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# Erasmus+

Vocational  
Education  
& Training

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# Erasmus+ Impact Study

National Study:  
Data collected from  
existing sources 2014-2016

- 1275 participant reports
- 29 Final Reports
- 5 project coordinator interviews

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Making waves in  
Vocational Education  
and Training

**Erasmus+ Impact Study:**  
International Mobility  
Placements for  
Vocational Education  
and Training Learners  
from Ireland

Erasmus+



# National 'Tracer' Study

National Study:  
Data collected directly  
from VET learners who had  
mobility placements  
between 2007 and 2018

- 335 survey respondents
- 4 individual interviews
- 2 focus groups

**"It Made Me Hungry For More":  
Tracing the Impact of European  
Work Placements on the Skills,  
Attitudes, Education and Career  
Paths of Vocational Learners  
from Ireland**  
Ireland National Report



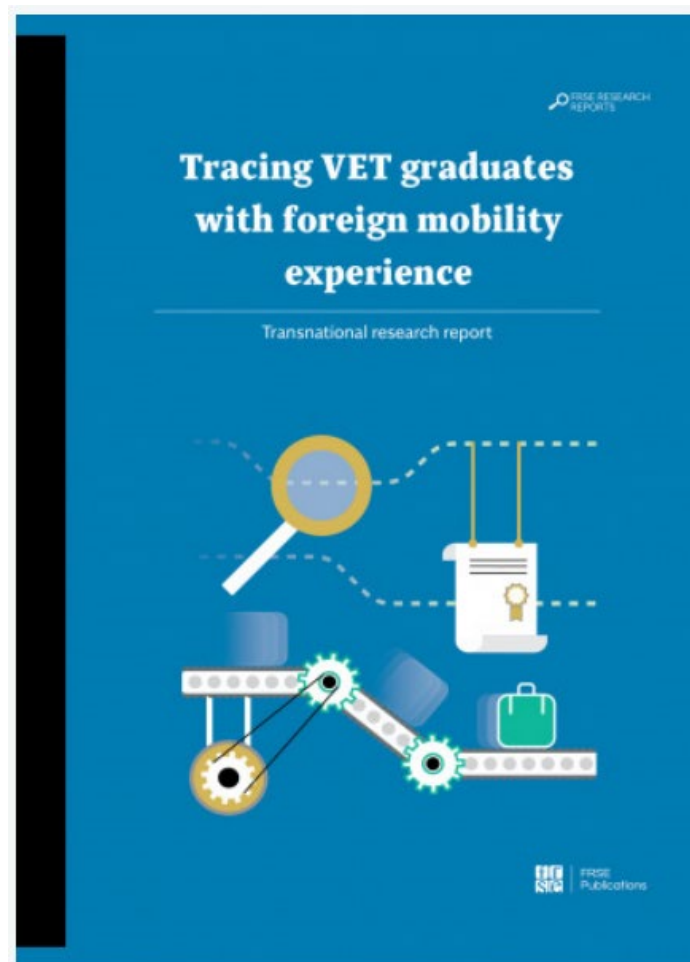


# International 'Tracer' Study

## International Study:

Data aggregated from national studies of Austria, Belgium (Flanders), Czech Republic, Ireland, Latvia, Luxembourg, North Macedonia, Poland, Slovakia, UK

- 8009 respondents
- 115 individual interviews
- 26 focus group interviews





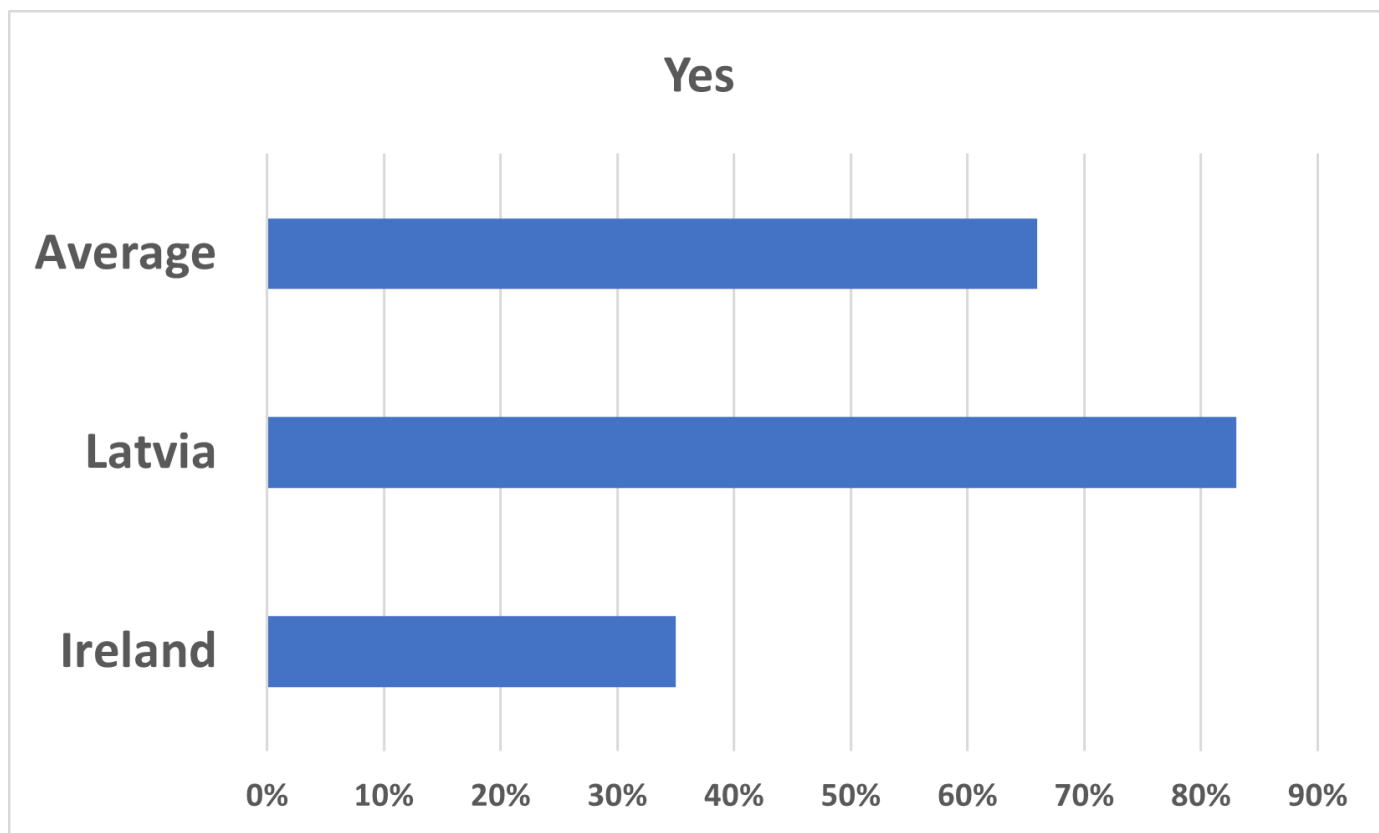
# 'Typical' Irish Profile

- From a College of Further Education
- Placement at early stage of course
- Learner at early stage of career
- In a medium, small or micro business
- Short duration (less than one month, usually two weeks)
- Often, the only work experience element in the course of study



# Other Work Experience

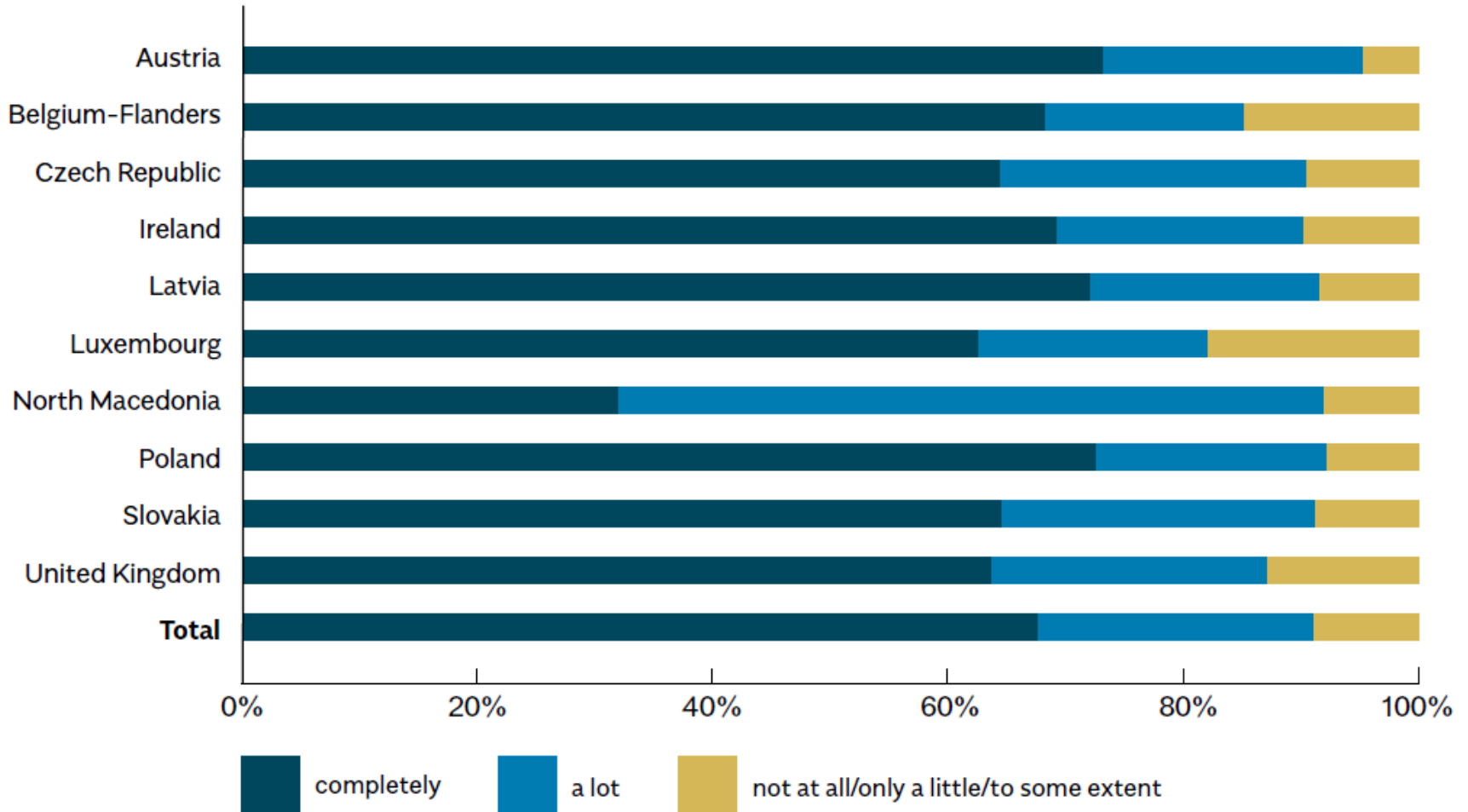
Did you also do training or a work placement as part of the same study programme in your home country?





# Satisfaction Overall

"I remember my time abroad as part of a training/work placement well", n=7 904)

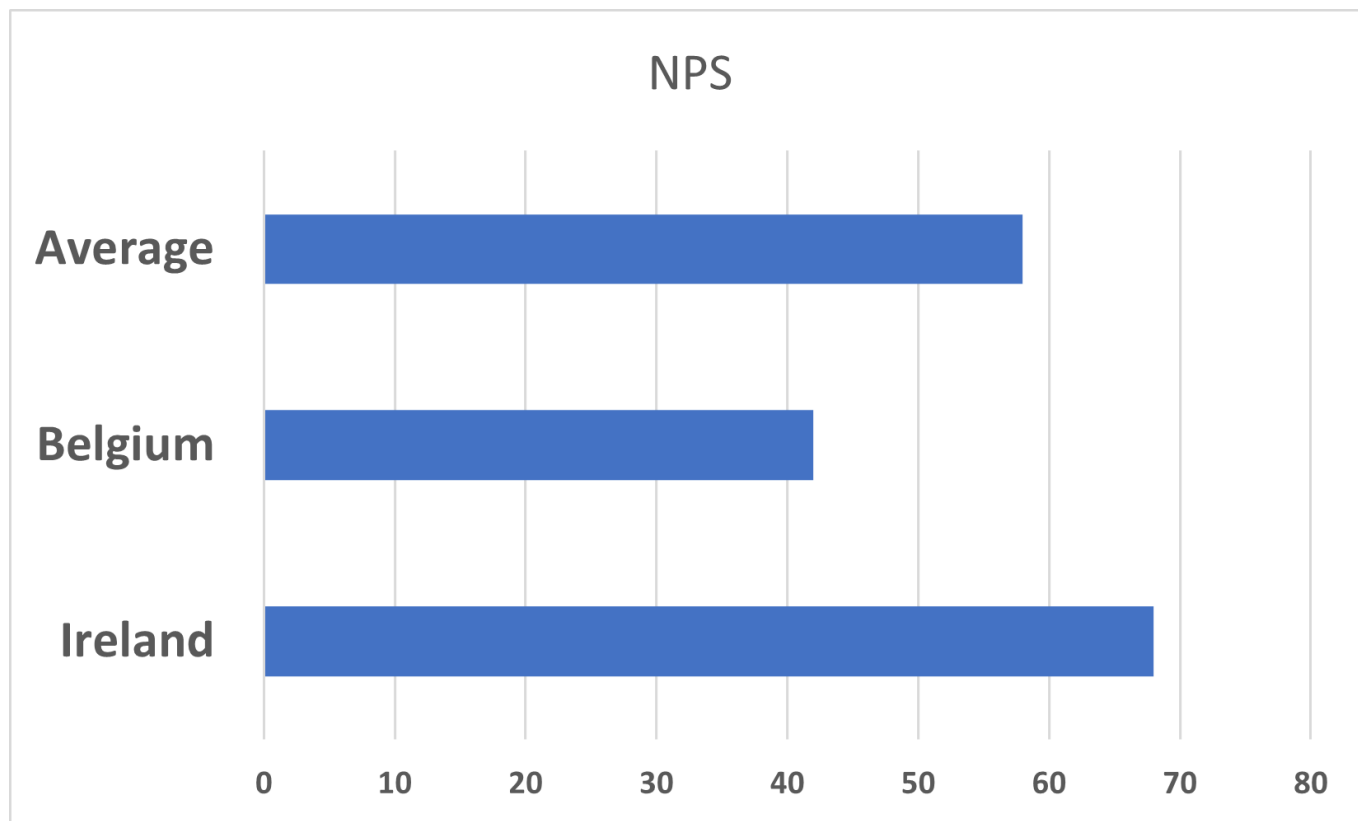




# Satisfaction in Ireland

NET Promoter scores (likelihood to recommend to others):

North Macedonia, Slovakia & Ireland highest







# Key Variables

“Participants express the highest satisfaction with their work placements when the work duties were **relevant to their interests, matched to their skill level** and when they **progressed to education or employment after their work placement**. **Prior discussion of duties** between the sending and host organisations and between the sending organisation and learner is the most effective way to realise this high level of satisfaction.”

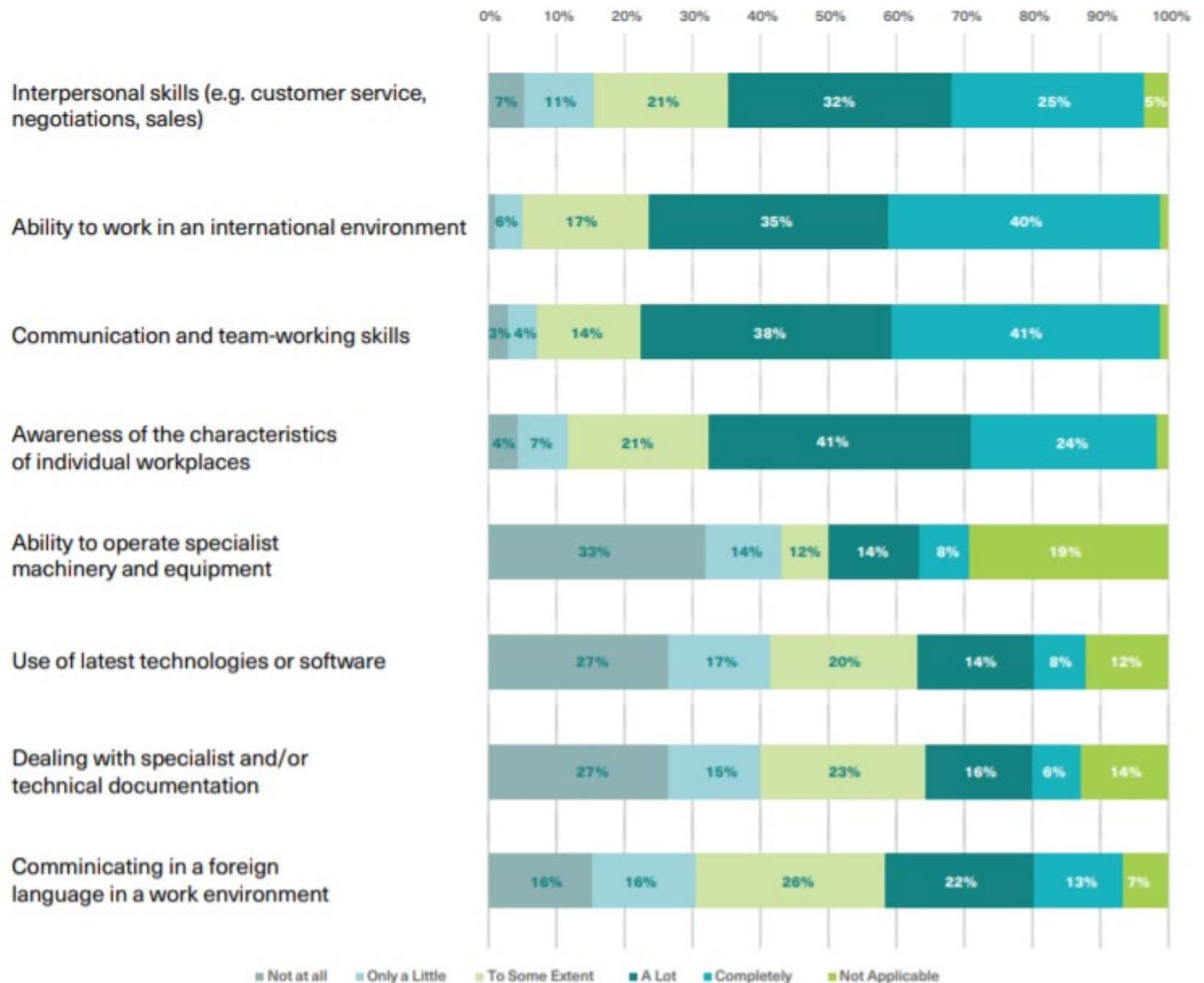
(National Tracer Study)



# What Supports This?

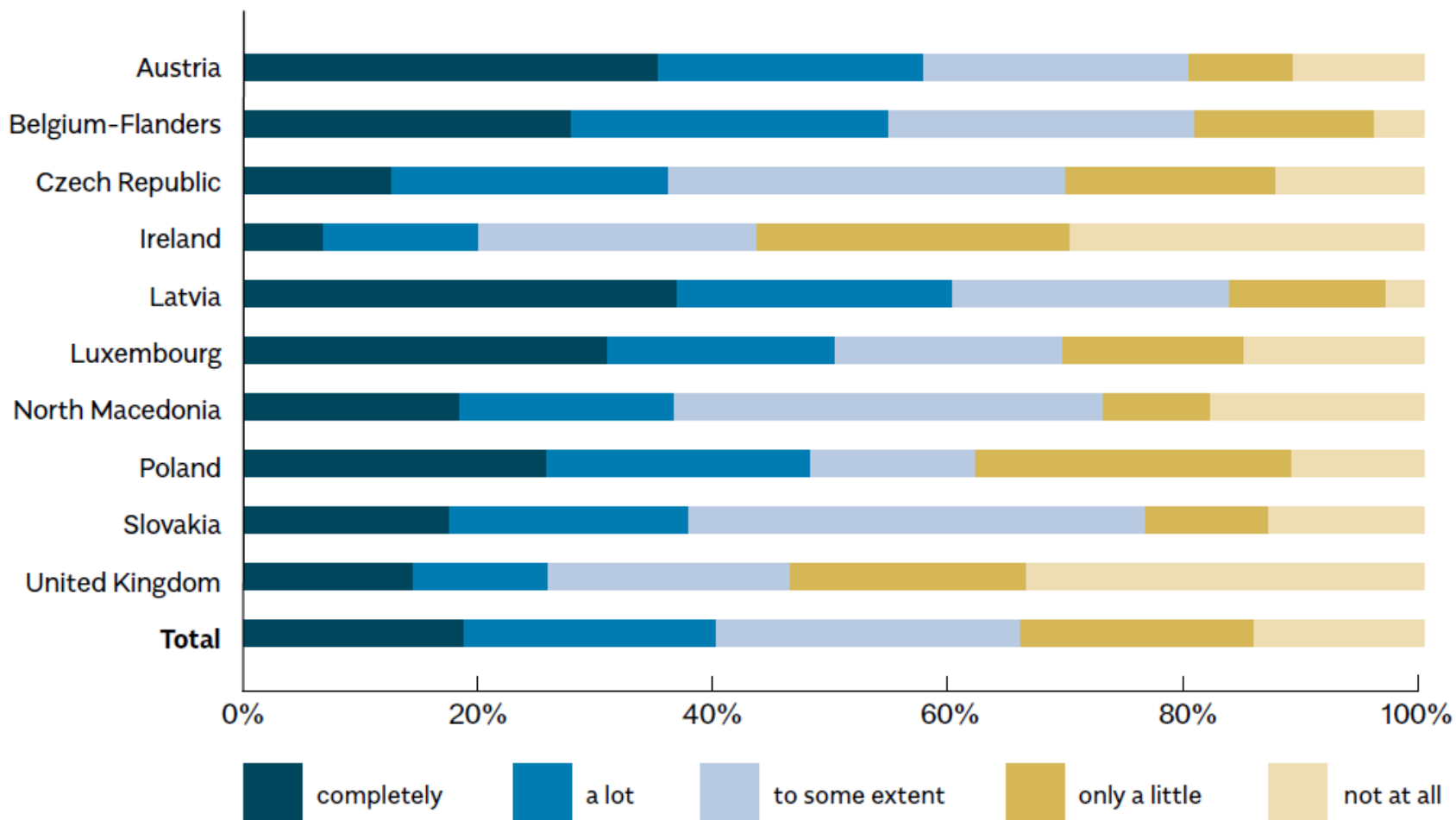
- Good relationships and communication between organising partners
- Involving the participant in planning
- Mentoring and support from both sides

“Sending organisation staff tended to focus on participants’ emotional and physical wellbeing, while host organisations provided practical and logistical assistance.”





# “Thanks to the traineeship, I can read materials in a foreign language more easily”





# Outcomes

>75% developed or improved their communication and team-working skills, and their ability to work in an international environment

64% learned elements of their profession they could not otherwise learn in school or college

55% agreed that their placements had positively influenced the grades they received in their vocational training



# Criticisms

Occasional mismatch between work placement and level of vocational skill

Lack of detailed information about work placement prior to travel

Placements 'too short' – though often a retrospective feeling

Negative attitudes among fellow learners



# Future Paths

At the time of survey, just over half of those who had completed VET education had progressed to Higher Education and others to seek employment – broadly in line with national VET trends (ref, Evaluating Post Leaving Certificate Provision in Ireland, 2019)

Research suggest impact of placement is in affirming learner's choice of vocational area, and instilling confidence to pursue higher education



# Future Paths

Of those who continued to employment, 58% were in full time work, 21% in part time, and less than 10% actively job-seeking

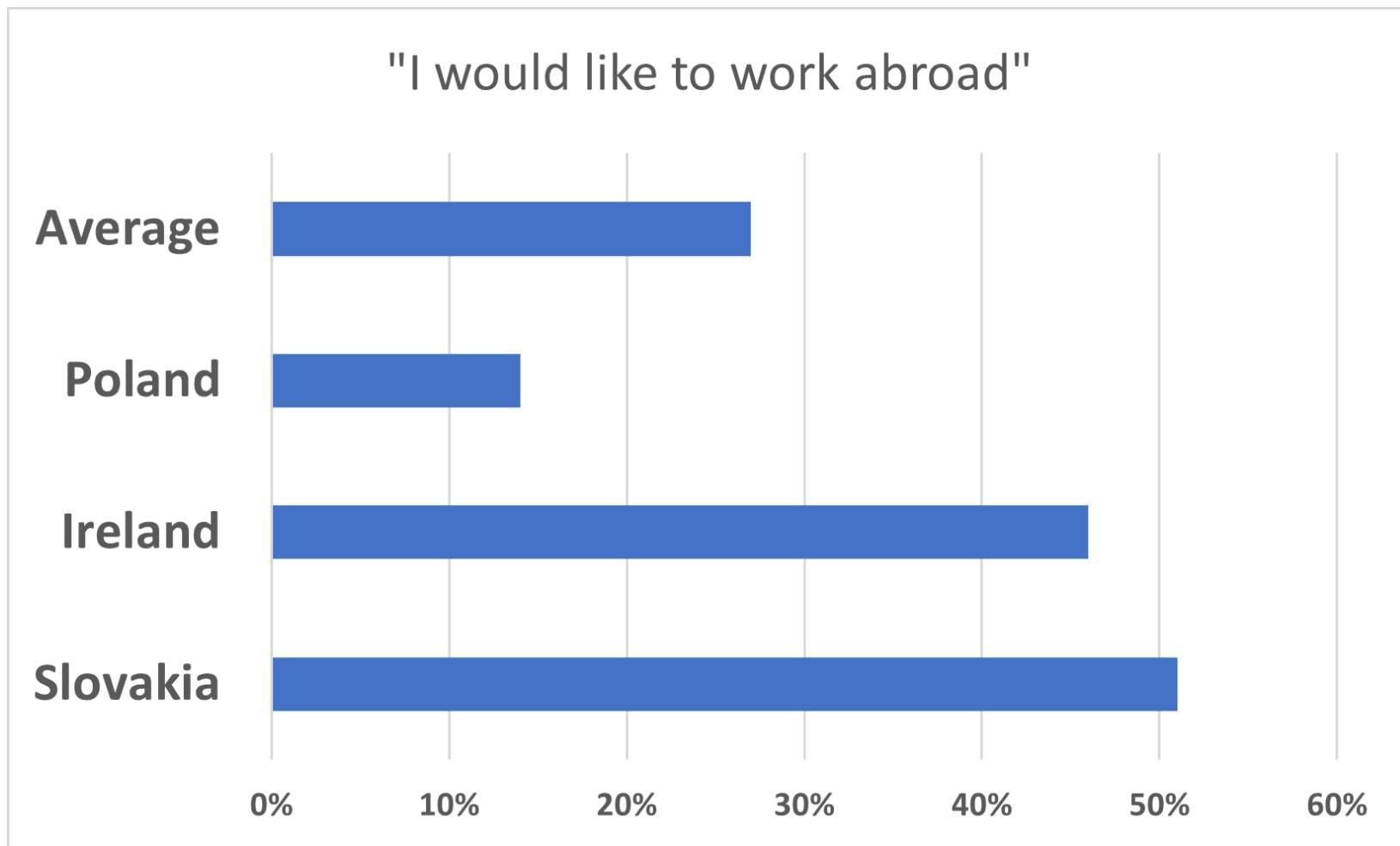
>65% agreed that work experience had a real impact on their future career development

Just under 66% agreed that their participation had helped them get a job.





# Desires for Future Employment





# Future Paths

“I was slightly disheartened even going out to Spain because it was like, this is really my last chance for getting a job in the field I want most.

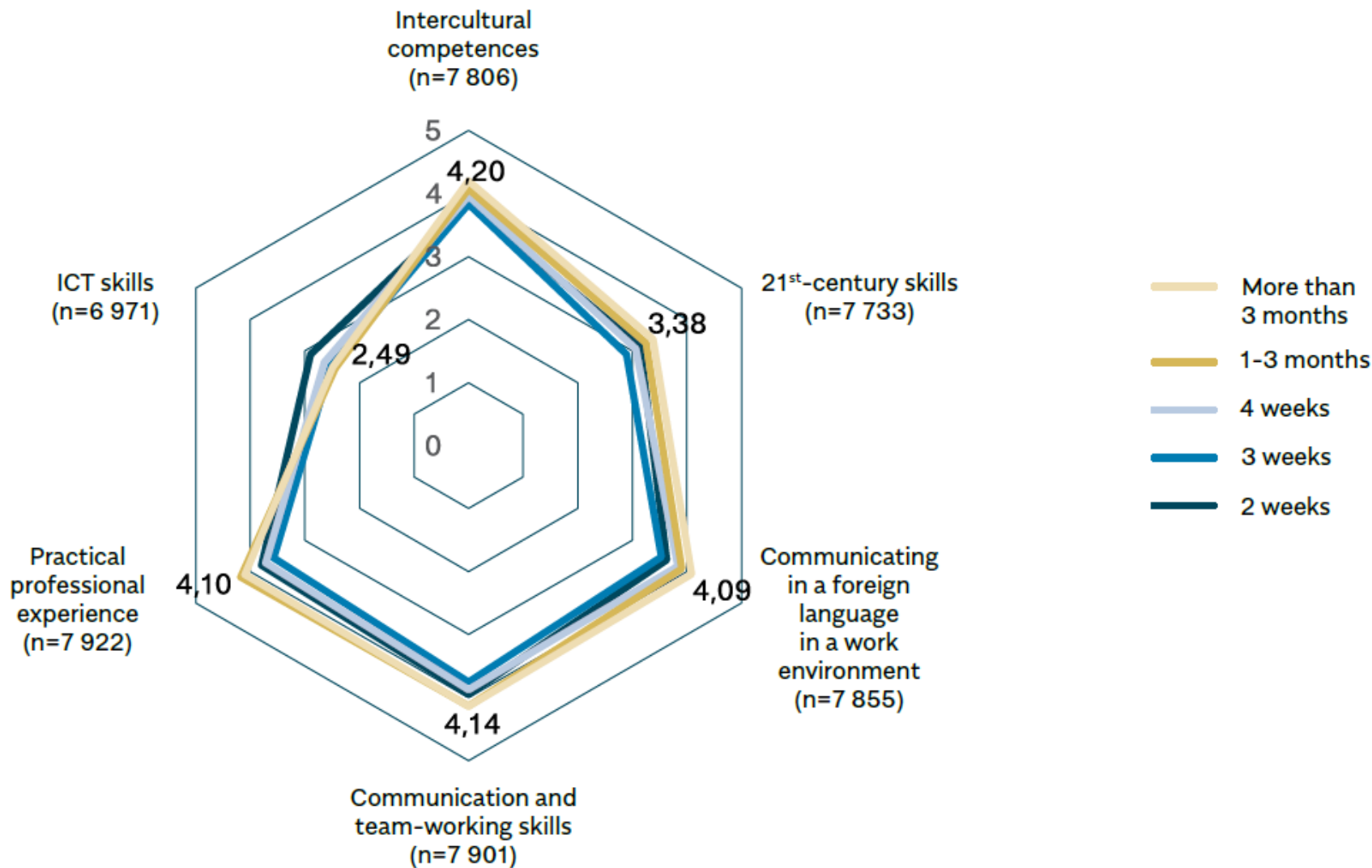
But as soon as soon as I put all this information that I'd gathered, and all the skills I'd acquired, on my LinkedIn account – suddenly it was becoming a hell of a lot more active. There were all these buzzwords that were obviously crucial....being able to build your skill set and to give yourself three months working in a biological research station gets you in that mindset again. Then when you're applying for jobs in the evening or the weekend...it helps, it inspires or pushes you on.” (3 month placement, Spain)



# Key Variables

“Vocational mobilities have the **greatest cultural and interpersonal impact on those who have not lived away from home or worked in their vocational area before**, and these participants tend to value their placements expressly for developing these competences. Placement durations of a month or less are therefore very appropriate for this group. However, participants who have more extensive professional and life experience were more likely to value the placements for the development of their vocational skills and contribution to their overall career path.”

# Impact on Skills, by Duration





# Recommendations

1. Peer-to-peer connection should be further supported and encouraged, particularly online through sharing of information on social and professional networks.
2. Targeted, vocationally oriented language instruction would substantially enhance the experience of participants
3. **The introduction of a project-based learning element to mobility placements could mitigate the reported disengagement of some participants in the mobility experience.**



# Recommendations

4. Participants would benefit from greater guidance on how to present the value of their mobility experience to employers in CVs and interviews
5. **Mobility placements could be used more flexibly to meet the needs of different cohorts of learners**
6. The Irish vocational sector in general, and VET learners in particular, should be made more aware of the opportunities that exist for them



# Find Out More

All studies available on

<https://www.leargas.ie/resources/>;

printed copies of National Study  
available through Léargas

Get in touch at [chughes@leargas.ie](mailto:chughes@leargas.ie)