projektet med skolemad, da de har haft det i mange år. Det var overraskende givtigt at besøge førskoleprojekterne - at opleve vigtigheden af at starte i god tid - at få forældrene med - det er lettere i førskoleprojekterne.  
*[In preparing the visit to Denmark, I became much sharper in what we did and could of important activities, and how and why we should organize our LOMA food scheme in our new school / industrial kitchens. I discovered that in Denmark we have a good tradition of letting the children participate in many things (cooking on bonfires), although this can seem dangerous. During my visit to England, I was inspired by the fact that much had been done to show what to do about the teachers' layout of the classroom with many posters and exhibitions.*

*I also felt great ownership for the kids. The great involvement of volunteers - both in kitchens and with school gardens - was inspiring. During the visit to the Czech Republic, I was concerned that so many were eating at school and that they seemed to be used to eating what was. There seems to be a big head start in the school food project, as they have had it for many years. It was surprisingly beneficial to visit the preschool projects - to feel the importance of starting well in advance - to get the parents involved - it is easier in the preschool projects.]*

I made a list of items that should be in our outside kitchen-tool box.

We prepared salad and spring rolls with the children in my classroom.

We started to discuss how we can involve the children in my school in cooking in the canteen.

- We have completely re-written our food education curriculum to ensure enhanced coverage in a sequential and systematic way. Staff are now overwhelmingly committed to this project and have increased confidence in sharing this good practice with other schools in the local area. We are hoping that the new Ofsted framework will make people more open to what we have to offer!
- Ideas to farmers marked

- We are working on getting school bees.  
We have planned a large local school market on the main square with lots of local organic producers
- From our Denmark visit I took the idea of writing (with other members of our team) a more comprehensive food education curriculum and skills assessment scheme that our school could follow ensuring all children receive the same quality lessons. During the UK visit I then shared this as it was at the time (work in progress) with the other members of the EPRESS group. Since then I have gone on to develop this even further and now have a curriculum that any teacher in our school can pick up and plan from. We have also developed a skills assessment booklet which tracks the skills our pupils are learning, both to roll out this academic year.
- Sharing practice with colleagues  
Developing a more individualised curriculum for our children in the school based on the Danish examples  
Much more outdoor cooking n=based on our experience in Denmark
- The SEN Manager has developed the SEN outdoor area by laying a sense path; this was seen in the Czech Republic. We are still nattering the Head Teacher to let us have Bees.
- I presented the learning on children and young people's involvement in the cooking and serving of meals in school settings. I presented this as a case study to other educationalists and as a basis for implementation in their spheres of influence.
- To have focus on mental health combined with physical health. That will be included in our next LOMA project in 7 th. grade.
- The teachers from Denmark have showed how we work with the pupils in the kitchens. We have also talked about how we cooperate with the local farmers and how we teach the pupils in different subject connected to LOMA.  
From the EPESS project, I learned how to start a school garden, and it has given me and my colleagues new ideas for further developing it.
- Involvement of pupils in cooking for their peers in DK was inspiring - we are now developing activities similar to these in CZ.
- We use a lot of information from EPESS.  
For example:
  - creating boxes with cooking needs (Loma boxes)
  - protective cooking aids for children
  - garden arrangement
  - Healthy eating projects
  - creation of an Eco centre (inspiration by Eco centre in Denmark)

## Further comments on the programme

- We have really enjoyed the EPESS visit and learned a lot from the visit.
- I think the Erasmus+ functions as an excellent program and frame for cross-country, educational collaboration to the benefit for teachers, schools and students.
- Der har været meget rejsetid i projekterne i både Tjekkiet og England.  
Og derfor har vi set rigtig meget forskelligt, hvad der har været rigtig godt.  
Men det har taget rigtig meget tid  
Dog har jeg savnet muligheden for flere organiserede drøftelser og refleksioner, når vi har været sammen. De gange, hvor det har lykkedes at få mulighed for at sætte ord på sine egne refleksioner i fællesskab med andre, har været meget givtigt.  
Der skal dog også være tid til pause og uformelt samvær, da man bruger meget energi på sådan en tur.  
Vi vil jo alle gerne vise så meget som muligt fra vores eget land, men måske havde det været godt at skruet lidt ned her.  
Det har været en fantastisk gave at deltage i projektet - jeg er blevet meget klogere på flere planer. Tak for det.  
*[There has been a lot of travel time in the projects in both the Czech Republic and England.  
That is why we have seen a lot of difference in what has been good.  
However, it has taken a lot of time  
However, I missed the opportunity for more organized discussions and reflections when we were together. The times when it has succeeded in getting the opportunity to put words on its own reflections in common with others have been very rewarding.  
However, there must also be time for a break and informal get-together as you spend a lot of energy on such a trip.  
We all want to show as much as possible from our own country, but maybe it would have been good to turn down a little here.  
Participating in the project has been a great gift - I have become much wiser on several plans. Thank you.]*
- I loved the visit in Denmark. It was really a great inspiration and I tried great food there.
- Being part of this project has been a great opportunity not just for the participants, but the whole school community. We have an increased sense of the value of what we are doing when previously we have felt a bit isolated. We remain completely committed to the concept of food education and I myself have since signed up to a (non-school related) course on nutrition, at my own expense, in order to further enhance my own skills.
- Something that ruins the good spirit in the project is the fact, that the Danish teachers haven't received any hours/ payment for the two exchange trips. And have been fighting for almost a year.  
We have experienced so many great things, but this is something which removes some of the joy unfortunately.
- Very informative and productive project. We learnt so much from our colleagues in all three countries and it has really enhanced not only our lunch provision, but also the Food Education programme we have in school. The new curriculum we have developed and 'Food Education Journal, as well as our outside cooking area, are a direct result of the project.
- Thank you all for giving me the opportunity and experience of visiting schools in Europe.  
Thank you for giving me the opportunity to meet people who like myself, are passionate about teaching children about food.
- I had hoped to see more of the secondary schools and how they teach health and sustainability.  
It is difficult to use teaching methods from ex. nurseries.
- Great partnership, amazing people, really inspiring visits to schools, very good management. Thank you to all.
- Thank you very much for the opportunity to learn and inspire colleagues from abroad and in our country. It was developmental and we will draw on this possibility for a long time.

## Appendix 2. Questionnaire from each exchange visit

### Dear participant in 'EPESS Transnational exchange visit in Country

For evaluation purpose we will ask you to answer questions regarding you participation in The exchange visit in Country last week.

#### Data protection:

The information will be used to assist with the evaluation of EPESS and to meet our commitments to our funders and for public dissemination of results. We will not report any personal details such as your name. Personal information will be kept in a secure environment in line with the data protection rules of the University of the West of England, University College Lillebaelt and the Soil Association.

Best regards on behalf of the EPESS evaluation group:

Matthew Jones, University of the West of England  
Dorte Ruge, University College Lillebaelt, Denmark  
Morten Rasmus Puck, University College Lillebaelt, Denmark

Time of exchange visit

Background information about you.

We are asking you to answer the questions as precise as you can.

**What is your name?**

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**What is your role?**

- Teacher in primary school
- Teacher in secondary school
- Teacher in kindergarten
- Kitchen manager
- Head of school
- Social assistant
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Please briefly outline your main areas of work.**

- Teaching in primary school
- Teaching in secondary school
- Teaching in kindergarten/nursery

- School meal preparation
- School Leadership
- Leading department of school
- Evaluation of educational activities
- Supporting children from a range of cultural backgrounds
- Coordinator of food activities
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**How many years in total have you worked in schools and education?**

- 0-1 year
- 2-4 years
- 5-6 years
- 7-8 years
- 9-10 years
- 10 + years
- None

**Thinking about the exchange visit, did you learn something new regard to the following?**

	<b>A lot</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>A bit</b>	<b>Nothing at all</b>
Practical cooking education within school hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practical cooking education outside school hours (extra-curricular)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practical food growing (gardening) within school hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practical food growing (gardening) outside school hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Educational visits to farms or other food businesses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School or community based markets for food produced by farmers, local businesses or the school community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education on healthy nutrition and diet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education on food, sustainability and environmental issues (such as organic, fair, trade, animal welfare, waste, local food issues)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work to involve school cooks or catering staff in mainstream educational activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work to improve the meal-time experience for pupils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	A lot	Some	A bit	Nothing at all
Work to procure school meal ingredients from local, organic or other food producers with high standards for sustainability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initiatives to establish breakfast clubs and out of school hours provision of food	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initiatives to engaging with parents and families on food related-issues in school (e.g. questionnaires, consultations, working groups)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Engaging with pupils on food related-issues in school (e.g. questionnaires, consultations, working group)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development of school policies, rules and guidance on food in schools (such as rules on high sugar drinks in school)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development of a 'whole school' and 'integrated' strategy for healthy and sustainable food in school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education, that applies digital tools such as tablets, computer and online platform in food education and planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Would you change your practice regarding to the following topics based on your experience from the exchange visit?**

	Yes	No
Practical cooking education within school hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practical cooking education outside school hours (extra-curricular)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practical food growing (gardening) within school hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practical food growing (gardening) outside school hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Educational visits to farms or other food businesses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School or community based markets for food produced by farmers, local businesses or the school community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education on healthy nutrition and diet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education on food, sustainability and environmental issues (such as organic, fair, trade, animal welfare, waste, local food issues)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work to involve school cooks or catering staff in mainstream educational activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work to improve the meal-time experience for pupils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work to procure school meal ingredients from local, organic or other food producers with high standards for sustainability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	No
Initiatives to establish breakfast clubs and out of school hours provision of food	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initiatives to engaging with parents and families on food related-issues in school (e.g. questionnaires, consultations, working groups)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Engaging with pupils on food related-issues in school (e.g. questionnaires, consultations, working group)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development of school policies, rules and guidance on food in schools (such as rules on high sugar drinks in school)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development of a 'whole school' and 'integrated' strategy for healthy and sustainable food in school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education, that applies digital tools such as tablets, computer and online platform in food education and planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

You had said "yes" to the following topics, and we would like to hear if you want to give a brief statement about how.

**Practical cooking education within school hours**

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**Practical cooking education outside school hours (extra-curricular)**

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**Practical food growing (gardening) within school hours**

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**Practical food growing (gardening) outside school hours**

---

**Educational visits to farms or other food businesses**

---

**School or community based markets for food produced by farmers, local businesses or the school community**

---

**Education on healthy nutrition and diet**

---

**Education on food, sustainability and environmental issues (such as organic, fair, trade, animal welfare, waste, local food issues)**

---

**Work to involve school cooks or catering staff in mainstream educational activities**

---

**Work to improve the meal-time experience for pupils**

---

**Work to procure school meal ingredients from local, organic or other food producers with high standards for sustainability**

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**Initiatives to establish breakfast clubs and out of school hours provision of food**

---

**Initiatives to engaging with parents and families on food related-issues in school (e.g. questionnaires, consultations, working groups)**

---

**Engaging with pupils on food related-issues in school (e.g. questionnaires, consultations, working group)**

---

**Development of school policies, rules and guidance on food in schools (such as rules on high sugar drinks in school)**

---

**Development of a 'whole school' and 'integrated' strategy for healthy and sustainable food in school**

---

**Education, that applies digital tools such as tablets, computer and online platform in food education and planning**

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Thank you so much for participating in this questionnaire.

Mat Jones  
Dorte Ruge  
Morten Puck

## **Appendix 3. Interview and Focus Group Topic Guide**

### ***Capture of immediate experiences***

Briefly what did you do today?

Could you tell two of the most important things you learnt today?

Prompts: what specifically was interesting? How does it compare your own experiences? Can you see any difficulties? How practical is it in your setting? Could others help make this happen?

### ***Reflections on learning from visits***

What did you do try to change anything? How did you go about doing this? What happened?

What was it about the visit that made you want to do something (or not)?



## About the EPESS project

The current food system is producing major negative impacts for our health and the environment. Recent international research evidence - from the dietary burden of disease, to climate change and biodiversity loss, to nutritional insecurity and the breakdown of culinary traditions - show that the urgency for action is escalating. In this context, schools are well recognised as important locales for action to change the food system, not least because they prove a population-scale platform to transform how younger generations engage with food. The aim of this Erasmus+ programme was to develop and reinforce networks within the area of 'European healthy Pupils and skilled Educators via integrated School food Systems' [EPESS]. Through exchange of good practice activities, the participants share ideas, practices and methods across whole school food culture, school food education and teacher training. The collaboration brings together expertise from across the UK, DK and the CZ and intends to disseminate work to schools, organisations and communities across Europe. EPESS consisted of four voluntary and higher education sector partners and six school partners. Activities included exchange visits between three countries, involving two schools and one leading food-in-schools NGO in each country (LOMA Network in Denmark; Food for Life in the UK; Skutečně Zdravá Škola in Czech Republic). The programme helped build a community of practice with a group of educationalists with many common interests and shared commitments across countries. The hands-on experiential learning during the exchange visits were seen as vital to feel inspired, obtain depth of understanding and to see practice from the 'inside'. The programme enabled participants to have dialogue with experts with experience, to take a step back and see the wider educational and social importance of food education, and to be surprised and sometimes challenged by different ways of working. An important feature of the programme has been to enable schools to share what they do, to be more confident to do so, and – despite a range of obstacles - to show what they can achieve.

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