

HeLP

Healthy Teachers and Professionals in Education



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Training Need Analysis Country Report Italy

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PICTURES

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1. BACKGROUND

1.1 THE HELP PROJECT

The working conditions in Europe have radically changed during the last 20 years. Our “always on” society, extended work hours, increased pressure for performance and doing more and more with less and less, all lead to a growing absence of well-being in our lives and the limit between job and private life blurs. Many jobholders feel unable to cope with the tightened pressure; sickness rates caused by stress and psychological overload are as dramatically growing as the fear of employees of losing their job. Twenty per cent of European jobholders state that **job-related stress** directly affects their state of health.

Professionals in the field of education are not only concerned by those general changes, but additionally suffer from specific challenges. In many European schools there is a lack of funds, teachers have to work at the limit in terms of working time and intensity and additionally stand in a tension zone of overstrained students showing unacceptable behaviour, non-supporting school officials and parents who put pressure on them.

The alarmingly high rates of early retirements of teachers due to health reasons since the 1990s has attracted the attention of European research and politics due to the potentially negative, unhealthy consequences of teachers' work. Psychosocial and work-related stress, *psych vegetative* disorders, burnout syndrome,

workplace bullying, absenteeism and early retirements seem to be widespread and dramatically increasing phenomena across Europe. They evoke not only individual suffering and breakdown but also enormous costs for public funds and health services. Furthermore the emotional exhaustion of teachers of course affects the quality of teaching and has negative consequences for pupils and students.

Against this background it is of high relevance to train prospective and already working teachers with the aim to improve their professional handling of resources and to optimise their competences **to cope with job-related stress**.

The main **aim of the HeLP project is therefore to develop and implement an Internet based interactive and appealing training programme that supports teachers:**

- to develop higher sensitivity towards the handling of their resources;
- to systematically reflect their strategies;
- to become gradually acquainted with alternative ways of acting;
- and to establish them as far as possible, replacing unfavourable thinking and acting patterns.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This country report is an extraction of the HeLP survey conducted to gain an insight in work conditions, strategies used to cope with stress, learning needs and interest in on-line course delivery among teaching professionals in Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia and Spain

regarding **their needs and interests pertaining to stress reduction.**

1.3 TARGET GROUP ADDRESSED

HeLP does not want to rely only on its perceptions about what teachers need in today's rapidly changing educational landscape. Instead, HeLP wants teachers to tell what they need and use this information **define the right focus** for an on-line course on **individual stress relief strategies.**

The target groups of the HeLP project are **teachers, teacher trainees and other professionals working in the field of education** (e.g. head teachers, educators, lecturers, etc.).

1.4 METHODOLOGY

An online consultation took place between February and June 2014. The data collection was combined with desk research.

The online questionnaire has embedded an adapted variety of indicators from the sources considered as most consistent, namely:

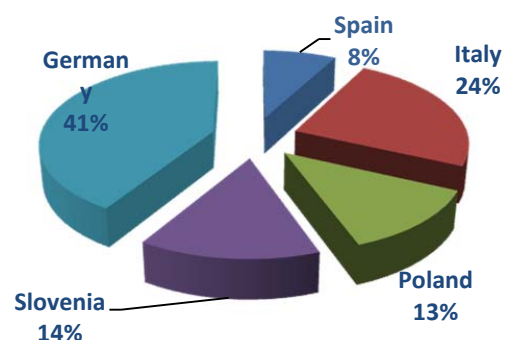
- ERI –S 10 items. Version 22.11.2012. J Siegrist, University of Duesseldorf.
- Berne Illegitimate Tasks Scale (Semmer&Jacobshagen)
- Depression Anxiety Stress Scale-21 (DASS-21). Last update feb 2013.
- Work and Well-being Surveys (UWES) Schaufeli&Bakker (2003)

The so provided feedback and recommendations is used to design a more customized e-counselling that takes into

account identified organisational needs and barriers.

In the following graph we have illustrated the distribution by country:

Graph 1: Distribution of questionnaires per country



As to the structure of the questionnaire it was agreed to be structured in 6 sections, namely:

- Introduction
- Your work conditions
- Your strategies in dealing with stress
- Your strategies to cope with stress/"burnout"
- Your training/learning needs
- Your interest in the help programme

Regarding the **SAMPLE**, we have used a sampling methodology called "*Judgement sampling*", particularly, *purposive sampling*, in which each sample does not have a known probability of being selected; that is, partners have selected teachers, teacher trainees and other professionals working in the field of education providing interesting information for the survey according to a selection process followed in each country. By using this sampling methodology, we

have obtained a strategic representation of the universe considered, not due to the size

but to the information provided.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE METHODOLOGY REPORT

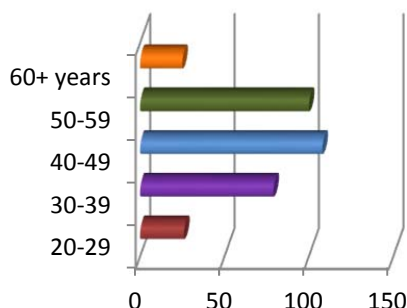
The Methodology report includes the results of the desk research and the analysis of the user needs analysis of teachers, teacher trainees and other professionals working in the field of education implemented during the period February-May 2014 in Germany, Spain, Italy, Poland and Slovenia.

It includes **342 valid questionnaires** from Germany, Spain, Italy, Poland and Slovenia (DE, ES, IT, PL, SI, from now on).

Looking at the **PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS**: Almost **72%** of the respondents were school teachers. The average experience years in teaching are **25 years**.

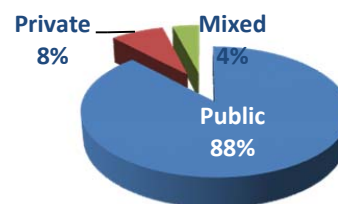
Regarding the gender of all the respondents we can see that the **great majority (73%) are female**.

Graph 2: Age group of the respondents



Respondents come from:
Primary school: 89
Lower secondary school: 105
Upper secondary school: 135
VET: 27
Other: 35

Graph 3: School funding



Regarding **WORK CONDITIONS**, heavy workload and job becoming more demanding throughout years seems to be the most stressful conditions pointed out by the surveyed respondents. Also, we can notice that most of the teachers are not worried about their permanent situation as teaching staff. **The average number of students in the class is 23 and 6 the average number of "difficult" students. They work 20 teaching hours per week and 97% of the respondents were in active teaching service.**

Regarding the tasks that have to be done, those the teachers consider out of place more frequently are: *Do you have work*

tasks to take care of, which keep you wondering if...

- ...they would not exist (or could be done with less effort) if organised differently (3,42) and
- ...they just exist because some people simply demand it this way (3,37).

As to **STRATEGIES IN DEALING WITH STRESS**: the statements in dealing with stress pointed out with highest ratings from 2 to 3 (that is from *sometimes* to *quite frequently*) are those related with **difficulties in getting relaxed**:

- *I found it hard to wind down (2.16)*
- *I find it difficult to relax (2.13)*
- *I found myself getting agitated (2.06)*
- *I felt that I was rather touchy (1.98)*

Concerning the **STRATEGIES TO COPE WITH STRESS/"BURNOUT"**: the respondents replied with an average 4,46 (from often 4 to very often 5) to the positive statements reflected in the questionnaire, those with highest ratings are:

- *I am enthusiastic about my job*
- *I am proud of the work that I do*
- *I am immersed in my work*

The majority of respondents DO NOT consider to be burnout and the strategies reported to be used more often to relax are **drinking coffee or tea (5.79), Try to relax at home (5.65), watching TV (5.56) and make a phone call to a friend, family member, etc. (4.87)** while *therapy, wellness, collective sports, relaxations techniques and creative activities* are those reported less frequently.

Regarding **TRAINING/LEARNING NEEDS**:

- 1 (strongly disagree) 2 (disagree) 3 (agree) 4 (strongly agree)

The preferred (those pointed as more than 3: agree) learning topics are related to **better know (major sources of stress, attitudes that cause stress resources to cope...), become more aware of positive attitudes and learning how**:

1. ...to react in a helpful way when I discover stress signals 3,22
2. ...to become aware of my personal stress signals 3,11
3. ...how to develop more positive, helpful attitude 3,10
4. ...about my resources in coping with stress 3,09
5. ...about attitudes that cause stress in my life 3,07
6. ...which are the major sources of stress in my life 3,01.

These are complemented by "Other learning topics" reported:

- Learn how to be more calm (IT)
- How to deal with the most negative evaluation of people towards my profession (DE)
- Dealing with authorities (school management) (DE)

Only 30% of the respondents have heard about Internet-based stress prevention training and only 5% have participated in a training course of that kind. It seems that it was not on the planning of the respondents to participate in an internet-based stress prevention training action.

The preferred course features, by rating with more than 3 (1 (strongly disagree) 2 (disagree) 3 (agree) 4 (strongly agree) are:

1. **Flexibility** of time and date 3,33
2. High **quality of learning contents** 3,28
3. Materials **easy to read** 3,24
4. **User friendly website** 3,22
5. Little or **no cost** 3,17

6. **Anonymous participation** 3,12
7. **Adaptation of the course contents** to my needs 3,11
8. **Short loading time of websites** 3,00

And finally, the **INTEREST IN THE HELP PROGRAMME**: 1/3 say no but the rest are **hesitating (46%) and would love to (21%)**.

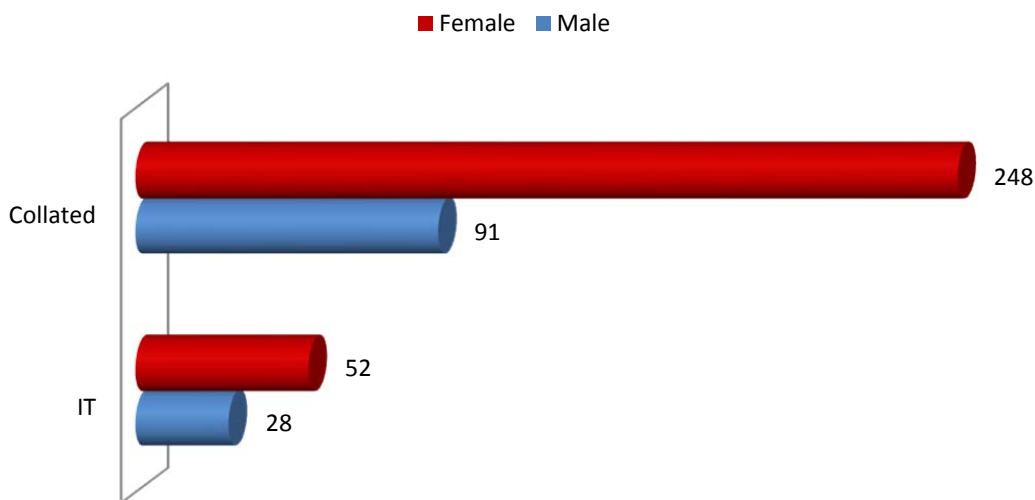
3. ITALY



This chapter presents the results of the online survey in ITALY.

Out of the 82 valid questionnaires, the gender of the IT respondents is very close to the collated one, with a slightly higher male representation:

Graph 1: Gender of IT respondents



82% of the IT respondents were school teachers in the age frame 40-59. 60% were from Public upper secondary schools. The average experience years in teaching are 20 years. The average number of students in the class is 22 and 8 the average number of “difficult” students. They work 17 teaching hours per week and 90% of the respondents were in active teaching service.

Table 1: Work conditions in IT: Statements

Average: 1 (strongly disagree) 2 (disagree) 3 (agree) 4 (strongly agree)	Italy	Collated
I have constant time pressure due to a heavy work load	2,74	3,03
I have many interruptions and disturbances while performing my job	2,67	2,7
Over the past few years, my job has become more and more demanding	3,47	3,2
I receive the respect I deserve from my superior or a respective relevant person	2,65	2,7
My job promotion prospects are poor	3,25	3,1
I have experienced or I expect to experience an undesirable change in my work situation	3	2,8
My job situation is not permanent	1,85	1,9

Considering all my efforts and achievements, I receive the respect and prestige I deserve at work	2,73	2,4
Considering all my efforts and achievements, my job promotion prospects are adequate	2,13	2,2
Considering all my efforts and achievements, my salary/income is adequate	1,88	2,2
I get easily overwhelmed by time pressure at work	2,88	2,7
As soon as I get up in the morning I start thinking about work problems	2,58	2,6
When I get home, I can easily relax and “switch off” work	2,33	2,1
People close to me say I sacrifice too much for my job	2,76	2,7
Work rarely lets me go, it is still on my mind when I go to bed	2,71	2,7
If I postpone something I was supposed to do today I’ll have trouble sleeping at night	2,33	2,3

In Italy we may notice that poor job promotion prospects, demands of the job and inadequate salaries considering efforts and achievements seem to be the most stressful conditions pointed out by the IT surveyed respondents.

The statements about feelings at work from the Italian respondents are even more positive and enthusiastic than the collated ones:

Table 2: IT respondents: Statements about how you feel at work

Average 1 (never) 2 (almost never) 3 (rarely) 4 (sometimes) 5 (often) 6 (very often) 7 (always)	ITALY	Collated
At my work, I feel bursting with energy	4,1	4,16
At my job, I feel strong and vigorous	4,1	4,34
I am enthusiastic about my job	4,7	4,60
My job inspires me	4,6	4,52
When I get up in the morning I feel like going to work	4,3	4,18
I feel happy when I am working intensely	4,4	4,35
I am proud of the work that I do	5,2	5,06
I am immersed in my work	5,2	4,66
I get carried away when I’m working	4,8	4,29

Table 3: Training/learning needs (IT)

The preferred learning topics in Italy are:

..to become aware of my personal stress signals	3,14
...how to react in a helpful way when I discover stress signals	3,24
...how to develop more positive, helpful attitudes	3,13

As to the interest of IT teachers, we can see it illustrated in the graph below:

Graph 2: Interest in the HELP programme (IT)

