CHANGING EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS
THROUGH A WCD LEADERSHIP PROGRAM
IN PORTUGAL AND SPAIN[1]

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OF THE REPORT ON THE EVALUATION OF A LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME FOR A WHOLE CHILD DEVELOPMENT IN DISADVANTAGED CONTEXTS

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS ON THE PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTING THE WCDL PROGRAMME IN SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

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Arturo Galán (Dir.)
Rafael López-Meseguer.
Diego Ardura

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1. Introduction

This executive report summarises the evaluation of the Whole Child Development Leadership programme (WCDL). The programme was developed in four main phases: research, training of directors, implementation of the programme with mentoring support and an assessment of the programme itself.

This report specifically addresses the final phase of the assessment, which, logically, refers to the previous three phases. The complete report has been structured in two main sections: the background to the assessment and the results of the programme evaluation. The background contains an explanation of the origin and creation of the concept of Whole Child Education which was based on previous studies and an exhaustive review of the research literature resulting in the WCDL Programme. The aim of the programme is to provide students with a holistic training that covers all the dimensions of the human condition, particularly in disadvantaged areas, so that the first strategy for achieving this goal is concerned with the leadership of the management team; in this way aligning leadership, organisation and management to achieve this goal. Chapter three of the report explains the methodology used to evaluate the programme.
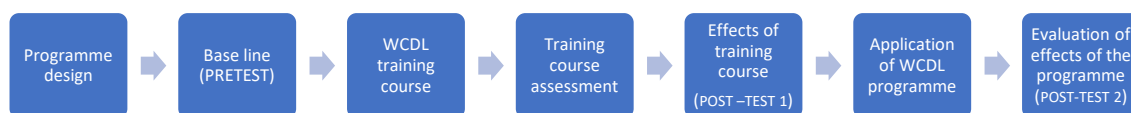
In accordance with the methodology, the remainder of the full report covers the second major section (assessment results) which is designed to follow a logical sequence: 1.- the results of the measures implemented *prior to application of the programme* in order to obtain information on the status of the schools and the management teams running them with respect to basic WCDL indicators, 2. How the programme will be applied through a *training course* (which includes evaluation of the training course, attended by at least two members of the management teams at each school), 3. The results *immediately following the training course* as an initial post-test measure and 4. The results obtained *one year after implementation of the WCDL project* adapted to each of the participating schools that were additionally supported by a mentoring system, the effects of which were also evaluated. This executive report summarises the assessment report in order to provide an overview of the general progress made as a result of the WCDL programme, an analysis of the inevitable effects of the pandemic, and an evaluation of the scalability of the programme in the near future.

The WCDL programme was set up in 2018 when the Spanish European Foundation for Society and Education (Spain) and the Centre for Studies on Portuguese Speaking Peoples and Cultures of the Portuguese Catholic University (CEPCEP) were commissioned to design and monitor a leadership programme for holistic education in a group of 14 Portuguese and Spanish public schools with pupils in particularly adverse and disadvantaged situations.

This type of leadership aims to contribute to the implementation of an educational programme for the holistic development of children and young people (Whole Child Development, WCD) which, through the management, aspires on one hand to create a culture of change driven by directors and motivated management teams, and on the other, ensure the involvement of the whole school community.

The aims of the WCDL programme during this first 18 months of operation were, given the logical constraints of implementing a new educational programme, limited in scope, that is, they entailed defining with greater precision the concept of *Whole child development (*Whole Child Education and *Whole child development leadership* (Leadership for Whole Child Education), validating this concept of leadership in disadvantaged contexts, offering it to schools in this type of situation in order to test its acceptance and suitability to their needs, providing management teams in schools of this type with a viable and realistic training, and training the managers of the volunteer schools selected, and finally, applying the principles of WCD leadership to those schools, based on an Action Plan, with the assistance of a mentor. As mentioned, from the perspective of design and programme assessment it cannot be expected from the outset that the schools will address all the aspects of the four domains of WCDL activity, or that significant effects will be evident in such a brief period of time (and only one academic year which was also experiencing the devastating effects of COVID). Based on this premise, action plans were devised for the schools, so that each management team concentrated on a few specific actions within the scope or domain of activity that they considered most appropriate for their particular context. Therefore, the evaluation took an approach to the WCDL programme that focuses on the effects of the training programme on the management teams, and on discovering the strengths and weaknesses during the first year that the programme has been implemented.

The final report, along with this executive summary, will concentrate on the initial phase which is necessary to establish the conceptual bases of the WCDL programme, summarising the results of the assessment of the second phase (the WCDL training course for the management teams involved in the project), and will analyse the directors' perception of the assistance provided through the mentoring system in implementing the WCDL Action Plan for improving each school. Also central to the report will be a presentation of the results of the programme assessment, by means of a design that compares the base line (measures taken prior to commencing the Programme) with the situation after one year of programme development. In between both measures, an intermediate measure was taken, following completion of the training course.

Programme design → Base line (PRETEST) → WCDL training course → Training course assessment → Effects of training course (POST –TEST 1) → Application of WCDL programme → Evaluation of effects of the programme (POST-TEST 2)

1.1. Application context

The programme was applied as a **pilot** scheme in 14 schools in the two countries of the Iberian Peninsula, Spain and Portugal. These institutions were selected as they were schools with particularly difficult contexts. In Spain, a total of eight schools in the Community of Madrid voluntarily took part in the WCDL programme. Four of these were primary and infant schools and the remaining four were secondary educational centres. Six schools took part in Portugal.

2. Methodology, instrumentation and application

The assessment approach can be included in what has been characterised as a comprehensive assessment strategy and has been framed in what is known as evaluative research, using a mixed design of sequential and longitudinal methods.

The design was based on establishing 19 indicators relating to the theory devised for Whole Child Development Leadership. These 19 indicators served both to design the quantitative measurement instruments (scales and questionnaires) and to establish the guides and categories required for qualitative analysis of the content of the interviews and focus groups.

The 19 indicators are grouped around four domains of activity defined in the conceptual bases and which also make up the structure of the training course:

Domain 1. The school's vision (6 indicators)
Domain 2. Organisational approach (6 indicators)
Domain 3. Curricular approach (3 indicators)
Domain 4. Professional development and support (4 indicators)

The **instruments, sources and techniques** for compiling information were questionnaires and Likert scales for the management teams, semi-structured, in depth and brief interviews for directors, focus groups of managers and teachers.

The **analysis plan** is mainly descriptive and longitudinal. In accordance with the methodology, information was compiled using quantitative and qualitative instruments and techniques in three time frames:

1. Prior to application of the programme: this is what is referred to as the **pre-test** phase and which will enable the base line to be established. Using the information collated at that time it will be possible to learn how the management teams perceive the situation of schools in terms of the 19 indicators for the four domains of activity. In addition, the schools' most important institutional documents were analysed in order to ascertain the extent to which those documents already include some elements that would help promote the WCDL Programme.

2. Following the training course: this phase is referred to as **post-test 1.** The analysis plan basically consists of checking whether there are differences in the various indicators between pre-test and the post-test. This is a measure for gauging control and development of the beliefs of the management teams, as the Plan of Action which will implement the selected features of the WCDL programme has not yet been applied in the schools. There are no basic hypotheses regarding the grading behaviour, it is simply a question of observing what happens following the training course.
   a. The training course was developed between the pre-test and post-test 1. The assessment was carried out by means of a descriptive analysis of each of the four modules that make up the training course and its final assessment. For this purpose, questionnaires were used together with a brief telephone interview from which the corresponding analysis of content was carried out.

3. Following the academic year during which the programme was implemented: this phase is referred to as post-test 2 and it is the most important measure in the

process. The WCDL programme was implemented through the School Action Plan with the help of a mentor. Overall it was hoped that the WCDL programme had an effect on some indicators especially those in which greater deficiencies were seen in the base line. Not only will the beliefs and perceptions of the management team be analysed, but also the indirect impact that the programme may have had on the teaching staff (basically through their knowledge of how the programme is applied).

2.1. Sample

Managers

The Spanish sample comprised 21 directors grouped in 8 schools, whereas the Portuguese sample comprised 24 directors grouped in 6 schools. The following graph shows the frequency of response of the directors in each questionnaire and each application. The questionnaire on climate aimed at good relations was only applied in Spain, as a specific teaching unit on this theme was included in the training course.


Sample of directors in the different questionnaires and applications
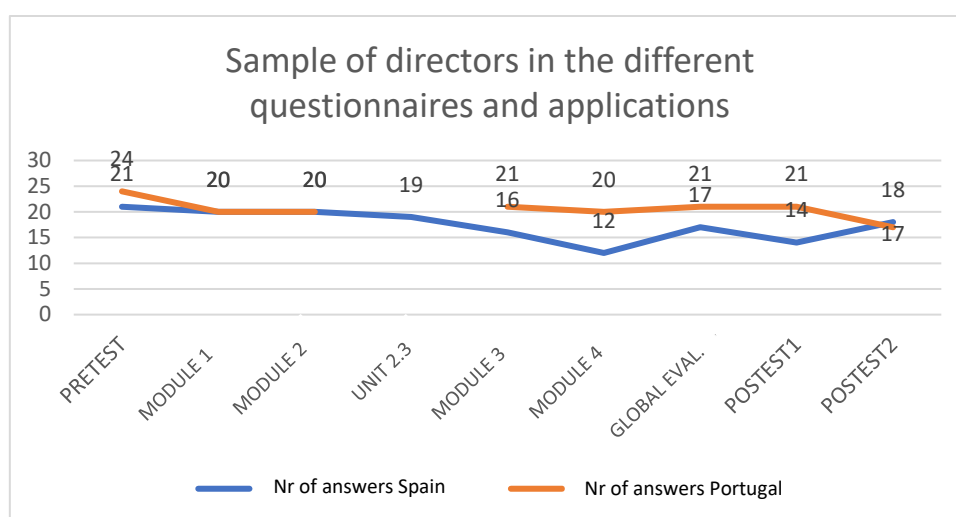
In terms of qualitative techniques, in Spain, 8 **interviews** were carried out with the 8 directors of the schools in both the pre-test and two post-test phases (telephone interview following the training course and the final interview). In Portugal, three of the six interviews in the final phase were not carried out as the dates coincided with the end of the school year and three directors were unavailable, despite numerous attempts made to contact them. The results in the third phase therefore only refer to those schools, although Spain and Portugal are referred to in the interests of economic use of language.

In Spain, two different **focus groups** were led, one per stage, given that the sample comprised 4 primary schools (CEIP) and 4 secondary schools (IES). Of the **primary** schools, 3 out of the 4 schools were represented, while in **secondary** 2 of the 4 schools were obtained. Therefore, a sufficiently diverse sample was obtained for the cases in Spain. In Portugal, 2 discussion groups were led and representation was obtained from five of the six participating schools.

Teachers

The sample in Spain comprised 119 teachers. Of eight schools, only five gave acceptable responses, with a frequency of response varying from 13 to 36 teachers (in the other three schools, the rate was 0, 1 and 3 responses). The sample in Portugal comprised 243 subjects. Of the six schools, only four provided responses which varied between 41 to 78 responses per centre. The Portuguese teachers, with 86% of the rate of responses provided by women, were on average 4 years older than the Spanish teachers (48 years). They had far more experience, both in total (23 years) and in their current school (10 years). 79% of the teachers were in permanent posts whereas in Spain the percentage was only 50%. In contrast to Spain, in Portugal only 40% considered that their schools were particularly difficult or disadvantaged centres, and only 13% (compared to 90% in Spain) considered their schools to be extremely disadvantaged (values 5 and 6 on the scale). In general, the teaching staff were quite satisfied with their school (more so in Spain that in Portugal) as may be seen in the following graph.
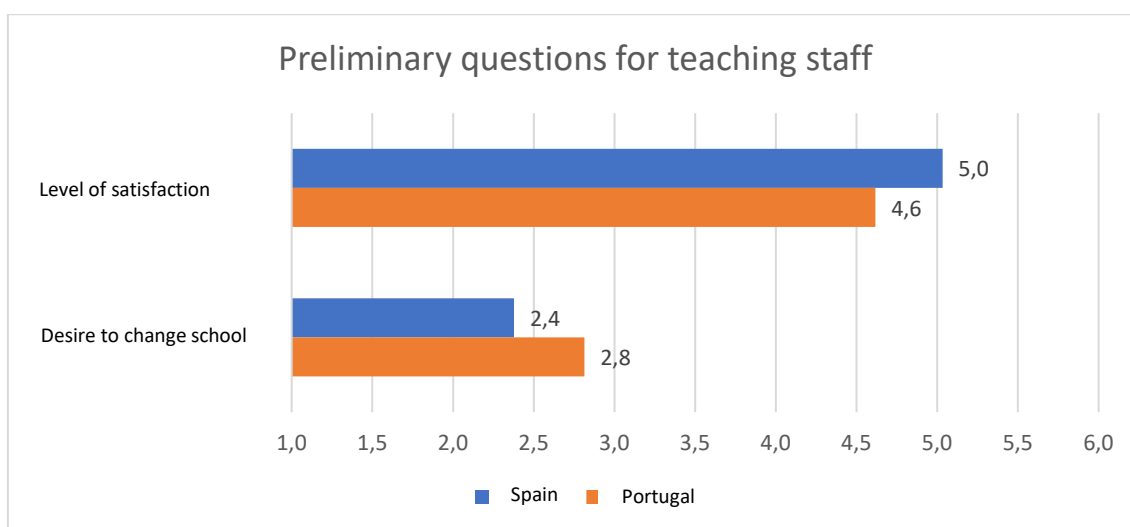

Thus in Spain, up to 45% showed maximum satisfaction as a teacher at the school, compared to 28% in Portugal. In the band of moderate satisfaction (values 3 and 4), Portugal was twice as satisfied as Spain (34% compared to 16%). This appears to have something to do with (r=-0,48) their desire to change schools (the most satisfied teachers were those who were less inclined to change school), so that in Portugal again, almost double the percentage of teachers decidedly wished to change school (value 6 on the scale) with 12%, compared to 7% in Spain. In contrast, 10% more Spanish teachers (48% compared to 38% in Portugal) were clear about not wanting to change schools.

In Spain, there were two **focus groups** of teachers, one for **primary** schools (CEIP) and the other for the **secondary** schools (IES). Of the primary schools, 3 out of the 4 schools were represented, while in secondary, 2 of the 4 schools were obtained. In Portugal, only one focus group could be created and representation was obtained only in one school due to the fact that the dates of the end of the academic year coincided, and other schools could not participate.

3. Training course assessment

The experience of this first pilot course on Whole Child Development Leadership (WCDL)held in Madrid and Lisbon can be considered **a success both in terms of satisfaction of the management students and in their perception of the learning acquired, its usefulness and applicability to particularly disadvantaged contexts.**

Although the evaluations were satisfactory in both countries and with practically identical trends, they were better in Lisbon, which had planned a primarily face to face course, whereas in Spain the classroom-based course was combined with activities and documented consultation via the EFSE teaching platform. However, halfway through the course, the COVID-19 pandemic erupted, and so the teaching had to transfer to virtual mode.
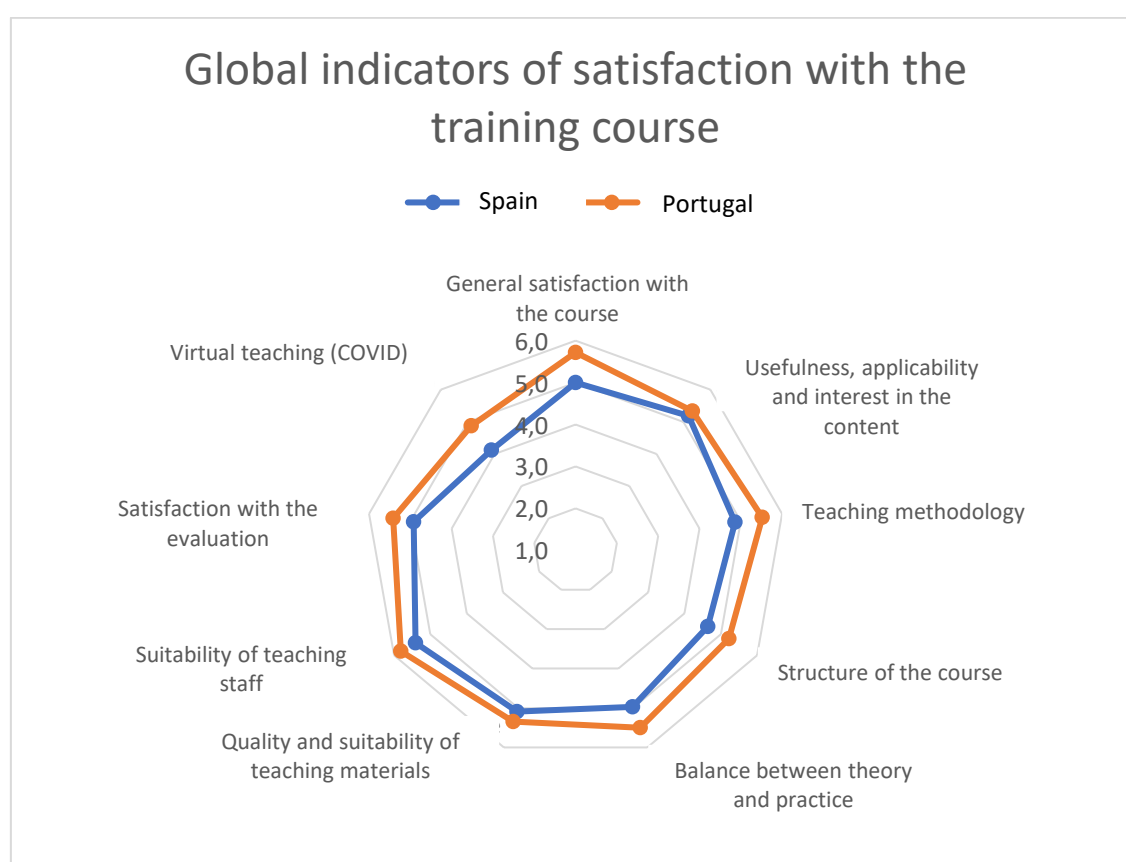
3.1. WCDL Action Plan for improvement

The final component of the training course was establishment of an **action plan** in which the management teams had to **operate and select which specific actions they wanted to take in order to transform their school in WCD terms,** based on the WCDL training received through the four domains of activity. Therefore, their improvement plans would be a central component in implementing the programme, in addition to that which would ultimately enable a connection to be made between attested improvements and the situation at the outset (base line) and the

training received (phase 2). Regarding this course of action, there was unanimous consensus among the participants that this was an appropriate way of completing the training and beginning to implement the WCDL programme in the schools.

4. Results of the WCDL programme assessment

This is the final and most essential part of this longitudinal assessment of the WCDL programme. This section will illustrate the **first indications of the impact of the programme through the four domains of activity following training, and after one year of its implementation.** It will be seen how in each domain of activity, the schools have been impacted through the key agents of the first three phases of the programme: the **management teams**. As we are aware, after one year of implementing the WCDL Action Plan in each school, which also coincided with the **pandemic** (which clearly limited application of the plan as intended), a direct impact on the teachers cannot be assumed, let alone on the students. However, in the case of the **teachers** there could be said to have been an indirect impact in the sense that at least information about the WCDL programme would have reached them from the management team (if, in fact, there had been some communication of the vision, and if planning of actions relating to WCD had begun). The WCDL programme for holistic education of students cannot be expected to have a real impact until the project has been well established in the school and the actions are operational and are registering at student level.

## 4.1. General conclusions of domain 1: The school's vision

The first domain of activity of the WCDL Programme is possibly the most important of all as it this which will enable to apply a WCD perspective to all elements and aspects of the school. Thus, the definition and communication of a vision that embraces the principles of a holistic education should be the beginning of a new mentality and a way of ensuring its positive influence on the decisions taken regarding the school organisation, and should focus on the curriculum and on personal development of individuals which comprise the other three domains of activity.

This first domain of activity within the framework of WCD leadership, with a management team that believes in a Holistic Education for students in order to improve the school, as a lever for change and transformation of the school, should imply confidence and trust in the management's authority and school leadership in order to engender change and transformation.

Therefore, as may be seen from the following graph, which includes the averages for Spain and Portugal, given that the difference between both countries are not great and have been reflected in previous sections of this report, the comparison between the base line and the measure taken on completion of the first year of implementing the WCDL programme shows that, even based on very satisfactory values in the base line, the programme has made improvements in the beliefs centring on the school management's potential however, it was found that the training and the year of support with mentoring has made a marked difference

to how they felt about their training and leadership skills (item 4) which they felt had considerably improved regarding their ability to achieve the school's objectives (item 6).
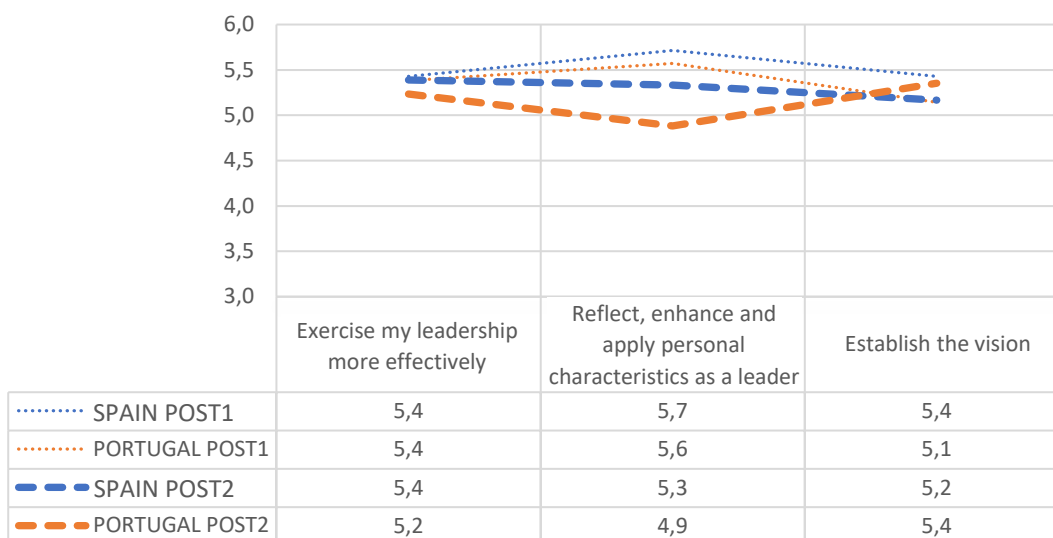
Domain 1
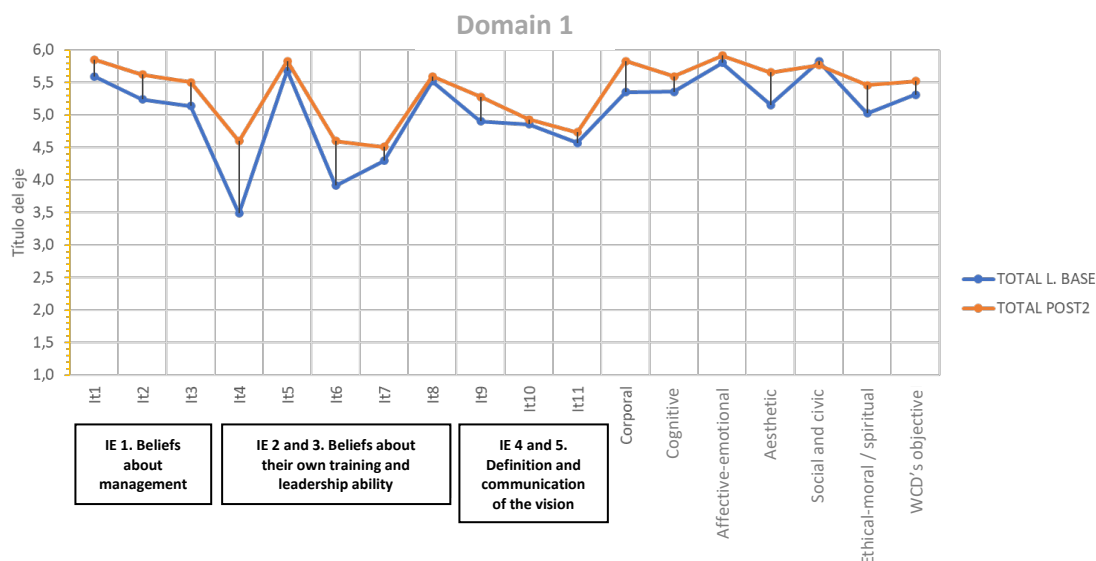
Slight improvements were also noted in the capacity to define and communicate the vision of the school, which should help to make the educational community aware of the new approach.

Finally, the managers stated that they consider it even more important than before to address the **six dimensions** of whole child education, particularly the corporal aspect, the aesthetic and the ethical(moral/spiritual) components, which moreover, were those to which less attention was accorded in the base line. The qualitative information reaffirms the fact that the management teams are encouraging an approach **that concentrates less focus on cognitive aspects and academic performance.**

As may be seen from the following graph, the indications of the management teams in their responses on the Likert scales (with very high averages, above 5 out of 6 in almost all cases) would appear to demonstrate considerable **success in the learning and the activities obtained following a year of work, which is reflected in their perception of their preparation for leading more effectively and applying the strategies to establish their vision.** Furthermore, another feature of the WCDL programme which also had an impact, was the **consideration of the directors' personal characteristics** (strong and weak points) and their **empowerment** required to work as leaders of an organisation, which has enabled them to apply these to enthusing and encouraging their schools during the first year of implementing the project. Probably as a result of excess workload during the pandemic, the time spent on reflection has to a certain degree diminished with regard to the measure taken following the training course.
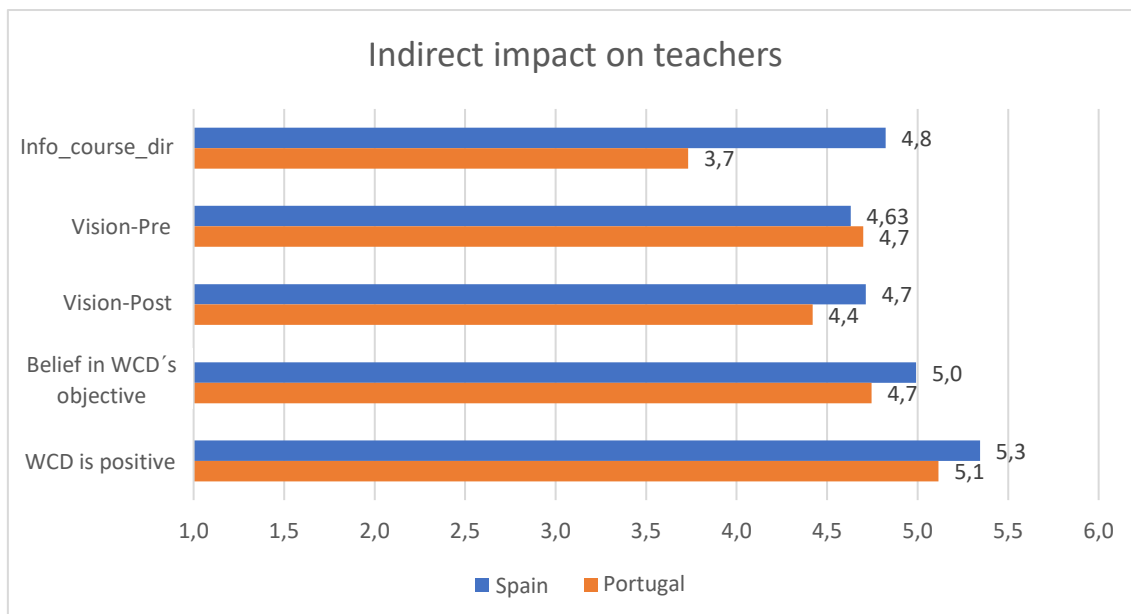
Learning deriving from the training course and implementation of the programme: Domain 1

	Exercise my leadership more effectively	Reflect, enhance and apply personal characteristics as a leader	Establish the vision
·········· SPAIN POST1	5,4	5,7	5,4
·········· PORTUGAL POST1	5,4	5,6	5,1
‐ ‐ ‐ SPAIN POST2	5,4	5,3	5,2
‐ ‐ ‐ PORTUGAL POST2	5,2	4,9	5,4

Throughout the first year of implementation of the WCDL programme, it was hoped that information on the programme reached the teaching faculty as a whole, and that this has had repercussions both in staff meetings and in meetings with families and in institutional documents. However, as we have seen in the directors' discourse, these actions were considerably restricted by the pandemic.

The indirect impact that reached the teachers was gleaned from information in the teaching questionnaire and the qualitative information of the focus groups. With the data extracted from the following graph it may be seen that **80% of the teaching staff in the sample in Spain and approximately 60% of the sample in Portugal, stated that they were aware and had received information on this new approach of whole child education**. Only 8% of the teaching staff stated that they did not know that the management team were involved in leadership training and 11% said that they had scant information. This percentage rises to 21 and 23 % respectively in Portugal. With these data it would appear that the information has had greater penetration among the Spanish teaching staff. The teachers' focus groups enabled us to discover that that **redefining the vision did not arise in the same way and has permeated to a different degree,** and the situation arising as a result of the **pandemic** has hampered communication of the vision in general terms, due to the limitations of remote media communication.

Teachers stated that they had worked to a considerable degree (averages of around 4.5 out of 6) **in the last year on clarification of the vision and the shared mission for the school**, one of the basic objectives of the WCDL programme. Also the importance of focusing on the **holistic education** of students reached the teachers: **around 85% in both countries stated that the directors had conveyed their conviction in this regard**, however in addition, around **92% considered that focusing on whole education of the students could bring about positive change in schools like theirs.**

Indirect impact on teachers

Category	Spain	Portugal
Info_course_dir	4,8	3,7
Vision-Pre	4,63	4,7
Vision-Post	4,7	4,4
Belief in WCD´s objective	5,0	4,7
WCD is positive	5,3	5,1

■ Spain ■ Portugal

Finally, to summarise the qualitative sources of information collation (interviews with directors and focus groups with directors and teachers), the following improvements can be obtained as a result of the WCDL programme:

Main improvements indicated in domain 1

> The management teams consider that the training and the programme overall have improved their management skills particularly in terms of their ability to reflect.

- *"I think that I have gained a lot in terms of reflection, as I said at the start, having things much clearer in my mind and wishing to work towards a specific goal. That is really true. How to achieve that goal, in reflection above all." (DIR04ESP).*

> The WCD programme has contributed to defining the school vision or at least to reinforcing some of the aspects that you were working on.

- *"For me it has been a driving force to enable me to go forward with all the activities and actions and provided consistency, because in schools that are as difficult as this one, in previous years, we have been working more from the standpoint of trial and error." (DIR02ESP)*

> Communication of the teaching staff's vision has been reinforced following implementation of the programme but difficulties were encountered in reaching families and students due to the pandemic

- *"We created a great deal of merchandising. We wanted to create a feeling of belonging and of pride in our school (...) What we have lacked or what is our biggest problem this year has been how to transmit this goal and this philosophy to families given the current difficult situation we find ourselves in." (DIR04ESP)*

> The management teams consider that the perception of whole child education is particularly applicable to this type of school.

- *"In an educational atmosphere where intervention is a priority as in our case, the theme of holistic education is even more relevant because we can promote the sucess of students just by intervening in the areas focused on, in terms of whole child education." (DIR02POR)*

> The teachers indicated that the managment teams have set up communication processes in order to bring the WCD programme to the schools.
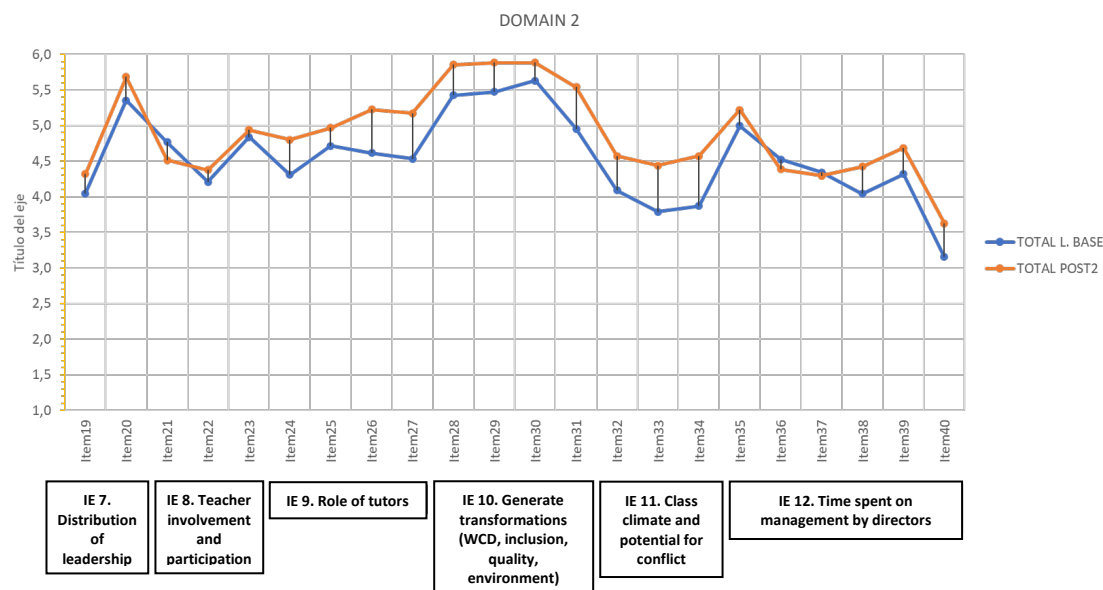
- *"I know all about this plan and I believe that most of my colleagues do as well. It was widely disseminated, and teachers were asked for their suggestions in different areas and their opinion on most issues and even on strategies and methodologies." (P4PORT)*

> The teachers verified the fact that efforts had been made to redefine the vision designed to ensure whole education of the students.

- *"We are increasingly aware that there is a need to develop the child as a whole individual, and so they need a holistic education. It means developing their personal, social and humanistic aspects. And so we are aligned with the WCD project plans." (P2POR)*

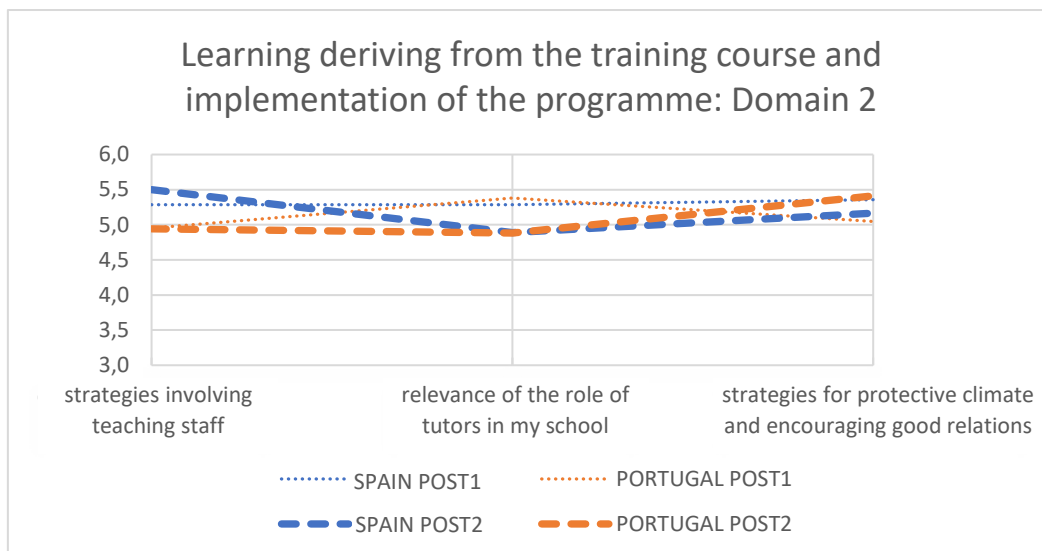## 4.2. General conclusions of domain 2: Organisational approach

Taking the overall data of both countries, the graph indicates that regarding **the school organisation** some improvements were achieved largely in respect of the items assessed, once more taking into account that the grades of the base line are very high.

DOMAIN 2

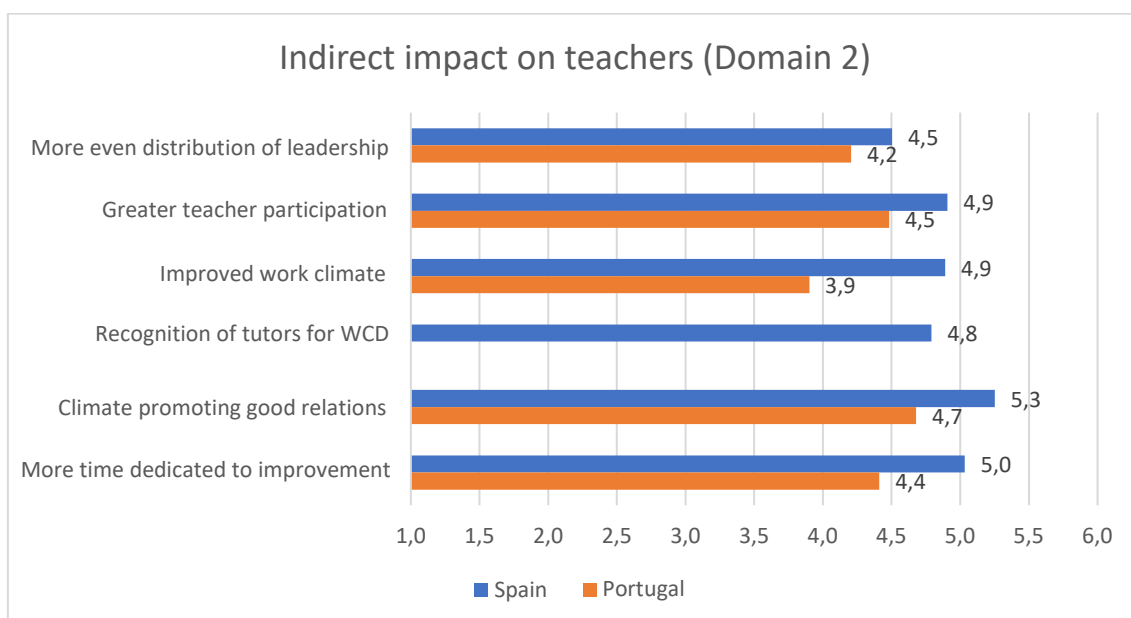| IE 7. Distribution of leadership | IE 8. Teacher involvement and participation | IE 9. Role of tutors | IE 10. Generate transformations (WCD, inclusion, quality, environment) | IE 11. Class climate and potential for conflict | IE 12. Time spent on management by directors |

The main development was found in the indicator for **school climate** and in particular in the perception of the **drop in the number and seriousness of disciplinary problems** (0.7 points of difference between the pre-test and post-test 2 averages). Also the indicator on **tutorials showed some improvements** although here it is important to take into account the different models used in Spain and Portugal.

With respect to the attempted improvements in the **use of real time** spent on management by the directors, the focus was more on aspects relating to **personal attention at the school, actions relating to fairness and inclusion of students and in reflecting on the actual performance of their managerial duties.** The increased time spent on bureaucratic tasks due to the pandemic was also highlighted in the interviews.

Referring directly now to the learning and progress made after a year of implementing the Action Plan at the school and the mentoring, the directors confirmed that to quite a considerable degree (between 5 and 4.4 out of 6) they implemented strategies which, in practice, enabled good results to be obtained in three key aspects**: to a considerable degree they promoted strategies for involving teachers more, the tutors were more organised in harmony with the management, and they have put in place strategies to encourage an improved school climate inclined towards good relations.**

Learning deriving from the training course and implementation of the programme: Domain 2

Chart showing SPAIN POST1, PORTUGAL POST1, SPAIN POST2, PORTUGAL POST2 across categories: strategies involving teaching staff, relevance of the role of tutors in my school, strategies for protective climate and encouraging good relations. Y-axis from 3,0 to 6,0.

Finally, **the teachers** also corroborated that they perceived to a moderately high degree the efforts made by the management team to distribute leadership more evenly, ensuring that more teaching staff collaborated on projects organised by the management team and more effectively, the teachers have seen changes in the way **the management team has encouraged involvement of the teachers and has achieved a considerable improvement in the work climate (especially in Spain).** The teachers also perceived that the role of tutors was promoted as agents of whole child education. **The focus groups have taught us that both the tutorials and management of the school climate have been oriented towards resolving social and emotional problems caused by the pandemic.**

Indirect impact on teachers (Domain 2)

Category	Spain	Portugal
More even distribution of leadership	4,5	4,2
Greater teacher participation	4,9	4,5
Improved work climate	4,9	3,9
Recognition of tutors for WCD	4,8	
Climate promoting good relations	5,3	4,7
More time dedicated to improvement	5,0	4,4

Main improvements indicated in domain 2

1. The distribution of leadership was one of the main fields of improvement, with the prevailing ideas being trusting, sharing and delegating.

- "The *distribution of leadership. I believe that this is a central aspect and one which we have moreover made efforts to apply. And what's more, this effort has increased because, personally, I have become increasingly aware of its importance.*" (DIRO7ESP)

1. In Spain strategies for improvising the school climate were aimed at ideas of creating a "protective environment" and "good relations"; in Portugal, they were aimed at dealing with the effects of the pandemic.

- "*In terms of coexistence, we have been trying to move more towards the idea of the school as a protective environment (…) We have done a lot of work on this idea with the children, that is, we care for you, but you have to care about us. We are your carers.*" (DIRO6ESP)

1. Distribution of leaders was seen to have increased, given the conditions imposed by the pandemic but also initiatives promoted by the management teams.

- "*It's true that this year the management team has begun to delegate tasks to other personnel. We have several programmes set up at the school and we have commissioned each one to coordinate a programme, and in this regard it has functioned quite well because the workload has been distributed and also the results were better, of course.*" (P11ESP)

1. The management teams were supported to a considerable degree by the tutors during the pandemic and they have tried to ensure that the tutorials dealt more with social and emotional aspects.

- "*For me what I am most grateful for with regard to the management team and the function of tutors were the weekly meetings that they organised (…) For example when we changed from mixed virtual and face-to-face class to total face-to-face classes, all that process was a big change that, as teachers, we noted. However, thanks to the Support of the management team we were able to deal with it.*" (P4ESP)

4.3. General conclusions of domain 3: Curricular approach

Taking the global data from both countries regarding the influence of the WCDL programme on the school curriculum, some interesting details were noted which merit consideration.
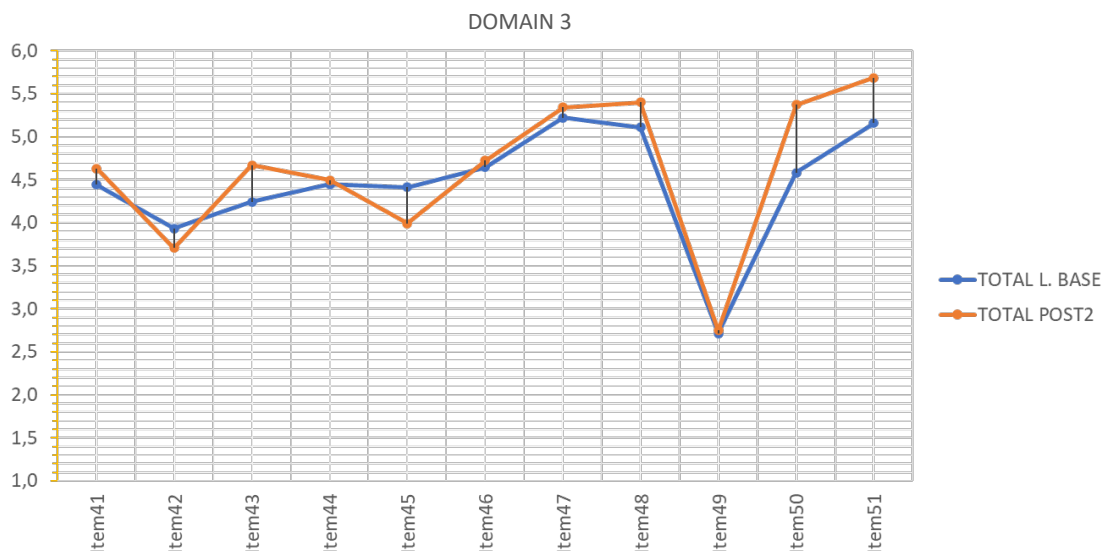
DOMAIN 3

| IE 13. Focus of the curriculum (dimensions, knowledge, methodologies, skills) | IE 14. Assessment of learning (performance, skills, others, decisions, repetition) | IE 15. Expectations (academic and social success) |

In this domain, the directors stated that from the start, the curriculum in their schools was aimed at developing different dimensions of the students. As in the previous domains, we started with a high base line with averages at the start of between 4 and 5.2 points. As expected, in item 49, referring to the evaluation of repeating a school year as an adequate strategy for recovering students, the view was maintained that it is an inadequate strategy (average 2.7) although not totally disparaged by all directors, especially in Spain.

The items where we saw reductions with respect to the base line refer to a curricular approach based principally on the acquisition of knowledge (item 42) and an assessment focusing only on academic performance (item 45) which indicates that **the directors internalised the fact that a curriculum aimed at holistic education of the students should change the traditional orientation of focussing on cognitive and academic performance directing it instead towards an approach that takes into account the other dimensions of students' learning.**

Although the initial scores were relatively high (averages of around 4.5 points), where there was no growth, one of the issues that was evidenced in both the quantities and qualitative studies, was the need for **greater training in order to reformulate the curriculum**, particularly with regard to a **skills based approach and assessment** (items 44 and 46) decisive yet complex elements to put into practice without the considerable commitment and training of the teaching staff [2].

The **most striking increases were evident in the expectations of success for all students** (0.8 points to 5.4) in the **concern for their social and emotional success** (0.5 to 5.7 points) and in the use of results of the assessment for improvement (0.3 points up to 5.4 points). The remaining elements did not produce any noticeable increases.

In line with all the quantitative and qualitative results, when the directors were asked about real progress in the skills based approach and assessment of abilities that consider the diverse

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[2] During the 21-22 academic year a training programme was set up for teachers in order to redress this lack.

dimensions of learning, **one year later, the real changes programmed had a more modest extent in Spain** (3.6) and moderately positive (average 4.4) or good (in the assessment changes, with an average of 5.1) in Portugal, where there is more of a tradition and greater flexibility than in Spain.
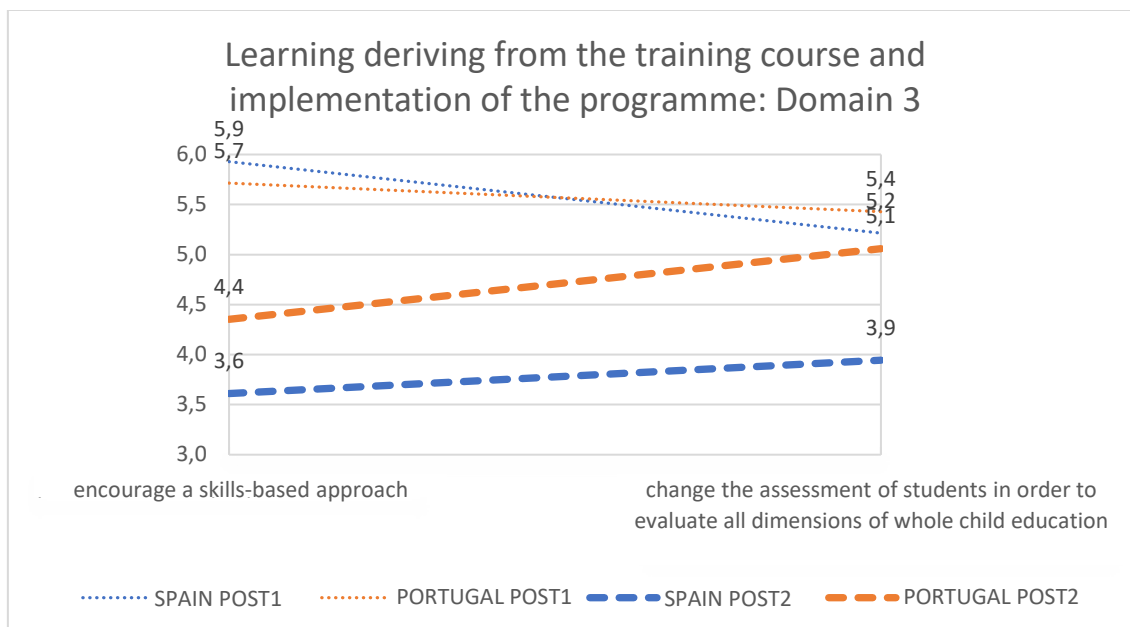
Teaching staff in both countries considered that in the past year **changes have been underway to promote holistic education** of the students (averages at around 4.7) compared to the model focusing on cognitive learning. However, they also expressed that the **changes in the evaluation of learning were more modest** (Measures around 4.4, two points above in Portugal compared to Spain), in line also with the director's perception.
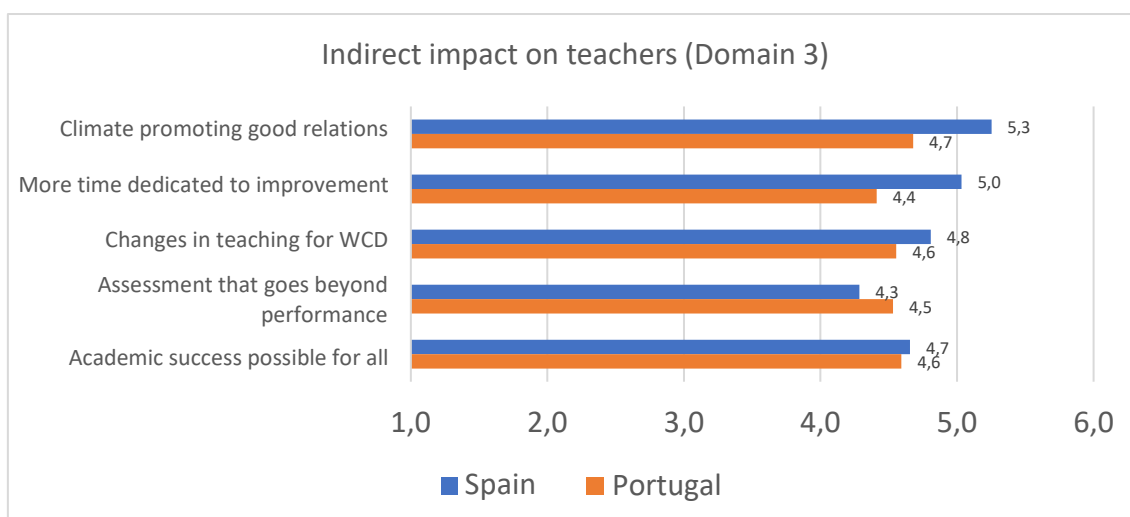
Despite the fact that this indicator was one of those that showed the least development from a quantitative perspective, in **the qualitative analyses some experiences or specific cases of improvement in this aspect were documented** as will be seen below.

Main improvements indicated in domain 3

> The directors considered that the focus on teaching and learning skills was particularly appropriate for this type of school, however they encountered difficulties when putting this into practice (pandemic, lack of training, resistance).

- *"We have advanced [in terms of skills] because we haven't given up, and where we have made the most progress is in technological developments; in fact a digital transformation project has been set up at the school." (DIR04ESP)*
- *We still have a long way to go in terms of training assessment practice because it requires a change of mentality and the need for training. That will be the next challenge." (DIR02POR)*

> Raising the expectations of students, one of the essential elements for directors during the first year of implementation.

- *"It means abandoning that negative way of thinking or that miserable outlook, that is "we're going to achieve the minimum, let's see if we can do the minimum." No. We are going to provide the same teaching quality as the best schools, and whoever needs support because they can't manage for whatever reason, will get the support they need." (DIR01ESP)*

> The teachers perceived that the attempt to raise students' expectations was one of the main changes.
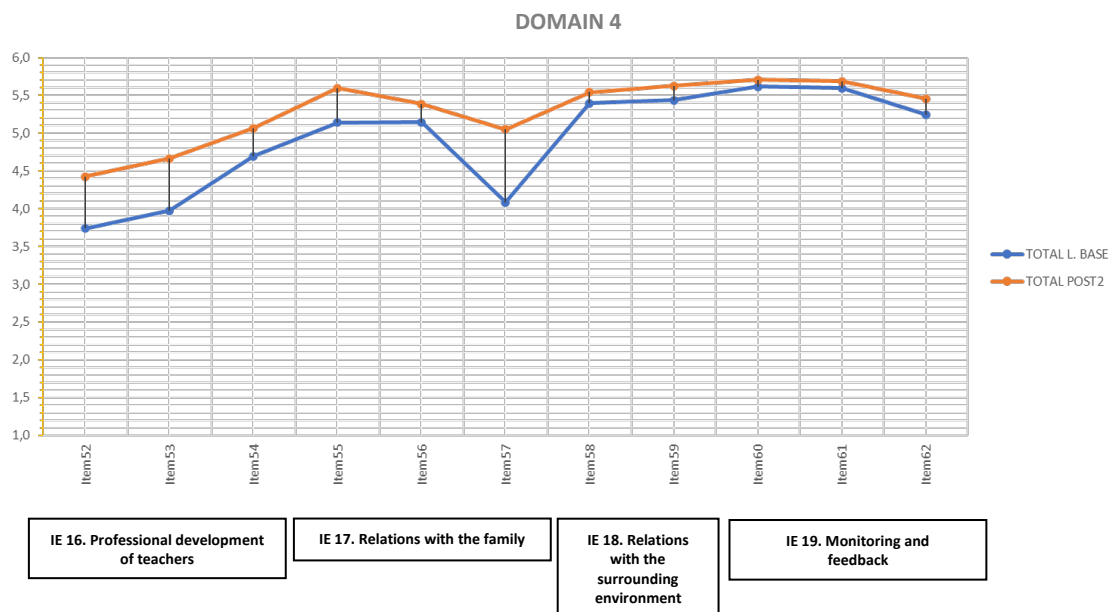
- *"The teachers of each year voted, with voting organised through the tutor, and then the students, in their own group, chose their best school mate by voting. And then the departments voted for the efforts and achievements of the students." (P3ESP)*

> The teachers indicated that they had attempted to devise a syllabus which took an approach to teaching skill-based learning.

- *"When we reformulate the assessment criteria precisely highlighting skills, we realise that students correspond even more." (P5POR)*

4.4. General conclusions of domain 4: Personal development: motivation, support and evaluation.

The WCDL programme functioned satisfactorily in the domain relating to support and professional development of the teaching staff. As may be seen in the summary graph, **in the indicators relating to the link between the environment and monitoring** (18 and 19) the schools in the sample already had very high values in aspects promoting the programme, therefore, the possibility of any increases was very low. Even so, it was noted that the commitment to these indicators reached **almost maximum values**.

DOMAIN 4

| IE 16. Professional development of teachers | IE 17. Relations with the family | IE 18. Relations with the surrounding environment | IE 19. Monitoring and feedback |

Regarding the **greatest increases** from the base line, two very important indicators were striking, namely, **the professional development of teachers and the emphasis on the relationship with families**. Precisely in the two countries, in the base line, a greater distance of improvement was noted in two items in which the training course could be particularly helpful, namely, **the area of planning.** Thus there were significant increases in item 52, relating to the existence of a professional development plan , and in 57 referring to the existence of a plan to carry out the relations with families.
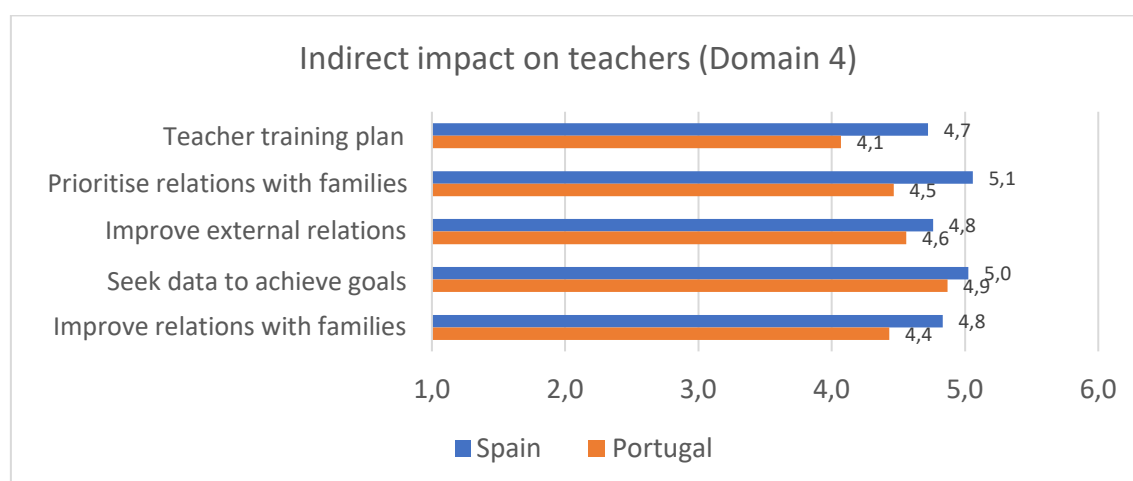
In any case, in this domain of activity, which is based on relations of the management and the school with the teachers, the family and the environment, the pandemic had an enormous effect in restricting the possibilities of action, due to the compulsory social isolation imposed.

Learning deriving from the training course and implementation of the programme: Domain 4
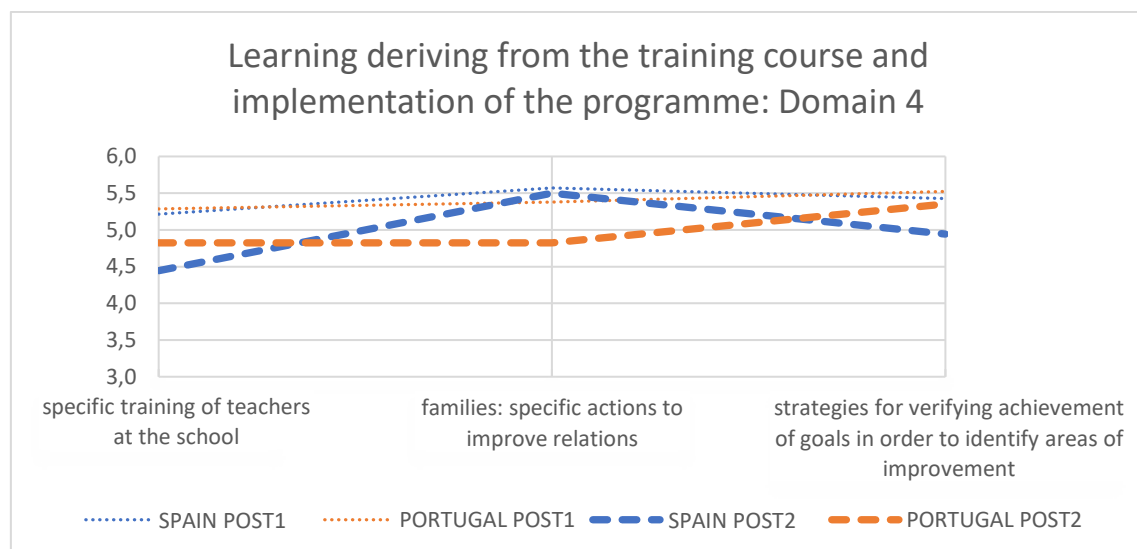
Notwithstanding, in respect of the final evaluation of the training and implementation of the WCDL programme by the directors, **they confirmed that they are actively promoting** (averages around 4.7) implementation of a **specific training plan for the teaching staff**. With respect to

implementation of specific new actions concerning families after one year of working with the WCDL project, **in both countries they claimed that these actions are a fac**t. Finally, the directors stated that the training and the school's Action Plan had helped them to **prepare new strategies to verify compliance with the school's objectives** in order to identify the areas for improvement (with high averages of 5.4 in Portugal and 4.9 in Spain).

Regarding the **perception in terms of teaching staff** of the initiatives relating to this domain of activity, it was seen that the changes carried out by the management team in the school year under assessment, which coincided with the pandemic, (approximately from July 2020 to July 2021, following six months of the training course), were perceived by the majority of teaching staff in the schools, who considered that **certain changes have occurred in the indicators mentioned**, **with an intensity that is slightly more noticeable in Spain** (with averages between 4.7 and 5.1) than in Portugal (with averages between 4.1 and 4.9). The **relationship with families** has become in their opinion, **a priority** for the management team, above all in Spain (with an average of 5.1) although the teachers indicated that it is a field in which they had been carrying out several initiatives in order to improve relations, and that the **pandemic** made it difficult to concentrate more on holistic education. In terms of **support and professional development,** the majority of teachers indicated that they were **aware that the management team has designed or is implementing a training plan and professional development plan for teaching staff** (some 88% in Spain and 65% in Portugal), although the main actions were aimed at measures relating to the pandemic, such as training in virtual technologies of teaching and actions designed to improve the health and emotional wellbeing of teachers.

Indirect impact on teachers (Domain 4)

	Spain	Portugal
Teacher training plan	4,7	4,1
Prioritise relations with families	5,1	4,5
Improve external relations	4,8	4,6
Seek data to achieve goals	5,0	4,9
Improve relations with families	4,8	4,4

Main improvements indicated in domain 4

> The personal well-being and professional development of the teaching staff were seen to be conditioned by the pandemic. However, changes were noted in this respect, above all in improvements to the digital skills of the teaching staff.

- *"The teachers were all in training but all were focused on the digital subjects of course, they were, and they still are. Now the major obsession is to put digital skills to the service of improving the quality of learning, but without losing sight of the pedagogic focus." (DIR01POR)*
- *"We have always had a welcome plan for the teaching staff which we have improved on this year. That's why I'm telling you because we have been careful to consider the pyschological aspect and well-being of the teaching staff." (DIR04ESP)*

> Communication with families has improved, paradoxically thanks to the pandemic. However, changes were also noted with respect to their inclusion in school activities and when providing a more personalised treatment.

- *"All the important information was sent by three different means (...) Communication was very fluid. This was the goal that teachers valued most. Of the 8 that we have one is to involve families and improve communication, and it is the one with the highest grade this year." (DIR02ESP)*
- *"It has all been more personalised, we almost had to devise a plan for each: "for family X: this technique." And we have tried to mediate more in this respect. Establishing a different type of relation especially with the families and also with the children that are disobedient." (DIR06ESP)*

> The teachers considered that the management teams were mostly concerned with settling in new teachers, increasing coordination and taking an interest in the personal situation that the pandemic had caused.

- *"When talking about mental health concerns, we shouldn't only think about students, we also have to think about ourselves, right? (...) In fact, it was not only among our colleagues that this was a concern but also among the management." (P4POR)*
- *"There is a desire to encourage that aspect of welcoming the new teachers by the management team. I believe that there is also a committee... as part of what we were talking about with the project committee for the PCP, there is a part about reception, having a welcome. And a video was recorded with teachers talking and welcoming their new colleagues. Efforts are made to welcome them... The fact is that the school is a difficult one and all the support we can get from teachers and the management team is fundamental." (P7ESP)*

> The teachers also considered that communication with families has improved with the pandemic. And the type of changes mentioned by the directors was also attested by the teachers.

- *"Yes, there was a substantial improvement in communications with families (…) The Roble was explained to them [a communications app for families]. Until now the truth is that families were not using it and it was difficult for us to get in touch with them unless we could phone them."*
- *"In our case we created a commission, the families commissio,n for which I was the representative in this case. Activities were organised every term in collaboration with the families. And the fact is that it worked very well." (P2ESP)*

5. Mentoring procedure

The WCDL mentoring is a **process of individualised support** that aims to assist school directors in developing new skills and competences and a specific management style in order to ensure that the principles of integral education will guide the whole educational community. (WCDL Notes #7). The Action Plan developed for every management team as a final project in the training course, submitted in July 2020, is that which the directors had to implement during the 20/21 academic year. This journey was completed with the support and guidance of their mentors, with whom they initiated a process of transfer of knowledge and learning based on experience and cooperation.

The **mentoring organisation followed different paths in Spain and Portugal**, which enables us to obtain the participants' evaluation of the process in two different formats. In **Portugal** the mentoring was seen as an **informal process** through which support was provided when it was asked for. Taking this into account, the course participants were satisfied with it, highlighting the fact that they could go to the teachers whenever they need to, instead of holding formal meetings that take up too much time. In this way they could work autonomously and at their own pace. Almost 70% of the directors considered the number of mentoring sessions to be adequate.

As the following graph indicates, the directors stated that the mentoring has helped them to a considerable degree, somewhat more in Spain (average of 5.2) than in Portugal (average of 4.8). Thus in Spain 50% of the sample awarded maximum points (6 out of 6) for the assistance provided by the mentoring process and 39% according a score of 5 out of 6. In Portugal the evaluation concentrated more on a grading of 5 points awarded by 53% of the sample.
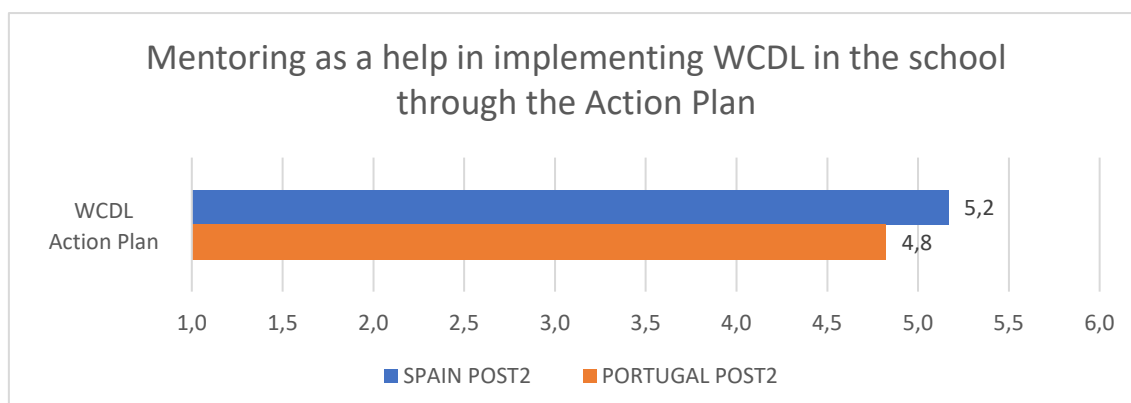
As may be seen from the following graph, **the mentoring has quite significantly helped all the management teams regarding three of the WCDL programme goals: taking into account the dimensions of whole child education in order to put the School WCDL Plan into practice, clarifying the vision, and communicating this more effectively to the educational community.** Regarding the second domain of activity, the directors also appreciated the fact that the **mentoring helped them to a considerable degree to encourage participatory strategies for the teaching staff.** In addition, the mentoring helped the directors to place the emphasis on **distribution of leadership and the search for natural leaders, or those with talent** among the teaching staff. The assistance provided in these two aspects was perceived more intensely by

the Directors in Spain than those in Portugal, with this difference being exceeded by half a point in the six-point scale.

Finally, there is one further item regarding the help that mentoring provided which relates to the third domain of activity, noting that it helped them **implement the planned changes in the curriculum** and in the teaching in order to promote aspects relating to Whole Child Education to a greater degree in Portugal than in Spain.
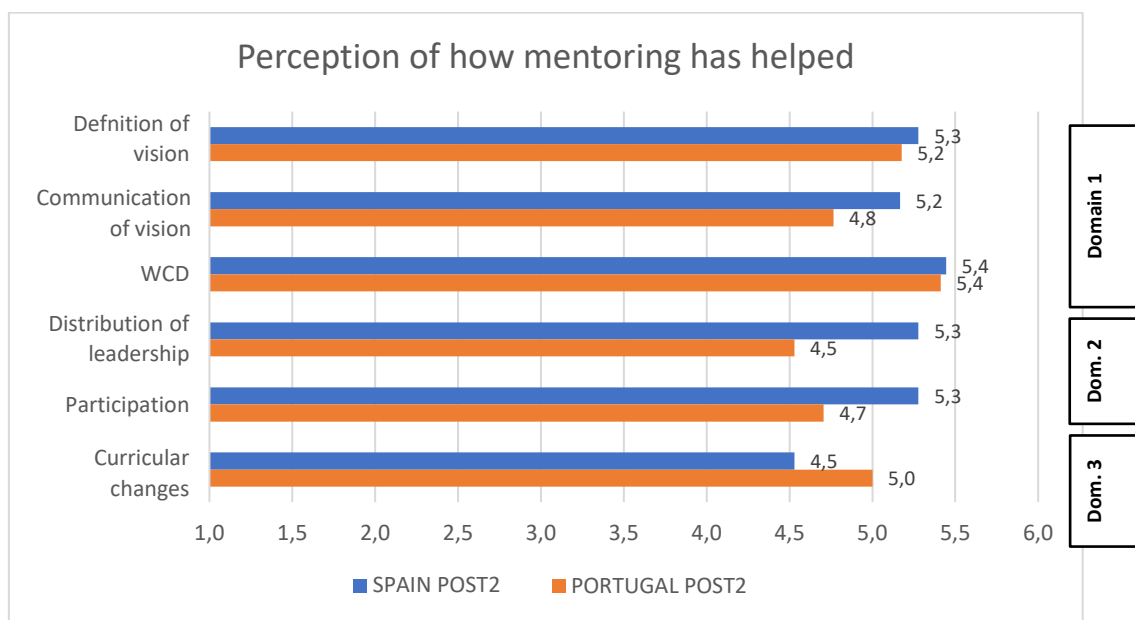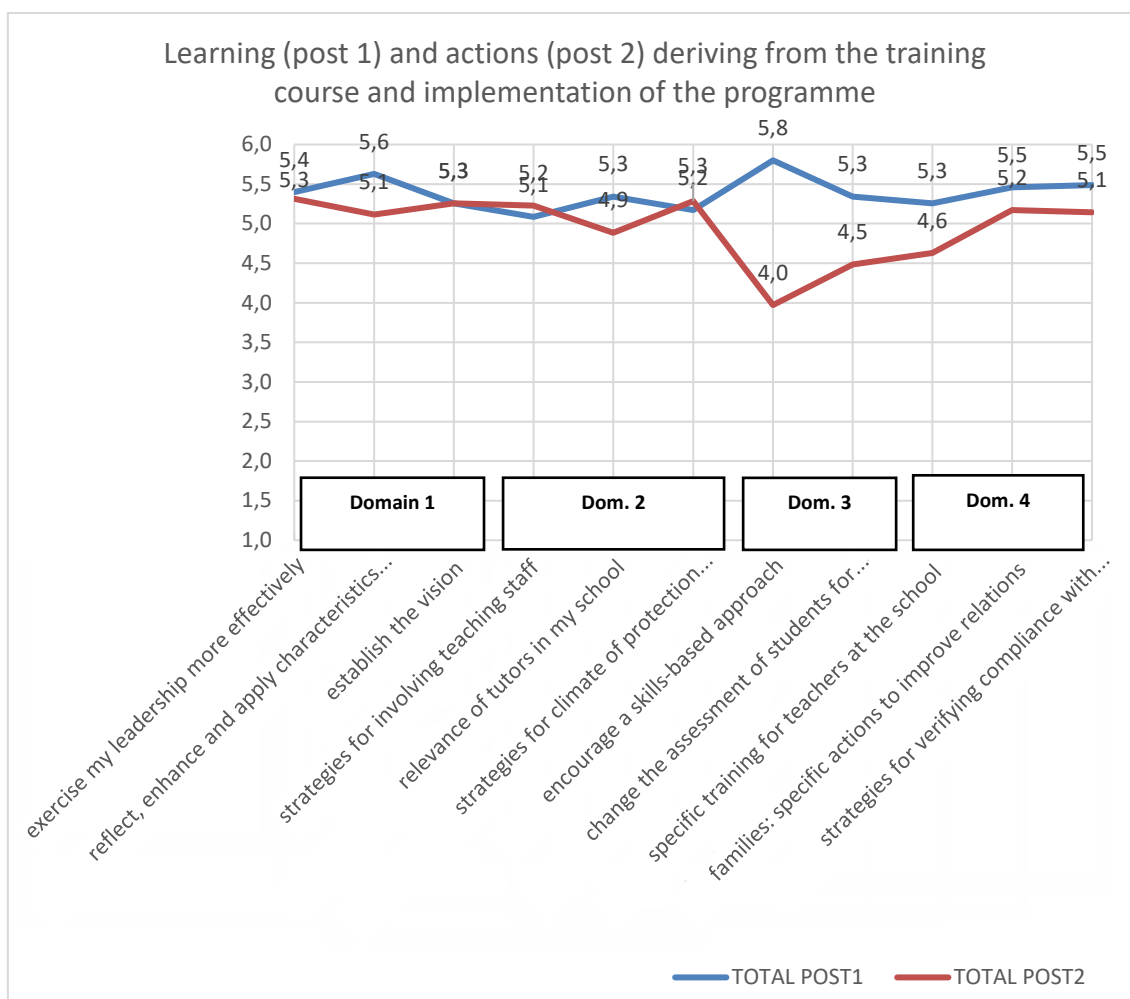

However, the qualitative analyses help us to conclude that the mentoring had greater importance in the overall process in the case of Spain, in line with the different averages with respect to the evaluations on the effect of mentoring in the specific indicators. As such, from the analysis of the qualitative content it is clear that **in Spain**, mentoring has acquired a central role in the process overall. From the perspective of the interviewees**, mentoring was perceived as "the driving force for action"** (rather than inspection and control) that which permits "giving an overall meaning " to what is being done; a mechanism that permits "reconsidering and evaluating " (which differs from inspection); a form of "therapy" for the directors; a tool for motivation.

# 6. Assessment of the overall progress, effect of the pandemic and scalability of the programme.

It is no easy task to gain an overall perspective of the efficacy of the WCDL programme in this first edition, however, there is no question that one of the main indicators is that of the learning achieved, and a second indicator is the degree to which it was managed to apply this learning in the schools on completion of the first year in which the programme was rolled out. Thus, in the view of the first people involved, namely the management teams, the results can be considered excellent in the four domains of activity as may be seen from the following graph.

Learning (post 1) and actions (post 2) deriving from the training course and implementation of the programme

In an initial analysis, we noted an **extremely significant impact of the WCDL programme on the directors in all the domains of activity,** with average scores almost always above 5 out of 6 points. The learning deriving from the training course (post-test 1) was extremely relevant, with very high average scores, which **once again shows the suitability and pertinence of the training in the four domains of activity. Putting this learning into practice in the schools after a year of work (post test 2) was also perceived as very positive, although there were some lower levels.** The most notable differences between what was learned in the training and its implementation were notable in domains 3 and 4. Within the **curricular approach, there was greater difficulty** (especially in Spain) in putting a skills based approach into practice (which stood out as the most significant learning in both countries), and implementing the changes needed to ensure that the evaluation of the students' learning is consistent both in this approach and in integrating the six dimensions of Whole Child Education in the processes for evaluating students.

As to how far the **WCDL programme has penetrated in terms of perception of the teaching staff**, it was found that 73% of Spanish teachers who responded to the questionnaire compared to 52% of Portuguese, stated that specific action was being taken to encourage and promote holistic education of the students in their schools.

% of teachers stating that their school has developed specific actions to promote whole child education
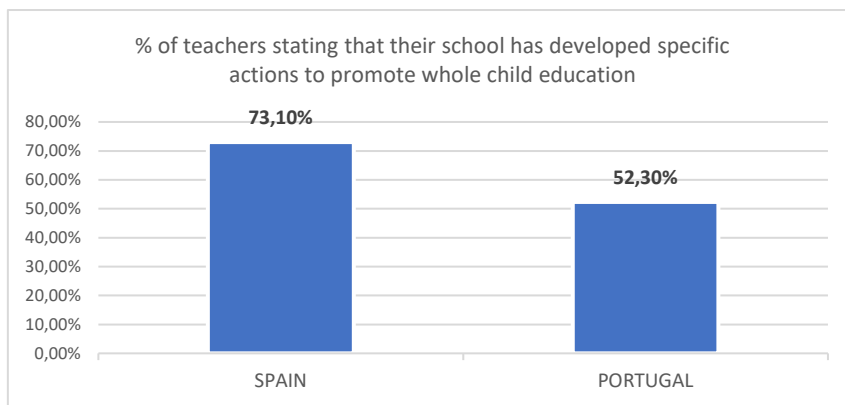
When the teachers were asked to enumerate these specific actions, it was clear that the teachers perceived that in **the first year of implementing the WCDL programme, numerous changes or improvements had been made in the school.** Although it is true that all those changes cannot be attributed to the WCDL programme, the teachers clearly perceived that **efforts were being made to transform things, despite the considerable difficulties caused by the pandemic**. The following graph summarises the frequency of those improvements grouped into different domains of activity of the programme.

Frequency of specific improvements perceived by the teaching staff
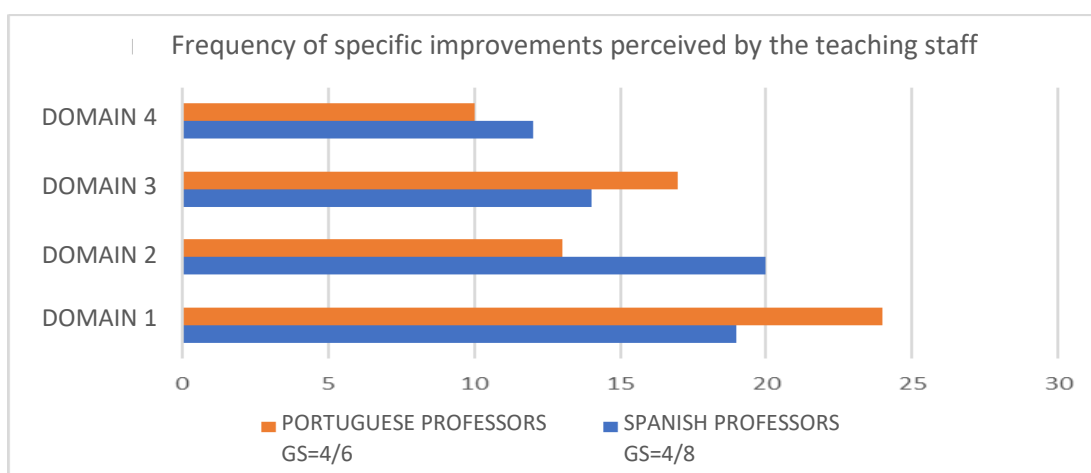
In qualitative terms, a similar number of specific improvements have been documented and noted by the teaching staff (64 and 65) and quite distributed through the domains.

With respect to the **influence of the pandemic on application of the WCDL project** in the schools, it was seen that the Spanish directors qualified the difficulty that COVID had caused as extremely significant in carrying out their plans for the WCDL programme. For the Portuguese directors, the difficulty was more moderate. Thus, **in Spain 72% of the directors considered that it had a significantly negative effect on them -** of which 50% considered that it had caused maximum harm (with a value of 6 out of 6) compared to 18% in the case of the Portuguese) and 22% awarded a very high score (value 5 on the scale compared to 18% again in the case of the Portuguese). Furthermore, only 11% of the Spanish directors considered that the harm was relatively mild or low (values of 2 and 3 on the scale) compared to 30% of the Portuguese.
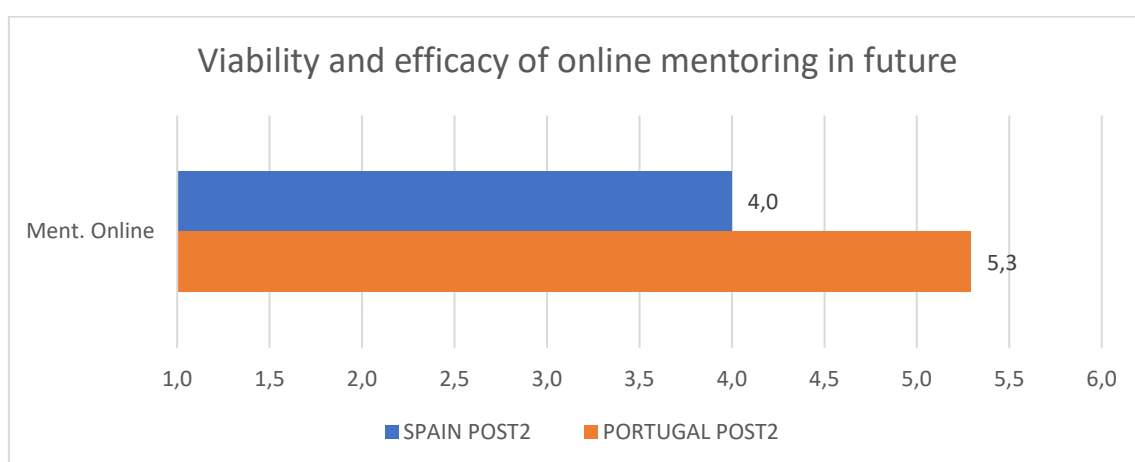
Difficulty in implementing the WCDL programme due to COVID
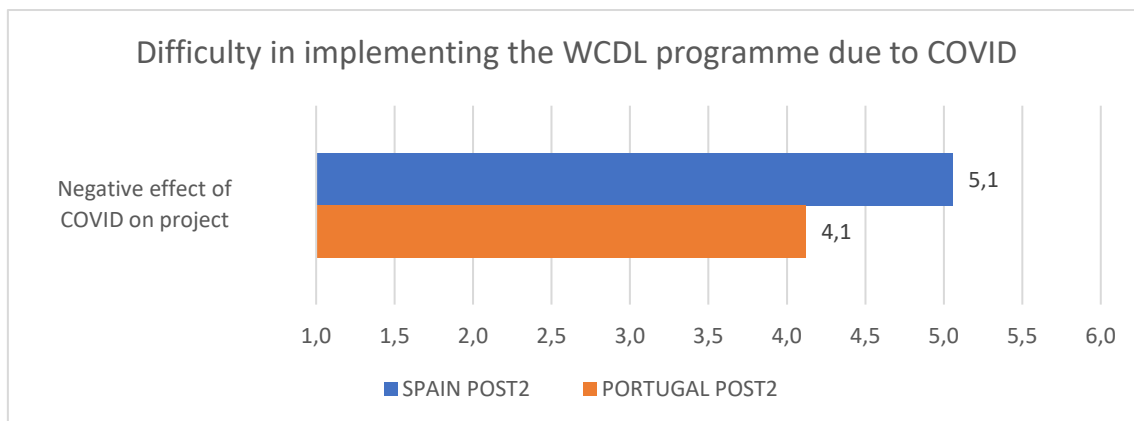
Furthermore, the managers were also asked about the **possibility of transferring future editions of the course to an online format.** In accordance with the quantitative data in the questionnaire, the Portuguese directors were much more likely to consider that the course could work well if scaled to online mode ("Following the experience of this virtual training, how satisfactory do you think it would be for future cohorts of this course if they were able to undertake all or a large part of the course by replacing the face to face sessions with virtual classes?):

Adecuacy of online training for future cohorts

SPAIN
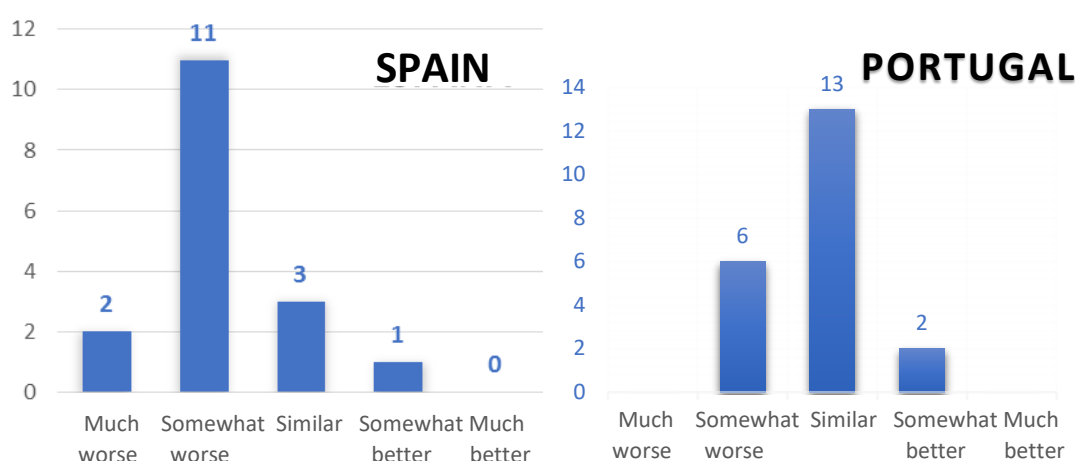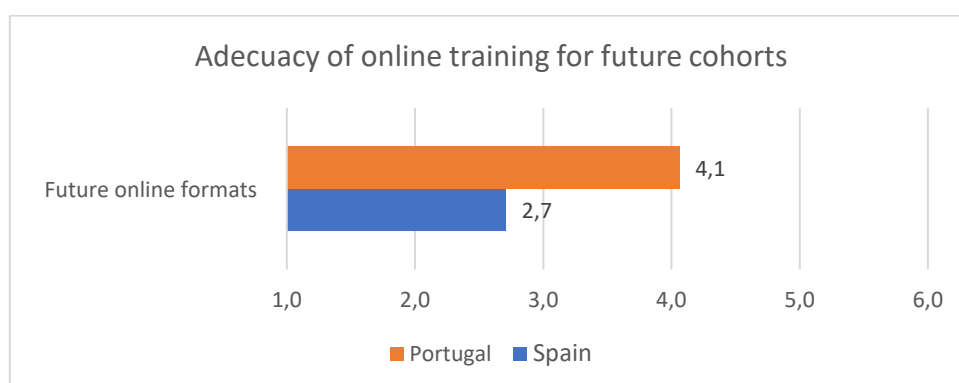
PORTUGAL

In percentage terms, 29% of **Spanish** directors considered that it would be extremely unsatisfactory, 35% moderately unsatisfactory, and only **23% believed that it would be adequate or satisfactory.** In turn, 14.3% of Portuguese directors considered that it would be

extremely unsatisfactory and as many again believed the opposite (extremely satisfactory) **with 61.9% choosing satisfactory evaluations**.

On another level, and given the relevance that the mentoring process has had, it was also considered important to ask the directors for their opinion regarding how *online mentoring* could work. In this case again, it was the Portuguese directors who felt that it was considerably more viable and effective compared to a positive but much more moderate evaluation by the Spanish directors. In Portugal, 100% considered that it would be viable and feasible, and up to 88% answered with the maximum score of values on the scale (47% scored with a 5 on the scale of efficacy and 41% with a 6). Conversely, in Spain 44% of the directors considered that it would be ineffective (17% of whom stated that it would not be effective at all). However, opinion was very divided, as 50% considered it to be very effective (of which 33% scored the maximum value of efficacy, namely a 6).

Viability and efficacy of online mentoring in future

Ment. Online — SPAIN POST2: 4,0; PORTUGAL POST2: 5,3

Scale: 1,0 1,5 2,0 2,5 3,0 3,5 4,0 4,5 5,0 5,5 6,0

Legend: ■ SPAIN POST2 ■ PORTUGAL POST2

In the interviews, directors highlighted some aspects that should be taken into account: firstly, they consider that **the interaction through digital means is less spontaneous** and, secondly that the type of dynamic and methodology of the course **makes face to face classes an important component** in terms of participation**.**

To conclude, the possibility of scaling this programme to a greater number of schools is a decision that transcends the indications that a report of this type is able to provide. The suggestion that may derive from the analysis of these questions is **that in general terms, a majority of directors of the full sample see both training and mentoring as viable in a format that is mostly virtual, however, with some precautions and without completely ruling out face to face sessions, as the nature of such classes includes interaction, the human element, and social relations which facilitate debate and, as a result, learning.**