



TOY for Inclusion:

Community Based Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) for Roma Children

2017 - 2019

Workstream 3:

**4th Monitoring report of the community-based ECEC pilot actions for the period from
October 2018 – mid January 2019**

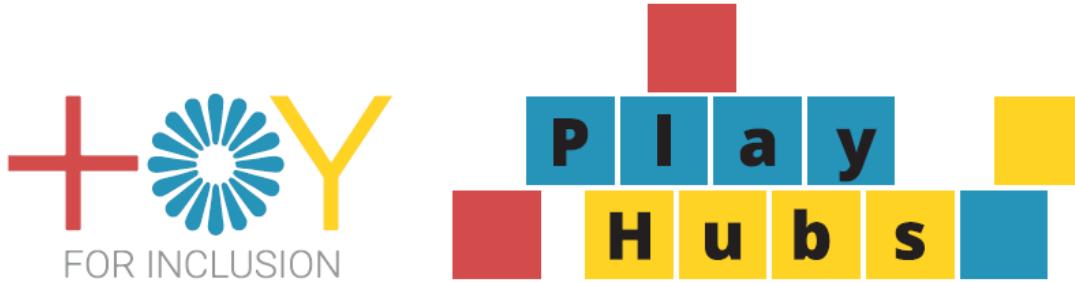


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Overview



TOY for inclusion aims to improve the transition experience of Roma children to schools by offering an innovative response to discrimination of Romani communities. This is reached through the creation of community based ECEC Play Hubs (resource and meeting centres) where relationships between Roma and non-Roma young children and their families are built and interactions in safe play spaces across all generations are supported.

There are three main objectives of WS3:

- to carry out needs-assessment within Romani community regarding community-based ECEC activities;
- to establish an ECEC Play Hub in each pilot and target community;
- to organise activities and events in the ECEC Play Hub, including intergenerational learning activities, with the aim of combating segregation and promoting inclusion.



In previous monitoring and evaluation, period over 700 children were registered in ECEC Play Hubs.

After first reporting period (April 2018), pilots were more focused on integration of Roma children, which resulted in more Roma families participating in ECEC Play Hub activities and there were more interactions between Roma and non-Roma children than in the first monitoring and evaluation period.

During the summer period, ECEC Play Hubs were quieter since less children/families were attending and fewer activities in average were organized. At the same time, representation of Roma children was higher in percentage, since they usually do not go on paid holidays with their families during summer. It shows us that it is necessary that ECEC Play Hub stays open during the entire year.

ECEC Play Hubs have varied their activities in this period and changed the manner of operating according to the needs and feedback from families (more outdoor activities, changes in operating hours, etc.). The monitoring data shows that Partners continuously increased the number of toys and materials in ECEC Play Hubs.

At the same time LATs continuously worked on sustainability of the ECEC Play Hubs through collaboration with other organizations and NGOs, local and national authorities and improving visibility of the ECEC Play Hubs locally.

In the reporting period October 2018 – mid January 2019, partners provided documentation on:

- ECEC Play Hub toys (Template 1)
- Membership report (Template 2)
- Activity reports (Templates 3)
- Documenting ECEC Play Hubs (pilot actions) – quarterly report (Template 6)
- Focus group discussion with practitioners (Template 7)
- Reports from LAT meetings and mentoring/monitoring visits (Template 8)
- QUAT report (including action plan).



1. ECEC Play Hub membership and availability of toys



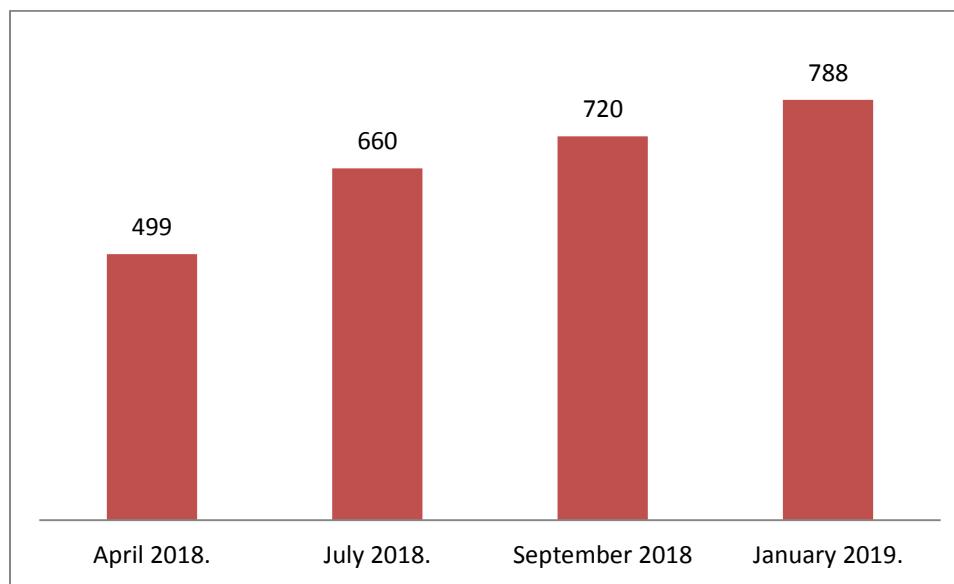
'ECEC Play Hubs contribute to reduce prejudice because thanks to the opportunity to meet, play together and build relationship families can understand that every child is a child, and every parent is a parent, without any kind of distinction about religion, gender, ethnicity and so on.'

Practitioner from Italy

According to data collected from Partners for the period October 2018 to the mid of January 2019, 788 **children** were registered in 8 ECEC Hubs in the 7 participating countries as members, which is about 60 registered children more than in the previous reporting period (See Figure 1 below).



Figure 1: Number of registered children in ECEC Hubs during the whole project period.



Girls and boys evenly participated in ECEC Play Hub activities (48% are girls and 52% are boys). Most of the children who were registered are aged 3-5 (30%) and 6-8 (27%) (Graph 2). These percentages are constant during whole project period (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: Number of children registered in ECEC Hubs: October 2018-mid January 2019.

Number of Children Registered	GENDER			AGE					
	F	M	0-1	1-2	3-5	6-8	older	no data	
Belgium									
Croatia	170	78	92	5	15	41	22	69	18
Hungary	41	25	16	2	6	17	15	0	1
Italy Mazara	64	41	23	4	6	24	21	9	
Italy Rome	36	18	18	3	2	12	9	9	0
Latvia	128	61	67	9	15	28	36	40	0
Slovakia	263	109	154	22	56	75	85	25	0
Slovenia	86	43	43	0	10	42	24	10	0
SUM	788	375	413	45	110	239	212	162	19

Figure 2: Percentage of girls and boys registered in ECEC Hubs by the end of project period (mid January 2019).

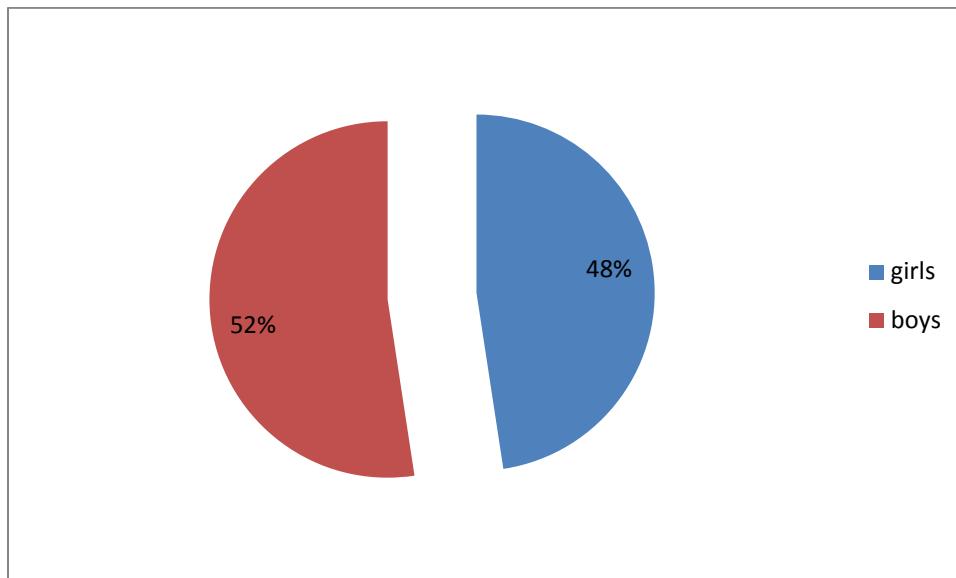
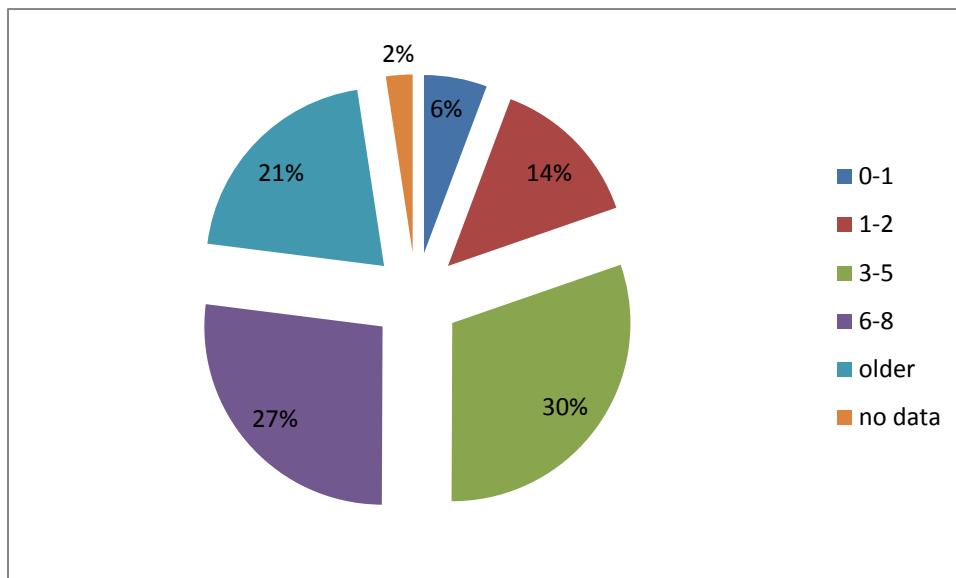


Figure 3: Percentage of children registered in ECEC Hubs by the end of project period (mid January 2019) by age.



On average 234 toys and educational materials were included in catalogues in the seven ECEC Hubs, which is little more than in the previous period. Data shows that in the previous period Partners from Latvia, Slovenia and Italy (Mazara del Vallo) collected more toys and educational materials. The majority of Partners continue to have same number of toys and materials in the ECEC Play Hubs as in the previous quarter. For an overall number of toys/materials see Table 2.

Note: VBJK (Belgium) did not collect data on toys available because Toy Libraries already exist in Flanders and they use these libraries for their activities.



Table 2: Number of toys/educational materials included in ECEC catalogue per country:

	Number of Toys by the end of March 2018	Number of Toys by the end of June 2018	Number of Toys by the end of September 2018	Number of Toys by the mid January 2019
Belgium	Not relevant	Not relevant	Not relevant	
Croatia	388	402	408	408
Hungary	146	147	242	242
Italy Mazara	122	151	167	196
Italy Rome	95	101	101	101
Latvia	215	228	240	323
Slovakia	78	78	245	245
Slovenia	81	81	81	124
Sum	1125	1192	1484	1639
Average	160	166	212	234



2. Attendance to workshops and their focus



'Carry on and never stop since ECEC play Hub bring kids joy and bring them together.'

Slovakia

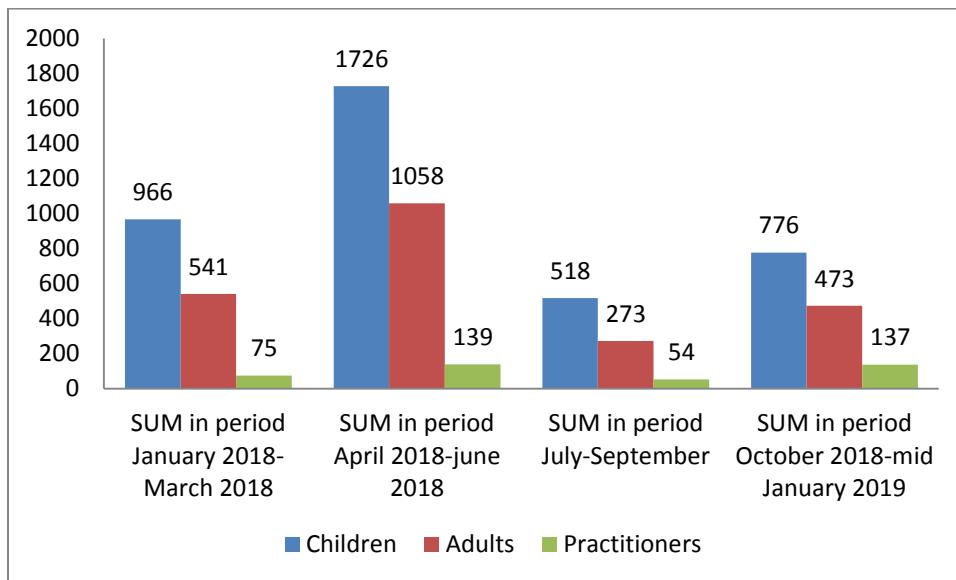
In this quarter 1249 children and members of their families were involved in the activities and workshops organised in the ECEC Hubs (776 children and 473 adults) in 7 countries (7 ECEC Play Hubs). Also, 137 practitioners took part in the activities, of which 20 were Roma.

Table 3: Number of participants (beneficiaries) involved in ECEC Hub activities in period: July – September 2018

	October 2018- Januar 2019		
	Children	Adults	Practitioners
Belgium	50	8	7
Croatia	81	63	6
Hungary	80	35	4
Italy Mazara	43	43	10
Italy Rome	32	39	11
Latvia	237	162	57
Slovakia	179	79	21
Slovenia	74	44	21
SUM	776	473	137



Figure 4: Number of children, adults and practitioners involved in ECEC Hub activities in the period April – June 2018, April – June 2018, July-September 2018 and October 2018-mid January 2019.



In the reporting period October 2018- January 2019, it is estimated that 552 Roma children and members of their families (391 children and 161 adults) **participated in Play Hub Activities. Roma children represented 50% of the total number of children attending the Play Hubs in this period, which is higher than in the previous three periods, when the percentage was 28%, 27% and 41% respectively.**

The overall number of children, adults and practitioners who participated in activities, workshops and events organised in the Hubs in this quarter is smaller than in quarter 1 and 2, but higher than in quarter 3. The fluctuation of participants may be due to the weather conditions, holidays (summer holidays, Christmas holidays) and the level of interest linked to the active promotion of the Hub, which was more intense at the beginning. The focus in quarter 3 and 4 has been on maintaining interest and regular attendance rather than one-off visits; improving and maintaining quality of the activities proposed and increasing the involvement of Roma families. On this last point, it will be important to ensure a more or less equal participation rates between Roma and non-Roma families. It is not the idea that as Roma participation rates increase, non-Roma participation rates decrease.

Table 5: Estimation of the number of Roma participants (beneficiaries) involved in ECEC Hub activities in the period October 2018- mid January 2019

	October 2018- January 2019		
	Children	Adults	Practitioners
Belgium	16	3	1
Croatia	11	7	1
Hungary	35	26	0
Italy Mazara	12	15	2
Italy Rome	11	5	2



Latvia	90	58	4
Slovakia	196	32	5
Slovenia	20	15	5
SUM	391	161	20

Figure 5: Estimation number of Roma children, adults and practitioners involved in ECEC Hub activities in the period April – June 2018, April – June 2018, July-September 2018. and October 2018. - mid January 2019.

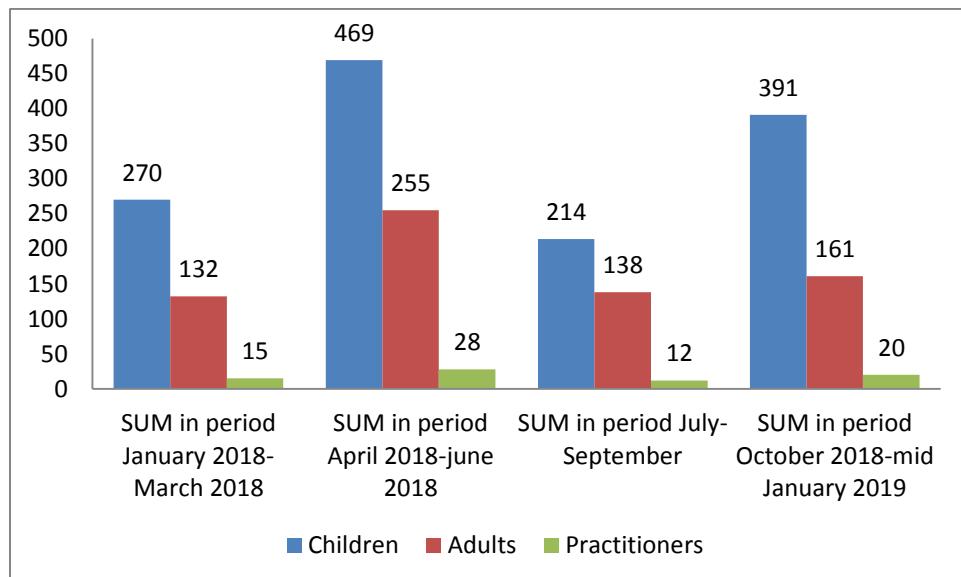
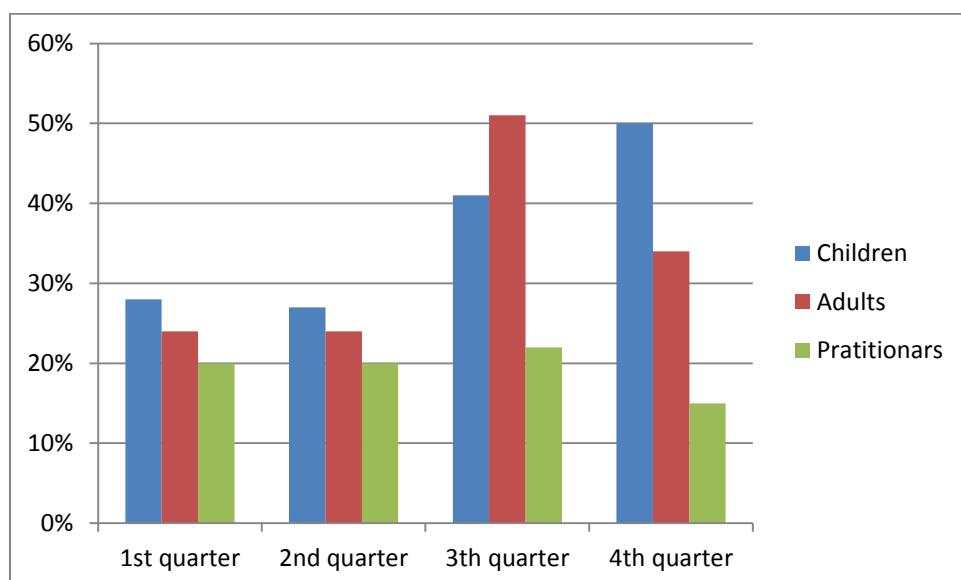


Figure 6: The percentage of Roma (children, adults, practitioners all together) compared to total number of people involved, per quarter.





During the Project period there were a total of 3973¹ visits of children and their family to the ECEC Play hubs. It is estimated that, out of that number, there were 1815 visits by Roma families (children and adults).

Along with the regular lending/borrowing activities of the ECEC Play Hubs, workshops and events were organised such as: Family Day, workshop about transition from kindergarten to school, creation of the photo frame, reading aloud sessions, intergenerational activities, etc. Altogether 68 workshops/events were organized in 8 ECEC Hub during this fourth quarter. For a detailed number of workshops/events per ECEC Hub see Table 5.

Table 6: Number of workshops/events per ECEC Hub in the period October 2018. - mid January 2019.

	Number of workshops/events Oct 18- Jan 19
Belgium	8
Croatia	6
Hungary	4
Italy Mazara	6
Italy Rome	2
Latvia	20
Slovakia	14
Slovenia	8
OVERALL	68

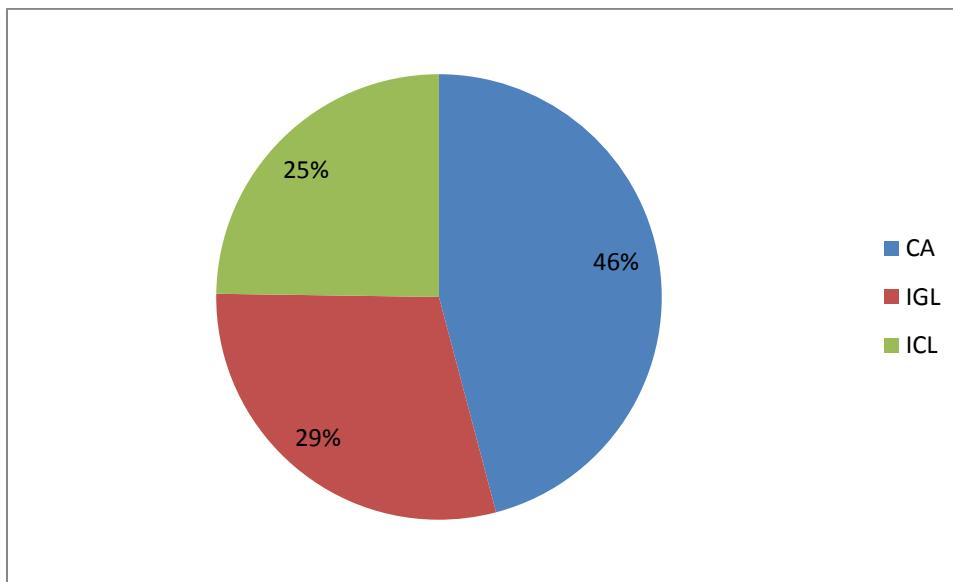
Three types of workshops/events were organized:

- **community activities (CA)**
- **intergenerational learning (IGL)**
- **intercultural learning (ICL)**

¹ Some of the these visits may have been one-off visits. This number also includes the multiple visits of the same family over time.



Figure 7: Percentage of different types of pilot actions *in the period October 2018 - mid January 2019.*



During the whole period of Project implementation 251 workshops and events were organized in 8 ECEC Play Hubs.



3. Successes, challenges, quality assessment and action plans for further improvement

'The enormous role has been taken by the Roma mediators to create safe space and good atmosphere during the opening.'

practitioner from Hungary

'ECEC Play hub is a place for socializing parents and children where you can really devote to your child and be more than you are 100% dedicated.'

practitioner from Croatia

Each partner organises monthly or bi-monthly (as agreed at the partnership meeting in Budapest, May 2018) **mentoring and monitoring meetings** with the LAT and keep records about main successes and challenges (Template 6 and Template 8).

The main successes identified by the Partners in this quarter were:

- Good interactions between Roma and non-Roma children and good involvement of Roma families (Belgium, Italy, Slovakia);
- Good cooperation with local authorities who recognize importance of innovative early years non-formal service and has motivation to support it (Croatia, Hungary, Latvia, Slovakia);
- Increasing initiative and commitment of children and parents to organize activities themselves (Slovakia)
- Better cooperation with other NGOs (Belgium, Italy, Slovenia), and professionals (Croatia);
- Better visibility (Hungary, Italy Mazzara, Slovakia, Slovenia).

The main challenges identified by the Partners in the last quarter were:

- Sustaining continuity in quality of the project after its end (Belgium²);
- Finding bigger/more appropriate space (Hungary, Italy Mazara del Vallo);
- Involving more non-Roma families (Italy Mazara del Vallo);
- Improving visibility and promotion of the Play Hub ((Italy and Slovenia);
- Motivate more Roma parents to go to the Hub (Croatia, Hungary, Slovenia) or to give opportunity to Roma parents to go to Hub independently, without transport (Italy-Rome) ;
- Fundraising for new toys (Slovakia);
- Improving internal regulations about the use of space/equipment (Slovakia);
- Involving more fathers (Slovakia).

Quality assessments in each Hub were carried out by the Local Action Teams using the ECD-QUAT. This is a Quality Assessment Tool of Early Childhood Development Services for Young Boys and Girls specifically designed to be used in the ECEC Play Hubs. The ECD-QUAT has six dimensions:

- Child Friendliness;

² The Belgium partner will not take part in the follow-up project funded by the European Commission – Erasmus+ KA3 programme.



- Agency; Safety;
- Health and Protection;
- Staffing and HR;
- Connectedness;
- and Sustainability.

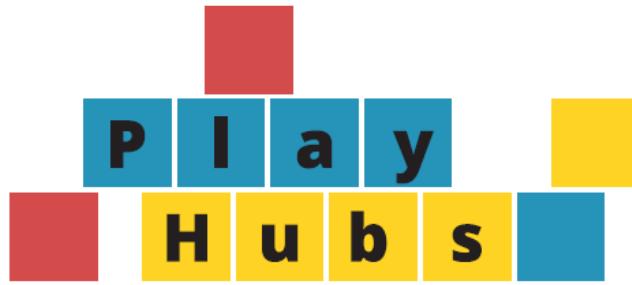
According to the 'Guidelines for Workstream 3: Community-based ECEC pilot actions' LAT members in each Partner country used the 'ECD QUAT for Play Hubs' tool in order to first plan the delivery of the services and then two times to self-assess the quality of their services (January 2018 – planning; July 2018 and January 2019 - assessment). After conducting the quality assessment, the ECD-QUAT produced a Spider Web for each LAT, highlighting strengths and weaknesses (see Appendix 1), and Action Plans for further improvements.

The quality assessment involved discussing and scoring all dimensions in a group reflection meeting, which involved staff, LAT members, community members and volunteers. As a result of the meeting main points for follow-up action were agreed. Overall, we notice some common points in several Partners' action plans:

- further motivating Roma and/or other vulnerable families to come to the ECEC Play Hub and work on activities that don't exclude any child (Belgium, Croatia);
- need for further involvement of volunteers or new volunteers or professionals in operating ECEC Play Hub (Croatia, Italy, Latvia);
- need to increase activities that allow children to suggest their own initiatives/participation (Croatia,);
- further promotion and improvement of visibility of ECEC Play Hub (Italy - Rome), Latvia, Slovakia, Slovenia);
- need to organise more meetings with the representatives of local authorities (Slovakia);
- need to organize more outdoor activities (Slovakia);
- need to improve sustainability (Italy - Mazara del Vallo, Slovenia),



4. Conclusions



'We saw a big difference between the beginning of the project and now. Children grew in their friendship, families that wouldn't meet, sit and talk to each other. And they share also more information about the services offered in their neighborhood, about schools and childcare centers and so on.'

practitioner from Belgium

- According to data collected from Partners, by the end of Project, a total of **788 children were registered in ECEC Hubs in the 7 participating countries, 8 ECEC Play Hubs.**
- During the Project period **children and their family members visited ECEC Play hubs 3973 times.** It is estimated that, out of that number, there were **1815 visits by Roma families (children and adults).**
- The number of Roma children and families participating in the Hubs constantly increased through the year, growing from 28% in the first two quarters to 41% in quarter 3 and 50% in quarter 4. The fact that the Roma proportion in overall participation reached a maximum of 50% could be perceived as a failure. However, the balance between Roma and non-Roma participation rate and the fact that the Roma participation rate reflects the proportion of Roma in the local population is a big success of the project.
- Girls and boys evenly participated in ECEC Play Hub activities and most of the children who were registered are aged 3-5 and 6-8.
- The toy lending/borrowing service offered as part of ECEC Play Hubs counts altogether **1639 toys and educational materials.**
- During the whole period of Project, implementation **251 workshops and events were organized in 8 ECEC Play Hubs.**
- **LAT in all Project countries had regular meetings.** Those meetings were more frequent during first months of implementation and now meetings are organized every two or three months.

From the data collected by the partners, it is clear that a lot has been done in the past 12 months: the quality and quantity of the services provided have consistently increased; the number of Roma families regularly attending the Hubs has also increased; and the cooperation between Hubs and other services and institutions has improved. However, in the implementation of this pilot project as for most innovative untested initiatives, there is room for improvement and there are a number of challenges, which need to be addressed.



Co-funded by
the European Union

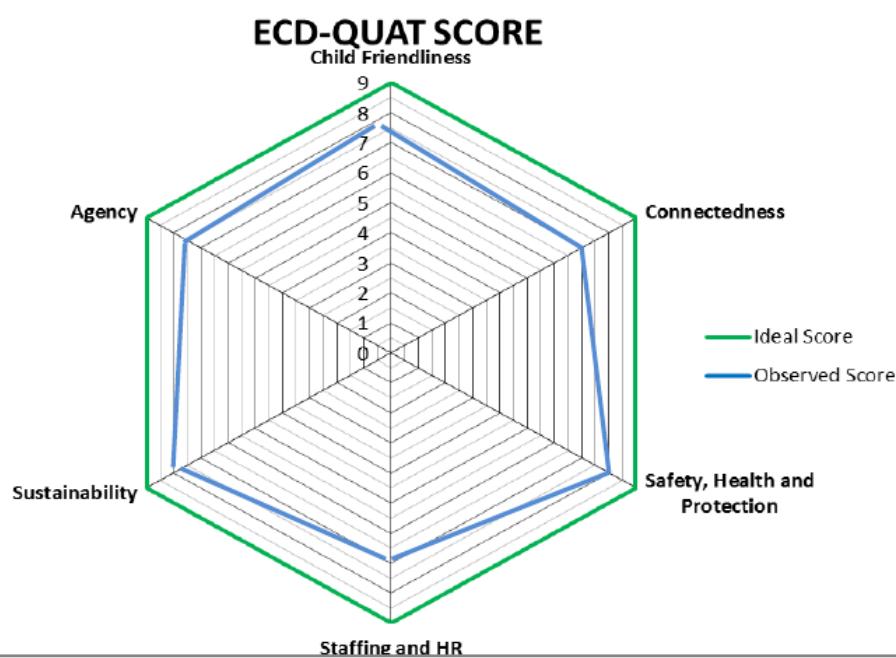


Fortunately, TOY for Inclusion has received a follow-up grant from the European Commission and OSF, to scale up and embed in policy this successful approach over the next two years. This new grant will provide an opportunity to consolidate the achievements so far, address the challenges , make improvements and make the TOY for Inclusion approach available in more locations and countries, as well as for other groups of vulnerable children (ethnic minorities, migrants and refugees, children growing up in poverty).

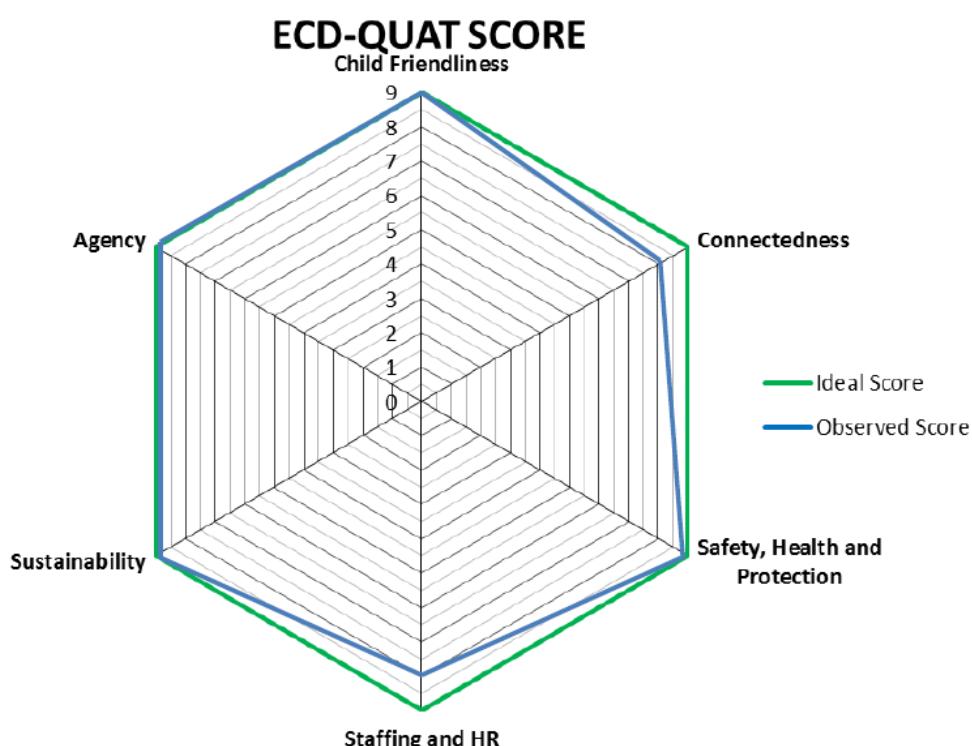


APPENDIX 1: ECD-QUAT Spider Web Score

Belgium



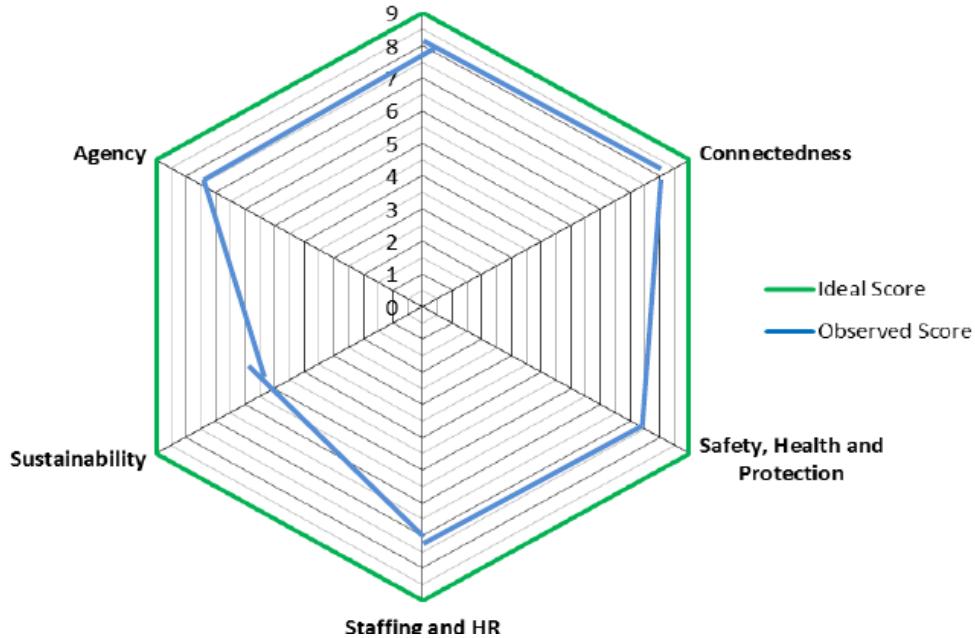
Croatia





ECD-QUAT SCORE

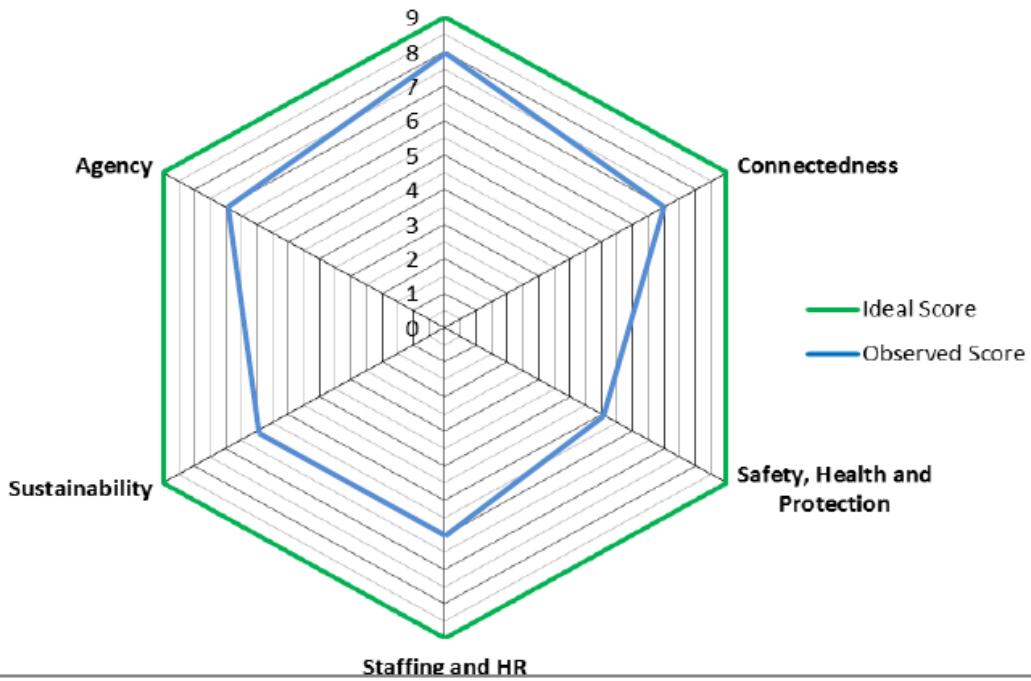
Child Friendliness



Italy Mazzara

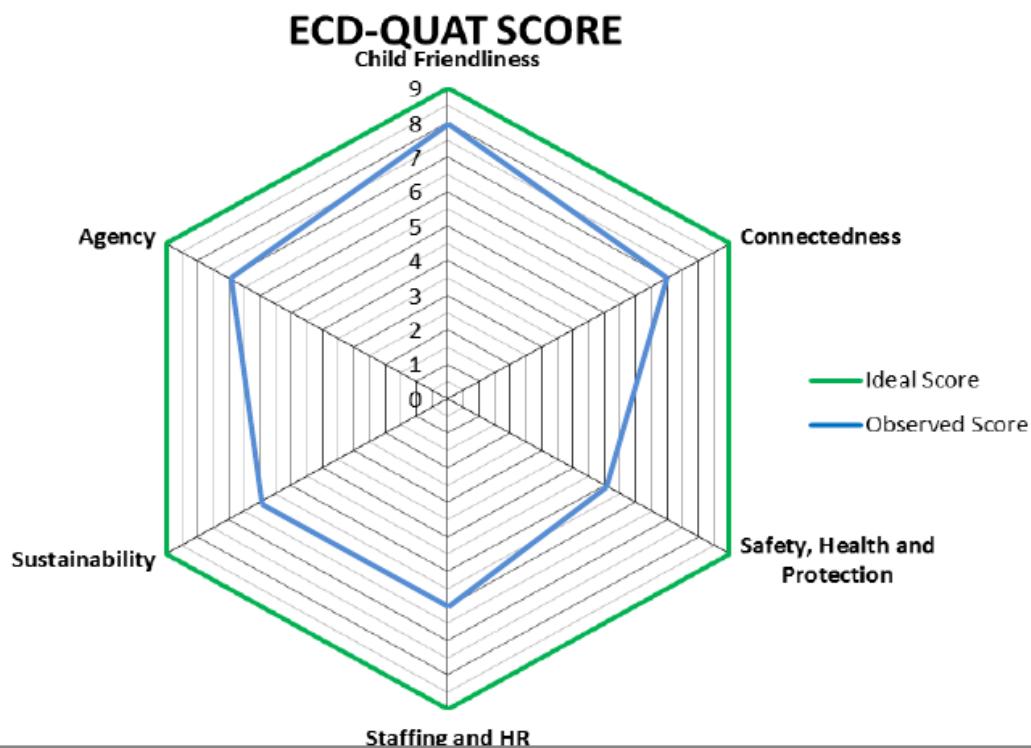
ECD-QUAT SCORE

Child Friendliness

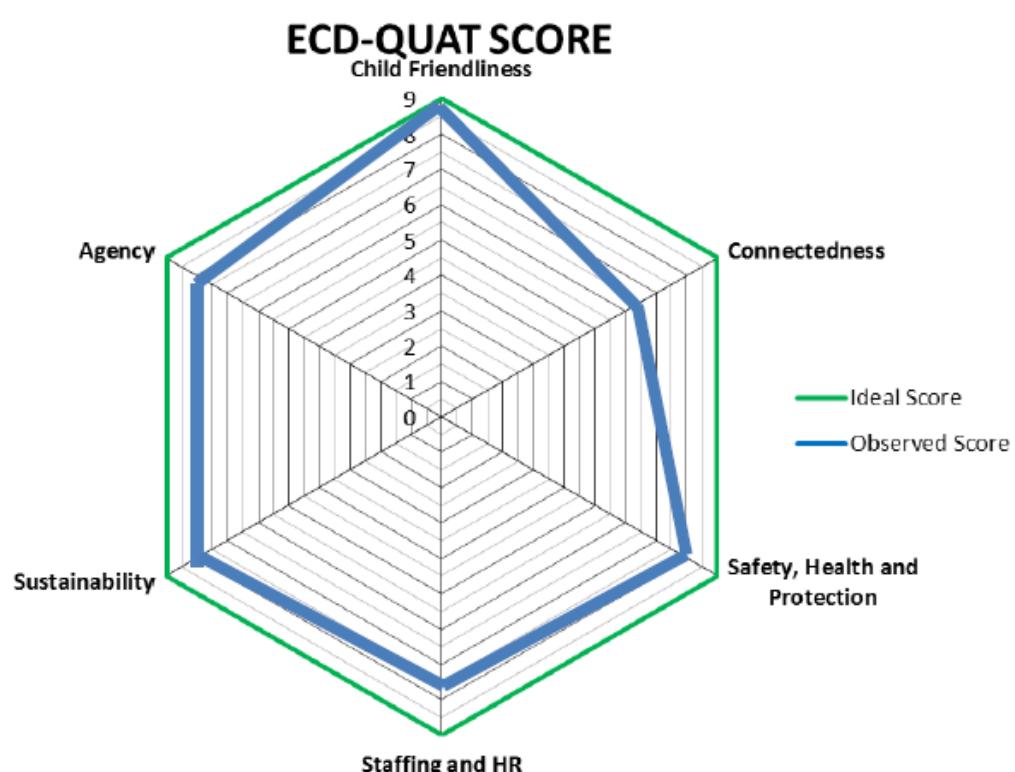




Italy Rome

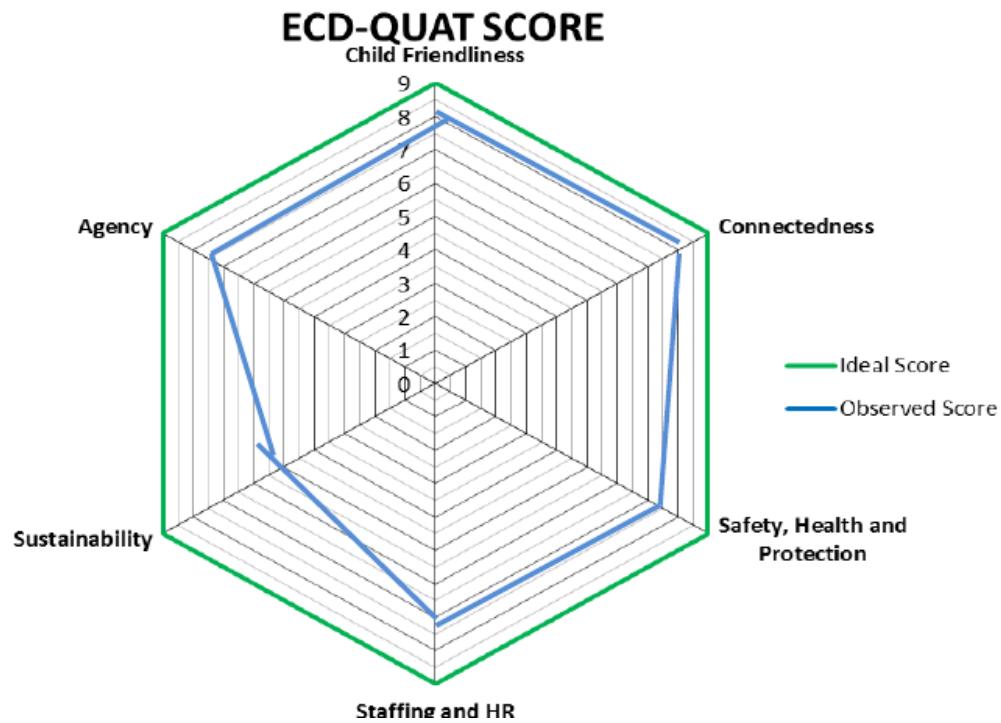


Latvia





Slovakia



Slovenia

