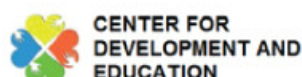# Visualize

An innovative training concept for strengthening
the tolerance and soft skills of young people

IO 1: State of the art and creating awareness
for the topic itself

January 2017

Content

1. INTRODUCTION

Realizing the current developments within Europe, where the request of tolerance skills does play a bigger role than ever before on the one hand, and where the request of soft-skills in job placements or job offers is a unneglectable skill to bring into the application process on the other hand, it does need to be ensured that young people with and without disadvantages in the age of 14 to 25 are not forgotten.

Thus the Visualize project aims at fostering the youngsters' tolerance and developing their overall soft skills. It delivers a crucial milestone to improve the achievement in relevant and high-level basic and transversal competences in a lifelong learning perspective. It also opens a cross-cultural, transferable, cross-sectoral cooperation by bringing art, IT, thematic experts and NGOs together in this proposed strategic partnership. This project is thought to inspire "good citizenship" for disadvantaged young people by elevating tolerance and generating a global understanding of varying points regarding the existence of a variety of possible points of view while finding common ground and eliminating the thinking patterns that suggesting that there's a right and a wrong way to interpret the world around us.

2. OBJECTIVE

The first step into the topic - and ensuring that all further project steps are adapted to the target group - is a short state of the art report, which has been compiled out of information collected within the immediate target groups and their teachers, trainers, key career etc.
The purpose of this report is involving young people's thoughts on tolerance and their current status of soft skills, which will give a quick overview to trainers and the visual thinking experts about the current situation within the target group, their disadvantages and difficulties, specific needs and interests. Thus the report provides the possibility to start smoothly into the topic with the youngsters and it further allows to compare a before-after status. Therefore it is to foster an ice-breaking for trainers and youngsters regarding the project, as to also introduce it.

3. METHOD

Questionnaires (see Annex 1 and 2) were chosen as to conduct an initial state of the art report and prepared by the leading organization (P1) together with the support of other partners, especially the expert for visual thinking strategies (P2).
The questionnaires have been distributed by P1, P3 and P4 to their immediate target group (20 youngsters) with whom they will work throughout the project and with additionally 10 youngsters so as to achieve a broader insight of knowledge, attitudes and needs. Moreover, P5 also distributed the questionnaires in its network and hence additionally the impression and opinions of 30 youngsters are shown in the summary.
At the same time two trainers that will be involved in the project in each country and additional four colleagues of them received a different set of questionnaires as to get an overview on what teachers, trainers and key careers' think about the situation and what kind of impression they have regarding the topic. The same questionnaire has also been distributed by P5, which gives an addition insight from seven adults from Greece.
At the end of the project the same questionnaires are ought to be distributed again within the target group of youngsters and the two trainers so as to analyze what kind of impact and to which extend the project reached.

4. RESULTS

The results present the combined outcome of 112 questionnaires filled in by youngsters from Germany, Greece, Macedonia and Spain; P1 in Germany reached out to 28, P3 in Spain to 24, P4 in

Macedonia, and P5 in Greece to 30 youngsters each. Regarding the adults each partner organization reached out to six and P5 to seven, which respectively gives an insight of the view of 25 educators in total.

A few questions of the questionnaire were intended to gather information on the same issues seen from two different angles; hence a comparison of it was intended.

4.1 Soft Skills

The first question is about soft skills, once to find out what youngsters believe is necessary or helpful and on the other hand to find out which soft skills the educators credit to the youngsters current behavior.

Youngsters: In your opinion, how important is it for you to have good soft skills (as self-esteem, language skills, self-confidence, tolerance)?

Looking at the opinions of youngsters which soft skills they believe are necessary in school and at work, it is rather balanced between the different skills, as throughout they believe that these skills are rather important. Interesting is that youngsters believe that a lot of confidence is required in their job life, rather than teamwork (see Fig. 1 and Fig. 2).
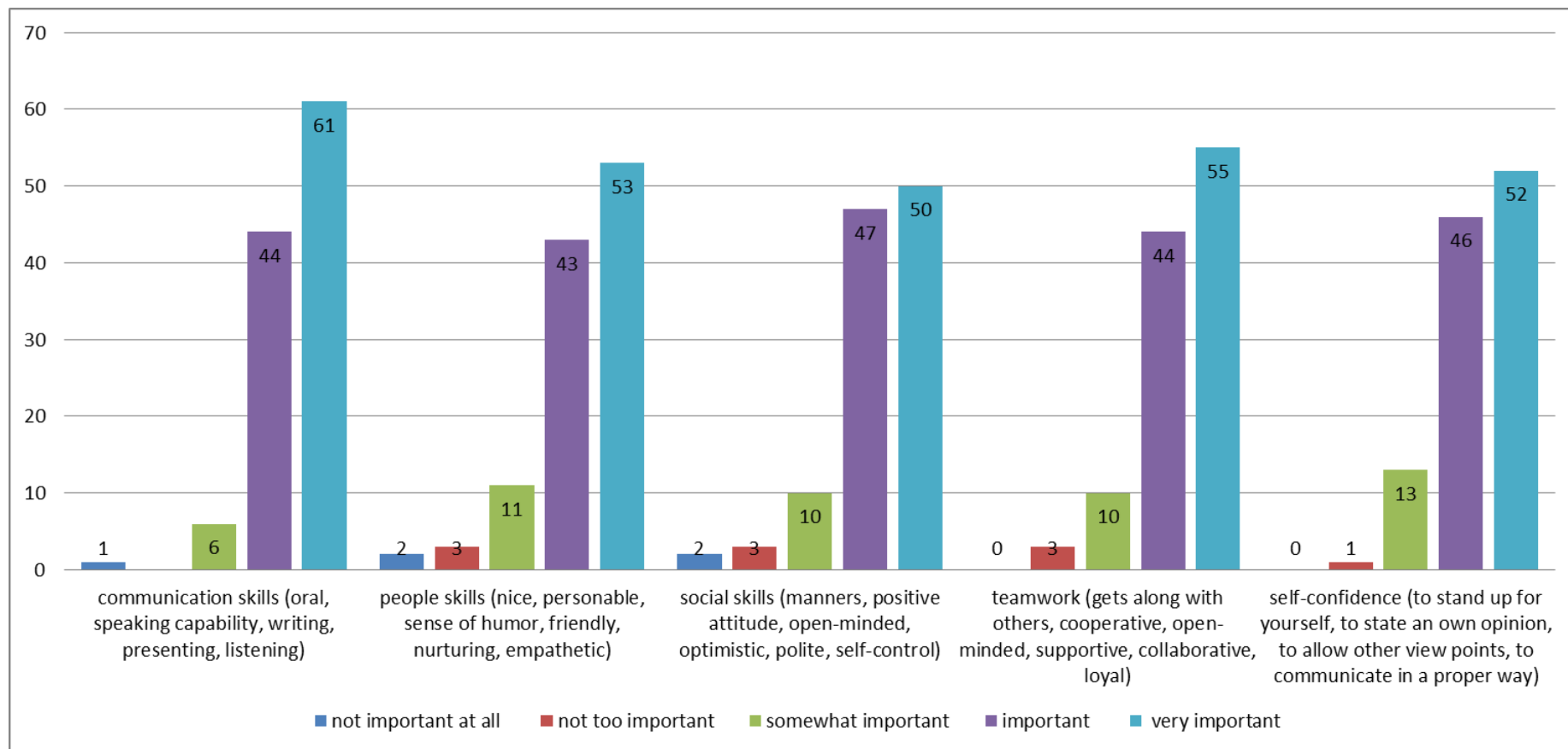
Fig. 1: Rating of importance of soft-skills in schools seen by youngsters
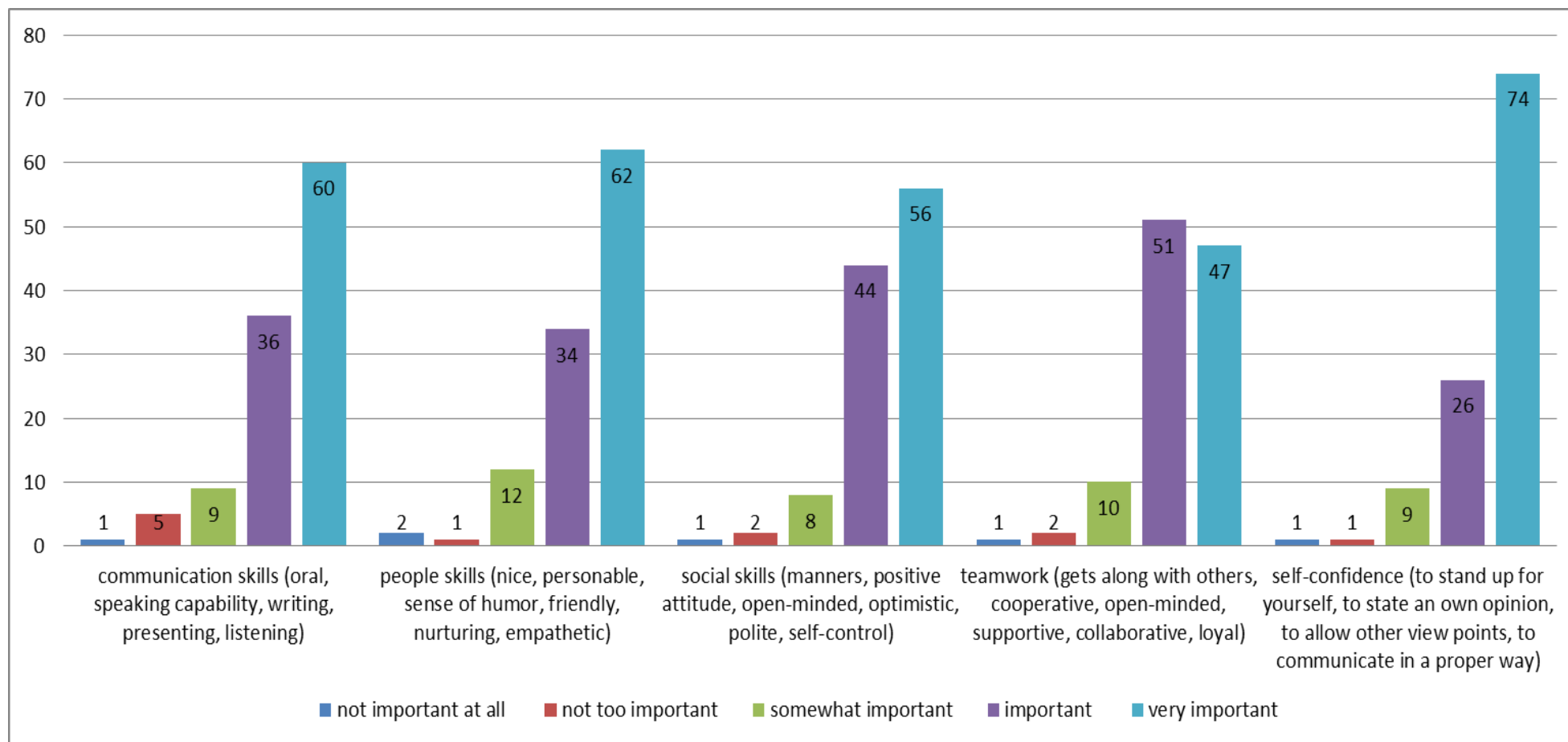
Fig. 2: Rating of importance of soft-skills during work seen by youngsters

Adults: In your opinion, how good are young people in the use of soft skills and self-confidence?

From the teachers/trainers perspective the soft skills of the students/youngsters currently do have space for improvement. Especially the communication skills and self-confidence at school are rather limited rated, similar the communications skills at work (see Fig. 3 and Fig. 4).
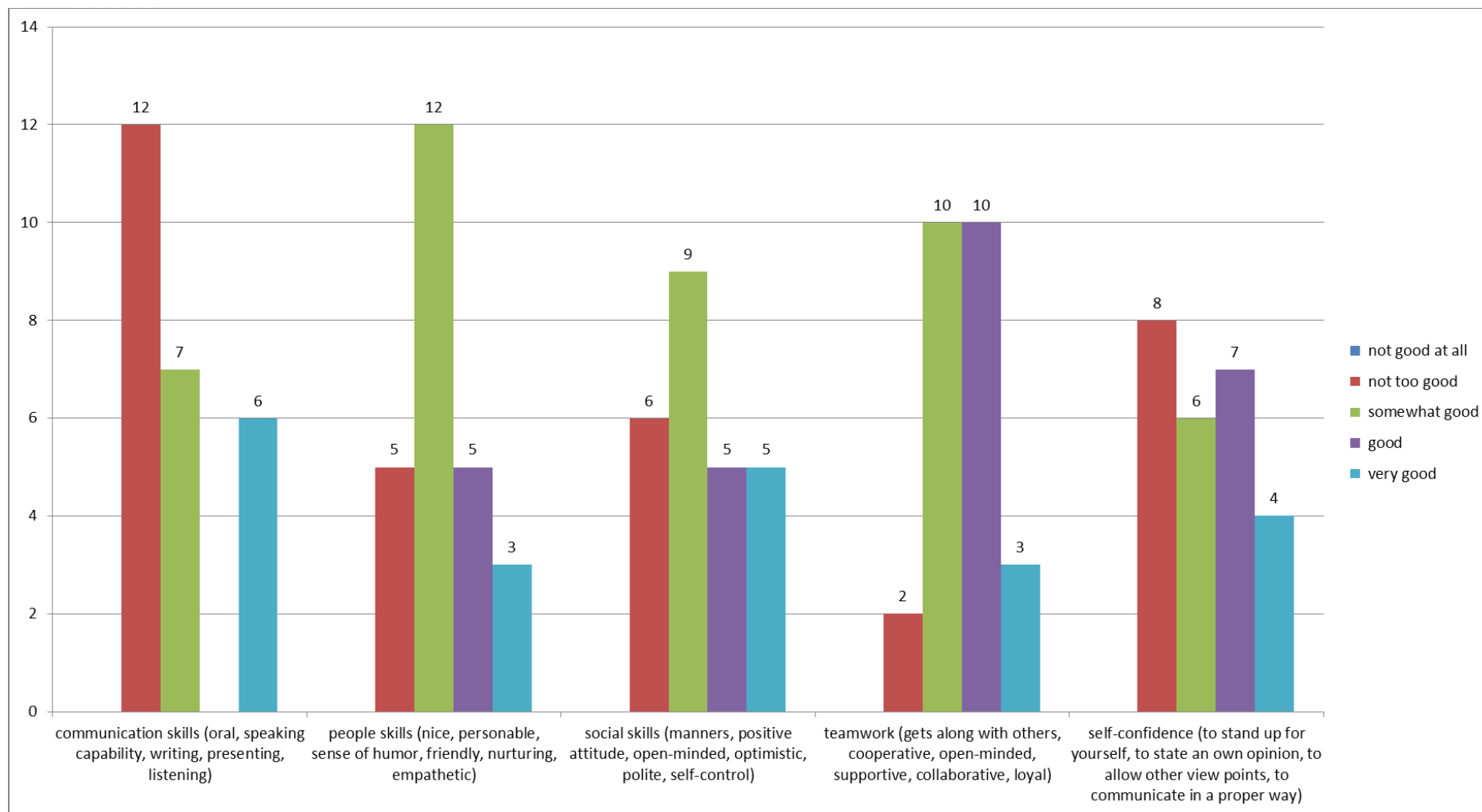
Fig. 3: Rating of soft-skills of youngster in schools seen by adults
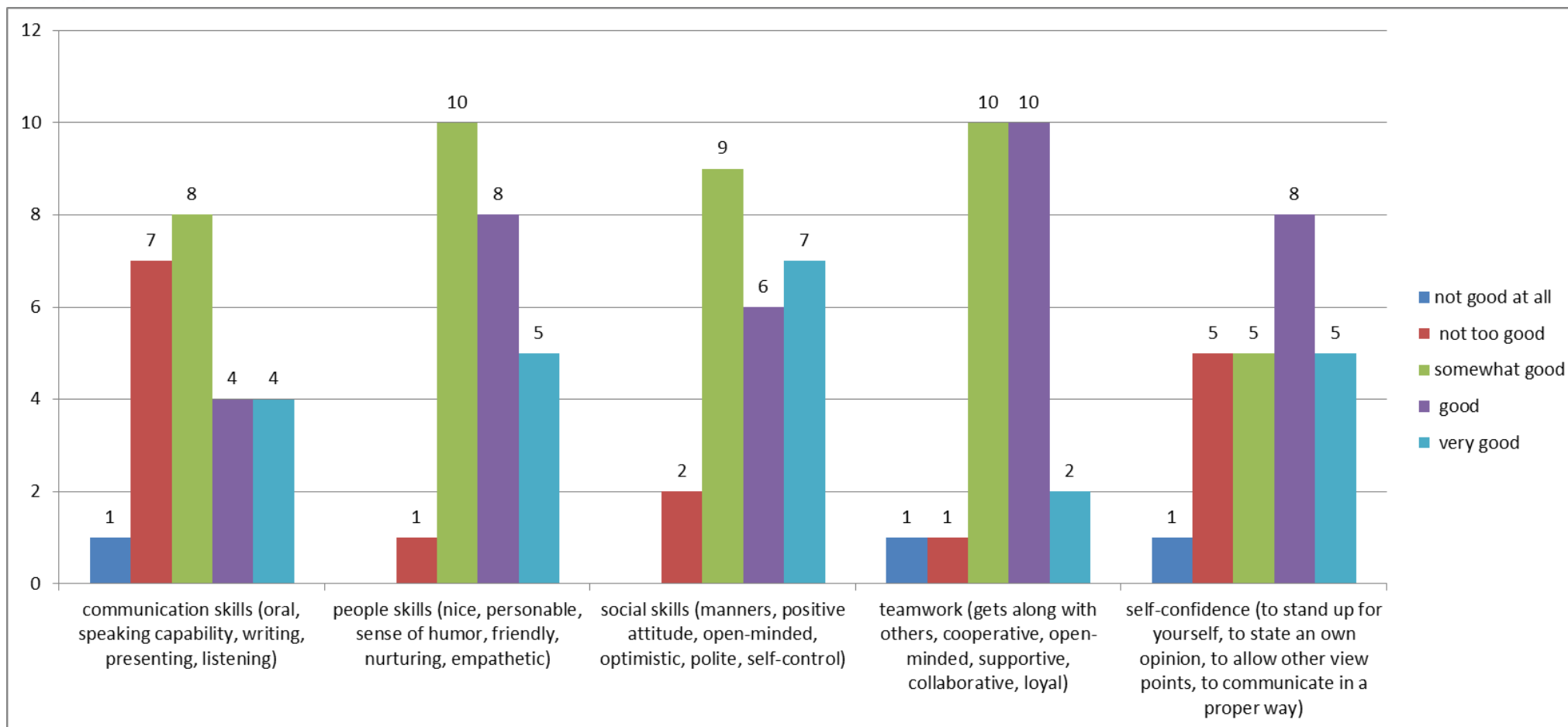
Fig. 4: Rating of soft-skills of youngster during work seen by adults

Tolerance

Youngsters: In your opinion, how tolerant are you regarding topics of …

Adults : In your opinion, how tolerant are young people nowadays regarding topics of …

In general the youngsters rate themselves as being rather tolerant in most topics in comparison to the teachers (see Fig. 5 and 6).
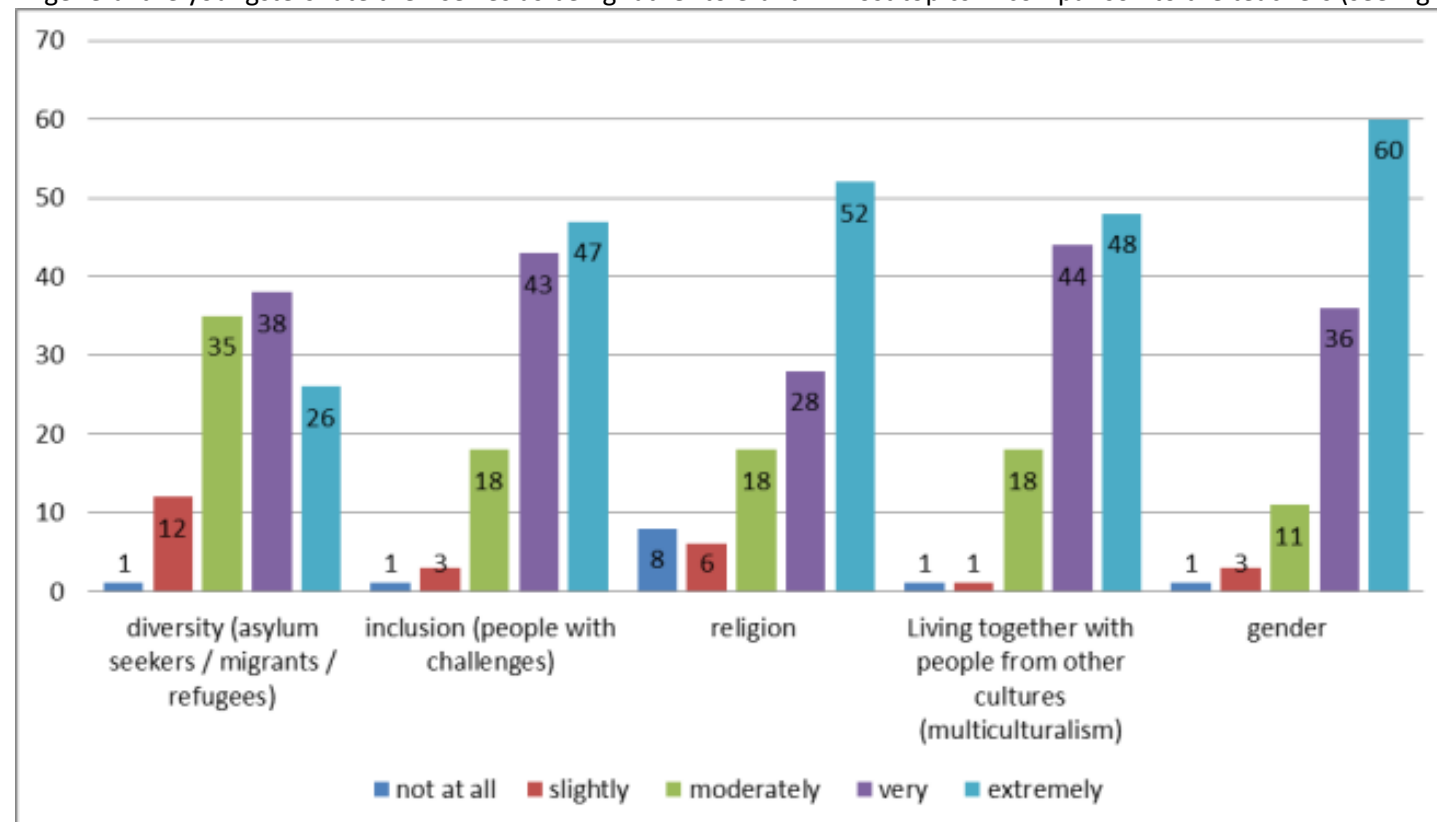
Fig. 5: Tolerance towards different topics seen by Youngsters
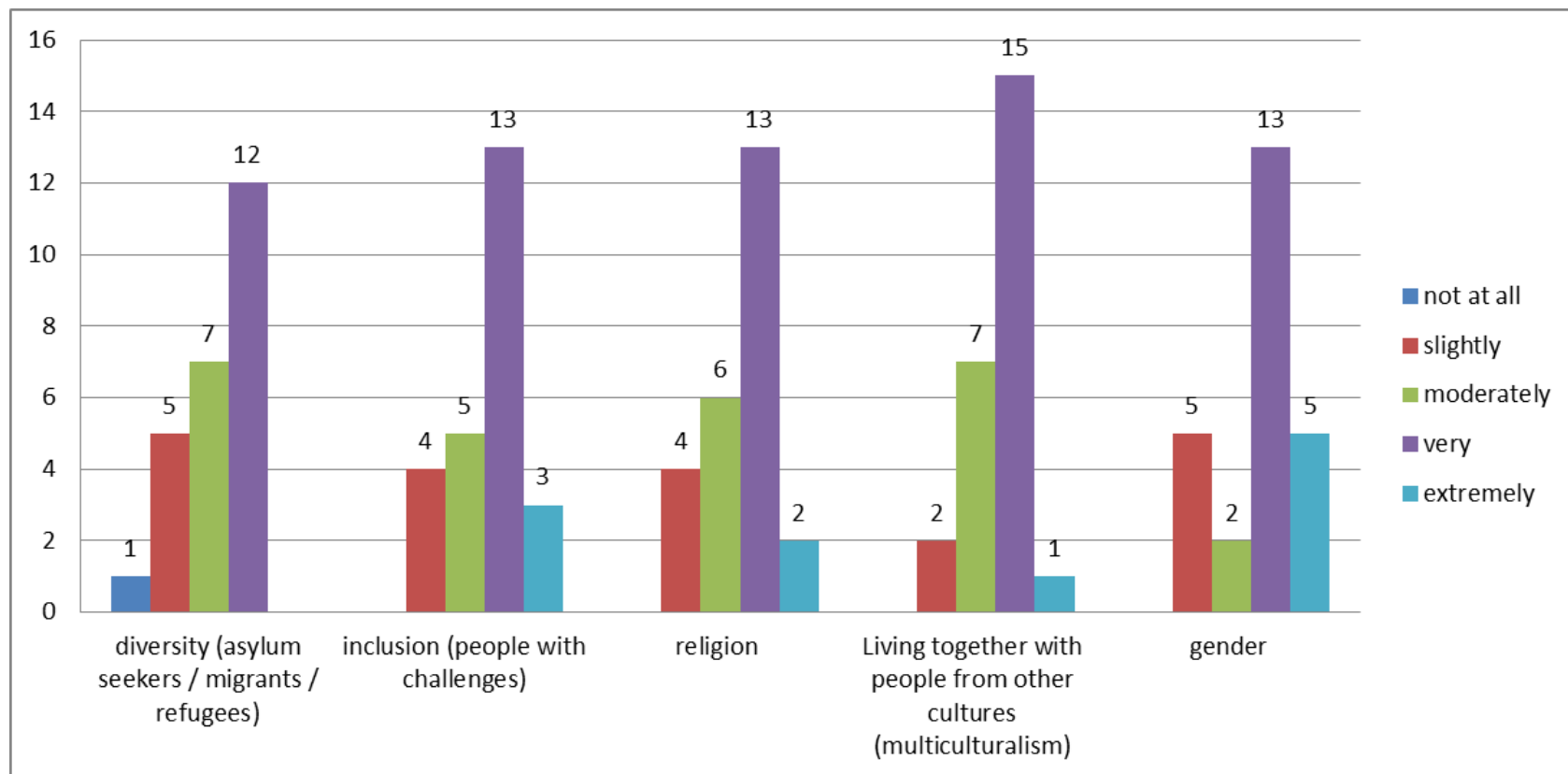
Fig. 6: Tolerance towards different topics seen by Adults

4.2 Teaching and training methods

Regarding the teaching and training methods used, the answers provide a possibility of comparing the impressions that youngsters have in comparison with the believe of the teachers about what they do.

Youngsters: Which kind of methods in teaching and training do you usually experience in your school and/or education?

Adults: Think of your teaching, training, educating style: Which kind of methods do you normally use?

The way teaching techniques are perceived by youngsters and what adults believe they use is also contradictory, as the teachers say that they are using hardly frontal methods, which the youngsters do perceive still as one of the biggest parts of teaching methods used by teachers/trainers in their daily work (see Fig.7 and Fig.8).
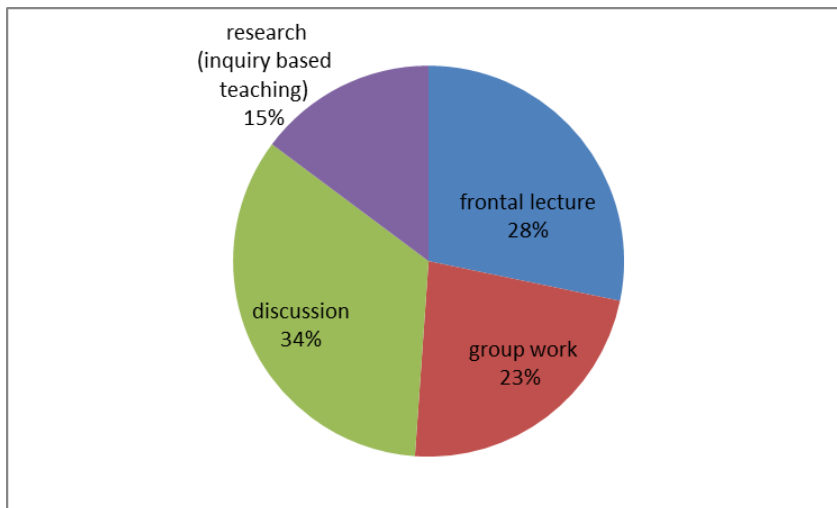
Fig. 7: Teaching methods seen by youngsters
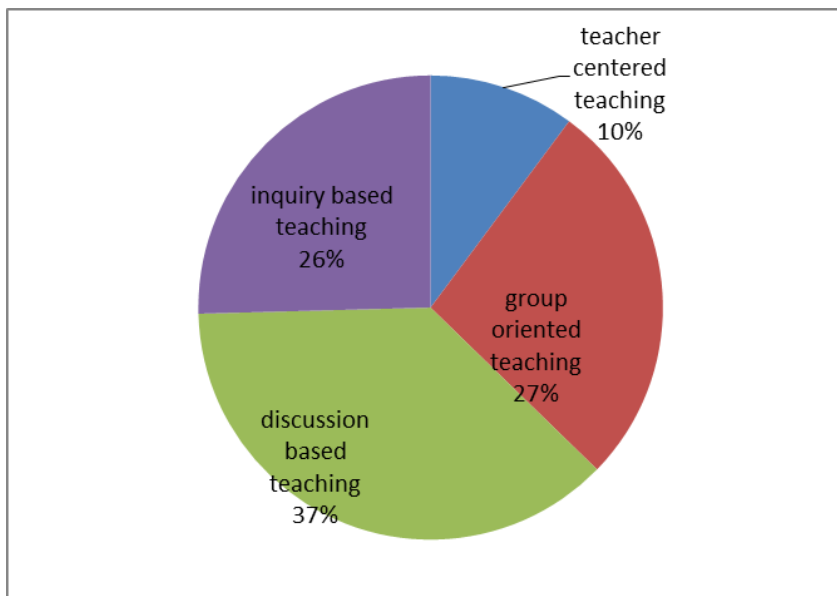
Fig. 8: Teaching methods seen by adults

Use of images

To find out if pictures are used during the teaching and trainings the youngsters were asked to mention how often they experience the use of pictures/photos by teachers and trainers during teaching and training activities in average (See Fig. 9).
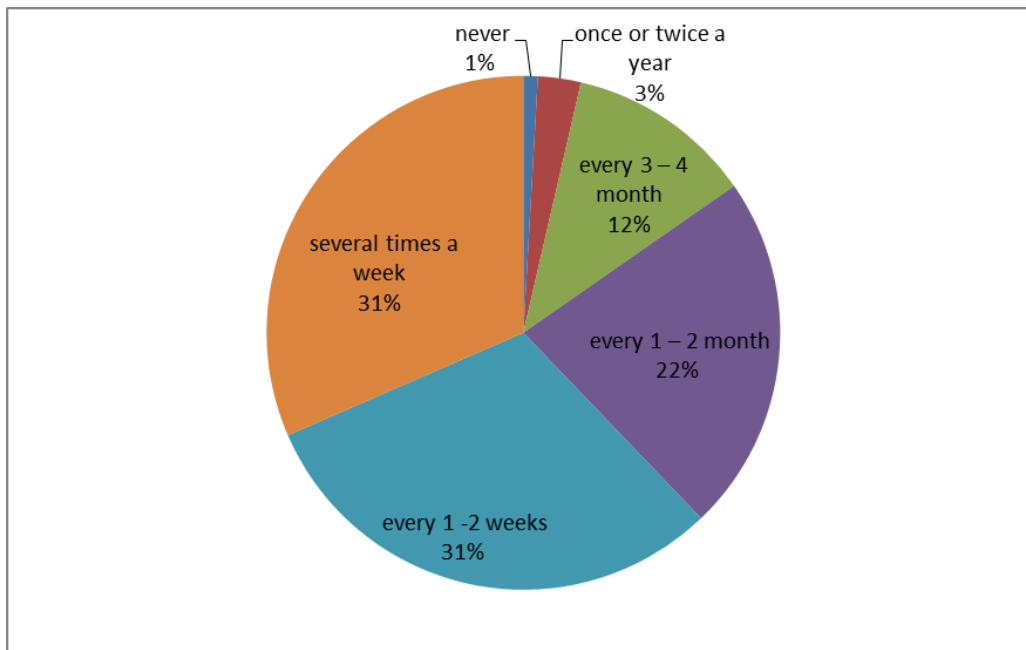
Fig. 9: Teaching with photos and pictures

Furthermore the adults were also questioned if they use images during teaching, training and explaining sessions.

As a result, twenty-four adults use images during their activities and were forwarded to answer specific questions on that, see section below "*working with images*".

One teacher/trainer mentioned not to use images as it is too complicated in his/her opinion.

4.3 Working with images

The teachers/trainers were given some specific questions on the way of how they use images and had the option to give multiply answers (see Fig. 10, Fig 11 and Fig. 12).
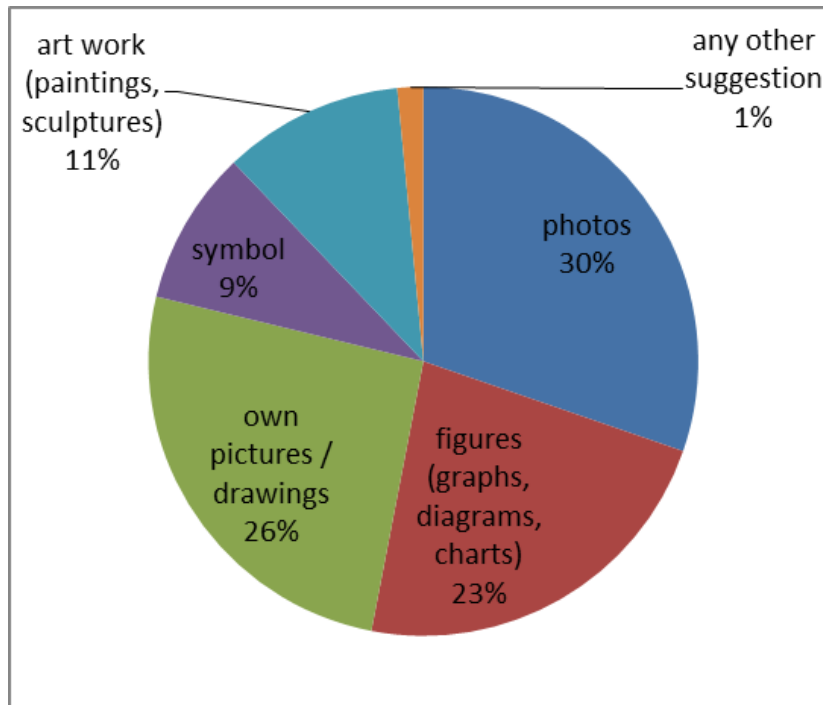
Fig. 10: Which kind of images?
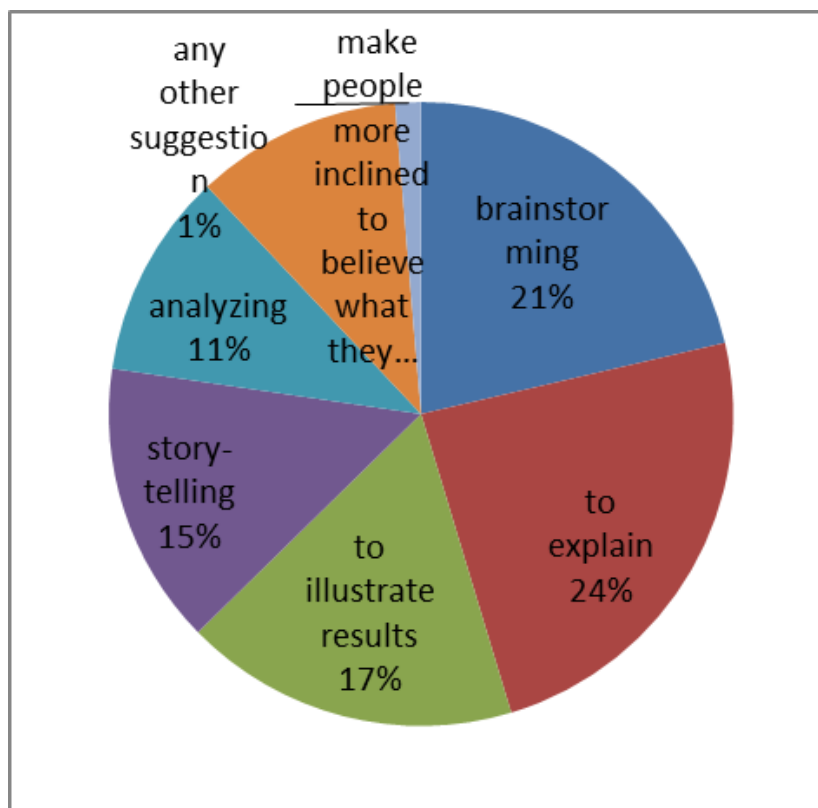
Fig. 11: For what purpose do you use pictures?
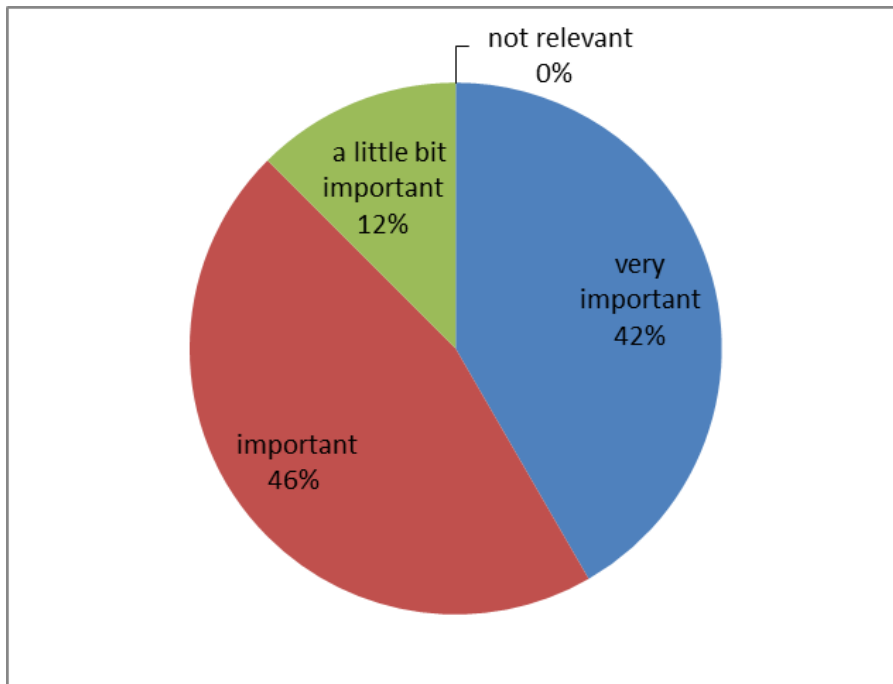
Fig. 12: Please rate the importance of pictures for your working context

As a next step one sample picture was given to find out if it could play a role in their working context (see below).

Fifteen teachers/trainers would use it, and ten would not use it. One stated as reason that it doesn't fit into his/her teaching/training context and two would use another picture.

The purpose to use images for teaching varies (see Fig. 13). Teachers/trainers mentioned also to use images in order to identify behavioral patterns, do activities regarding team work and enhance the creativity.
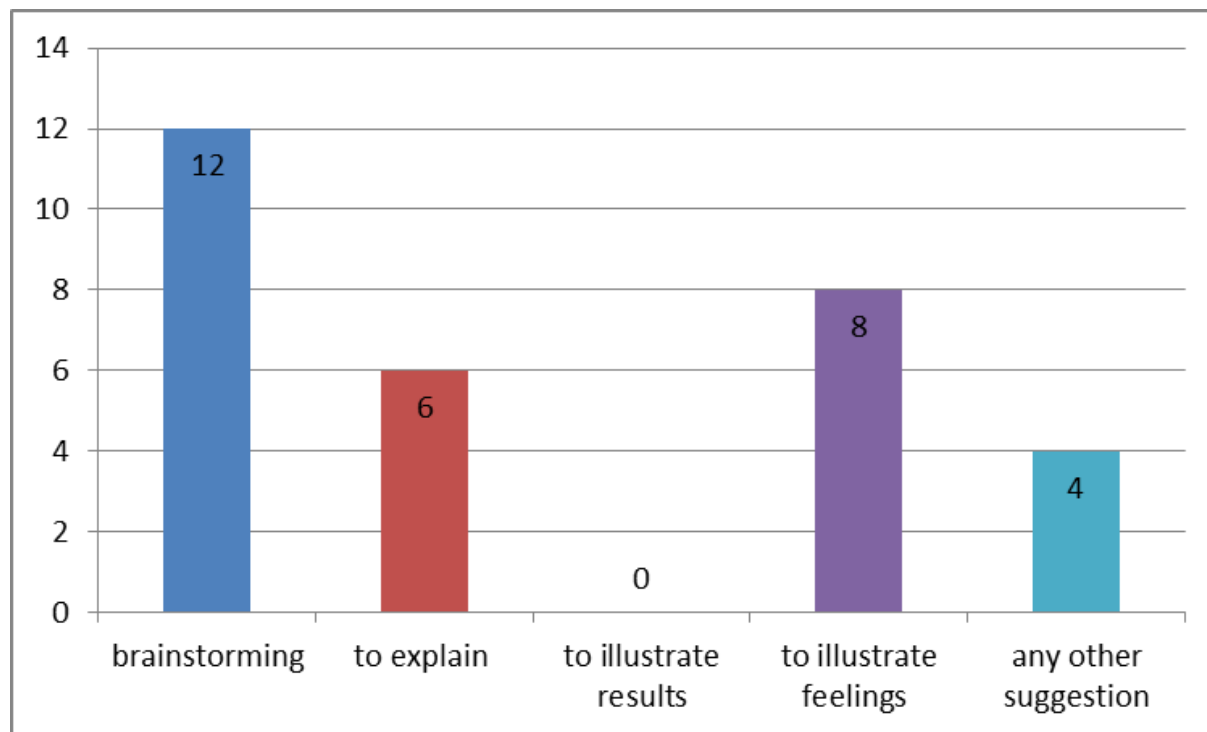
Fig. 13: Purpose to use the image

Furthermore the question was which kind of competencies could be enhanced with the help of this picture, and teachers/trainers stated the following opinions (see Fig. 14).
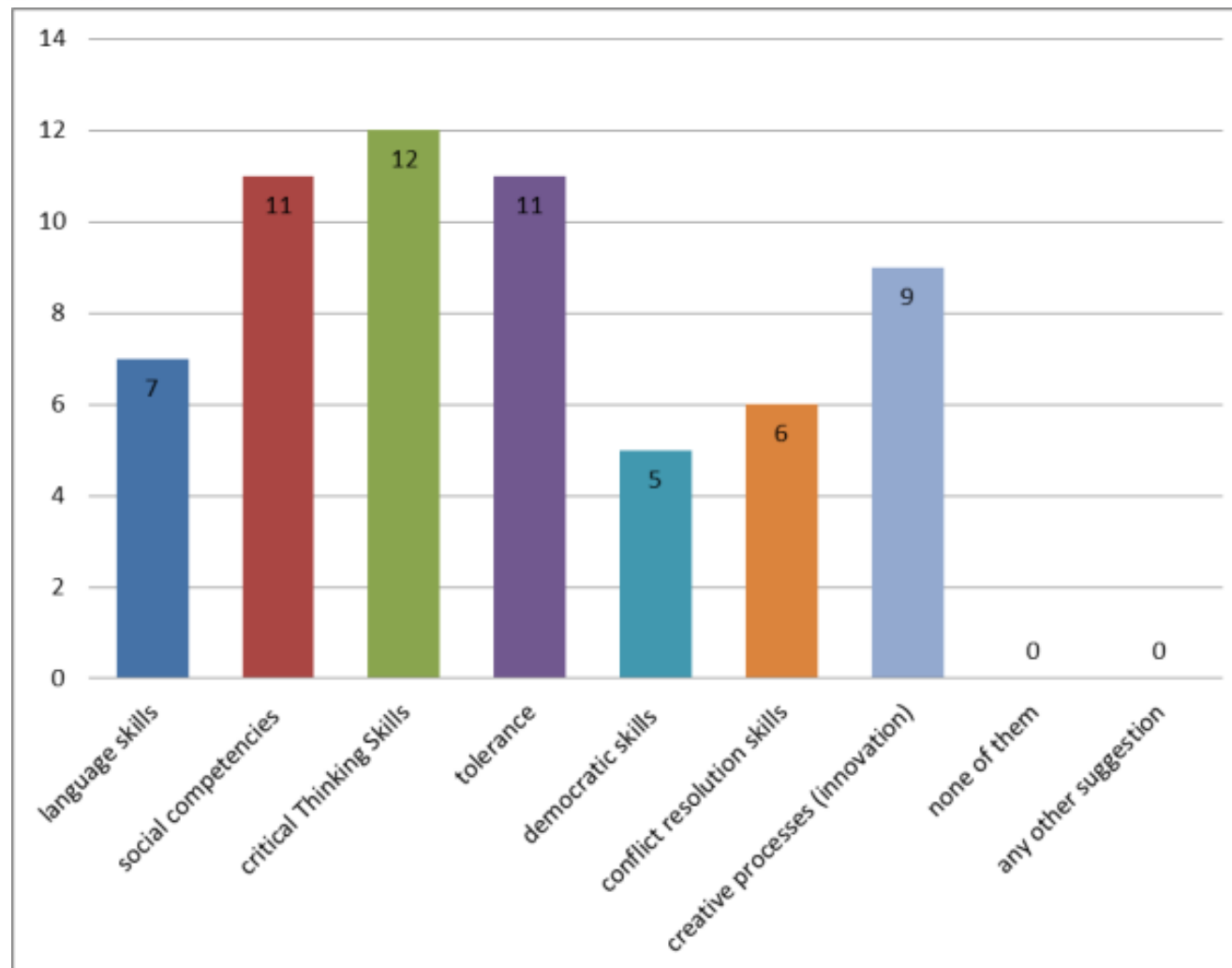
Fig. 14: Which kind of competencies could be enhanced with the help of this picture

5. SUMMARY

The first impression while reading the results is that youngsters seem to be aware of the necessity of social skills for their academic success as well their professional career at the labor market and may value activities to maintain this skills as they consider them as reasonable. This might be even more emphasized due to the fact that teachers/trainers do not rate their skills very high. The same goes for their tolerance. This discrepancy between the desired behavior and the effective attitude proofs that the idea of the VISUALIZE project fostering the youngsters tolerance and developing their overall soft skills is appointed well.

As teachers/trainers already mention to use images in their work it proofs that the advantage of visualizing the educational contents and illustrate the materials is already recognized. This is especially true in current times, where communication processes are often closely connected to pictures. Thus to improve more ways to visualize subjects and to work with manifold methods and descriptive tools instead of using the static way of frontal teaching seem to be welcome on both sides, teachers as youngsters.

Annex 1: Questionnaire for adults

Visualize

An innovative training concept for strengthening the tolerance and soft skills of young people
Contract number: 2016-2-DE04-KA205-014270
Erasmus+, Strategic Partnerships for Youth

For adults:

thank you for participating in our initial questionnaire for our European project „Visualize: An innovative training concept for strengthening the tolerance and soft skills of young people" funded by the Erasmus+ KA2 strategic partnership program of the European Union. You are providing us very valuable information and help us in improving our work and gaining our aims and goals. This data of course remains anonymous and is only used for the further development of the project.

1. **In your opinion, how good are young people in the use of soft skills and self-confidence like…..**

Please rate between: 1 = not good at all   2 = not too good
                                3 = somewhat good   4 = good
                                5 = very good

	Soft-skills and/or self-confidence	**During school /training**	**For the job-life**
a)	communication skills (oral, speaking capability, writing, presenting, listening)		
b)	people skills (nice, personable, sense of humor, friendly, nurturing, empathetic)		
c)	social skills (manners, positive attitude, open-minded, optimistic, polite, self-control)		
d)	teamwork (gets along with others, cooperative, open-minded, supportive, collaborative, loyal)		
e)	self-confidence (to stand up for yourself, to state an own opinion, to allow other view points, to communicate in a proper way)		

2. **In your opinion, how tolerant are young people nowadays regarding topics of …**
Please rate it between: 1 = not at all   2 = slightly   3 = moderately
                                4 = very   5 = extremely

	topics	Your rating (1-5)
a)	diversity (asylum seekers / migrants / refugees)	
b)	inclusion (people with challenges)	
c)	religion	
d)	Living together with people from other cultures (multiculturalism)	
e)	gender	

3. **Think of your teaching, training, educating style: Which kind of methods do you normally use?** *(More than one answer possible)*
   - ☐ teacher centered teaching
   - ☐ group oriented teaching
   - ☐ discussion based teaching
   - ☐ inquiry based teaching

4. **Do you use images during teaching, training and explaining?**
   - ☐ Yes (please continue with question no. 4.1)
   - ☐ No (please continue with question no. 4.2)

   4.1) If your answer is „yes"

   a) Which kind of images? (More than one answer possible)
   - ☐ photos
   - ☐ Fig.s (graphs, diagrams, charts)
   - ☐ own pictures / drawings
   - ☐ symbol
   - ☐ art work (paintings, sculptures)
   - ☐ ……………………………………. (any other suggestion*)*

   b) For what purpose do you use pictures? (More than one answer is possible)
   - ☐ brainstorming
   - ☐ to explain
   - ☐ to illustrate results
   - ☐ story-telling
   - ☐ analyzing
   - ☐ make people more inclined to believe what they are teaching or reading etc.
   - ☐ …………………………………………(any other suggestion)

   c) Please rate the importance of pictures for your working context
   - ☐ very important
   - ☐ important
   - ☐ a little bit important
   - ☐ not relevant

4.2) If your answer is „no"

a)   Why not? (More than one answer possible)

☐   technical devices missing

☐   too complicated

☐   I don't know how to use/integrate them into the lessons

☐   other reasons

5. Do you think the following picture could play a role in your working context?

☐   Yes (please continue with question no. 5.1)

☐   No (please continue *with question no. 5.2)*

5.1) If your answer is „yes"

a)   For which purpose (why) would you use this picture?

☐   brainstorming

☐   to explain

☐   to illustrate results

☐   to illustrate feelings

☐   ………………………………..(any other suggestion)

b)   In your opinion, which kind of competencies can be enhanced with the help of this picture? (More than one answer possible)

- ☐ language skills
- ☐ social competencies
- ☐ critical Thinking Skills
- ☐ tolerance
- ☐ democratic skills
- ☐ conflict resolution skills
- ☐ creative processes (innovation)
- ☐ none of them
- ☐ ………………………………..(any other suggestion)

5.2)   If your answer is „no", why not?

- ☐ It doesn't fit into my context.
- ☐ I don't like the picture.
- ☐ I would use another picture.
- ☐ I don't work with pictures.

Thank you very much for your participation!

Visualize

An innovative training concept for strengthening the tolerance and soft skills of young people
Contract number: 2016-2-DE04-KA205-014270
Erasmus+, Strategic Partnerships for Youth

For young people:
thank you for participating in our initial questionnaire for our European project „Visualize: An innovative training concept for strengthening the tolerance and soft skills of young people" funded by the Erasmus+ KA2 strategic partnership program of the European Union. You are providing us very valuable information and help us in improving our work and gaining our aims and goals. Your data of course remains anonymous and is only used for the further development of the project.

1) In your opinion, how important is it for you to have good soft skills (as self-esteem, language skills, self-confidence, tolerance)?

Please rate between: 1 = not important at all   2 = not too important
                 3 = somewhat important   4 = important
                 5 = very important

	Soft-skills and/or self-confidence	During school /training	For the job-life
f)	communication skills (oral, speaking capability, writing, presenting, listening)		
g)	people skills (nice, personable, sense of humor, friendly, nurturing, empathetic)		
h)	social skills (manners, positive attitude, open-minded, optimistic, polite, self-control)		
i)	teamwork (gets along with others, cooperative, open-minded, supportive, collaborative, loyal)		
j)	self-confidence (to stand up for yourself, to state an own opinion, to allow other view points, to communicate in a proper way)		

2) In your opinion, how tolerant are you regarding topics of …

Please rate it between: 1 = not at all   2 = slightly   3 = moderately
                     4 = very   5 = extremely

	topics	*Your rating (1 – 5)*
f)	diversity (asylum seekers / migrants / refugees)	
g)	inclusion (people with challenges)	
h)	religion	

i)	living together with people from other cultures (multiculturalism)	
j)	gender	

3) Which kind of methods in teaching and training do you usually experience in your school and/or education? (more than one answer possible)
   a) frontal lecture
   b) group work
   c) discussion
   d) research (inquiry based teaching)

4) In average, how often do you experience the use of pictures/photos by teachers and trainers during teaching and training activities?
   ☐ never
   ☐ once or twice a year
   ☐ every 3 – 4 month
   ☐ every 1 – 2 month
   ☐ every 1 -2 weeks
   ☐ several times a week

Thank you very much for your participation!