



TOGETHER
a whole family approach
for young carers



TOGETHER: A WHOLE FAMILY APPROACH FOR YOUNG CARERS

PROFESSIONALS GUIDE



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WHAT IS TOGETHER: A WHOLE FAMILY APPROACH FOR YOUNG CARERS?

The Erasmus+ funded TOGETHER project raises awareness of young carers and aims to support them and their families.

The first output of this project was awareness raising material to inform children and adults about how important it is to cooperate and be supportive with each other when there are caring responsibilities in the family. Specific resources were also designed for practitioners to support them in adopting this holistic approach.

What is a Whole Family Approach?

Adopting a whole family approach involves practitioners supporting young carers in the context of their families. Identifying young carers' needs and considering the impact of caring responsibilities on the whole family, and what personalised support is required ensures that inappropriate caring does not take place.



Creating our materials

The first part of our process involved a significant amount of desk-based research to find out what tools and resources are currently available to support young carers, families and practitioners using a whole family approach. Our initial research proved challenging, with few resources offering this holistic approach. To overcome this, partners created a guideline research template to identify resources that met as many of the criteria as possible to define the baseline of our work. This template referred to condition-specific resources, care related materials and support related information, all targeting each group: young carers, family members and professionals. This collection process defined the scope and limitations of existing materials and the gaps to be targeted through our Together project work. From this scoping exercise, partners collated the most appropriate resources into our project database. This database can be accessed [here](#) and practitioners can filter depending on key word searches, target groups or country specific materials.

Consultation with young carers and practitioners also ensured meaningful resources would be created. This activity provided partners with a baseline knowledge of the whole family approach, and where gaps and challenges existed in each nation specific context. It was important that each partner created a set of resources appropriate for their nation's unpaid carer landscape and the level of awareness that existed. Each partner therefore created individual resources for young carers, family members and practitioners.

Whilst resources were created for each partner's national context, the key messages remained the same. These resources remind young carers and their families that they are not alone. They aim to provide useful information and support for families, and to encourage families to speak openly with one another about the caring role.

For practitioners, these resources demonstrate that lasting positive change and support is more sustainable when working with the whole family.



ITALY

In the Italian context, the following resources were developed:

- ✓ bookmarks with the aim to support young carers in self-identification.
- ✓ a leaflet addressed to families containing information and advice to establish an honest and open dialogue within the family, also thanks to the support of specially created conversation cards.
- ✓ a booklet for practitioners working in the youth sector to raise their awareness of young carers and support them in recognising young people with caring responsibilities.



ALL THE RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE IN ITALIAN AT THE [LINK](#)

BOOKMARKS FOR YOUNG CARERS

Research and consultation suggested that in Italy there is still lack of knowledge about young carers. These resources therefore aim to raise awareness of the existence of young carers and to help them identify themselves. The ultimate message of the resources is that however unique their situations may be, young carers are not alone. Therefore, four different types of bookmarks were created, graphically different and with different statements of young carers. They also contain contact details for further information and support. The resource could be distributed in places frequented by young people so that it can be picked up, read and used as a bookmark.



Italian bookmark front and back side

ESSERE UN GIOVANE

CAREGIVER :

UNA QUESTIONE DI FAMIGLIA



INFORMAZIONI, CONSIGLI E CONTATTI UTILI
per la promozione della comunicazione aperta all'interno della famiglia



WWW.TOGETHEREUPROJECT.EU

2019-3-DE04-KA205-018801

Cover of the Italian leaflet



LEAFLET FOR FAMILIES

Based on the project's objective of promoting a dialogue about caring responsibilities, a leaflet was created for families containing information about young carers and an invitation to try to communicate with them about the impact caring can have on the lives of young people with caring roles. Considering the difficulty on starting this kind of dialogue, conversation cards were created to support family members to talk about relevant issues. The latter are back-front conversational cards, showing the same situation from two different points of view, on one side that of the young carers and on the other side that of the family members. The cards accompany the leaflet, which contains instructions on how to use them and some tips for talking and listening to each other. This resource also contains contacts and references to enable the target group to receive further information. It would be useful to deliver the resource to families where there is a cared for person and a young carer. It is recommended to start conversations on the topic of care in quiet moments, around the table or on the sofa, so that there is an environment as comfortable as possible. It is important to listen to what is said during the conversations and avoid taking things personally, even though they may be painful. Cards can be used to start conversations, but also as an input for individual reflection on relevant issues.

BOOKLET FOR PRACTITIONERS

The first phase of research regarding the resources available to professionals revealed a significant lack of tools to support professionals to recognise young carers and implement a whole family approach. The booklet, addressed to practitioners, aims to be a short guide on how to recognise and approach young carers and to consider that a whole family approach is very important to support them. It can be consulted and kept at hand by all professionals who work with young people and who might therefore encounter young carers. The first part of the booklet provides some information on who young carers are, what they do and how many young carers there are in Italy. It continues by providing an overview of the impact that caring responsibilities can have in the different areas of a young person's life, supported by information and statements from some young carers. The booklet ends by offering a simple tool that can help identify young carers and some advice to help them in a practical way. A few references to existing resources and contacts to find out more have been included to complete the resource.



WWW.TOGETHEREUPROJECT.EU

Cover of the Italian booklet



GERMANY

In the German context, the following resources were developed:

- ✓ a leaflet addressed to young carers and families to support them during the challenging time, containing information and advice to establish an honest and open dialogue within the family and reference to our counselling services.
- ✓ a flyer addressed to practitioners working in the youth sector to raise their awareness of young carers and support them in recognising young people with caring responsibilities.



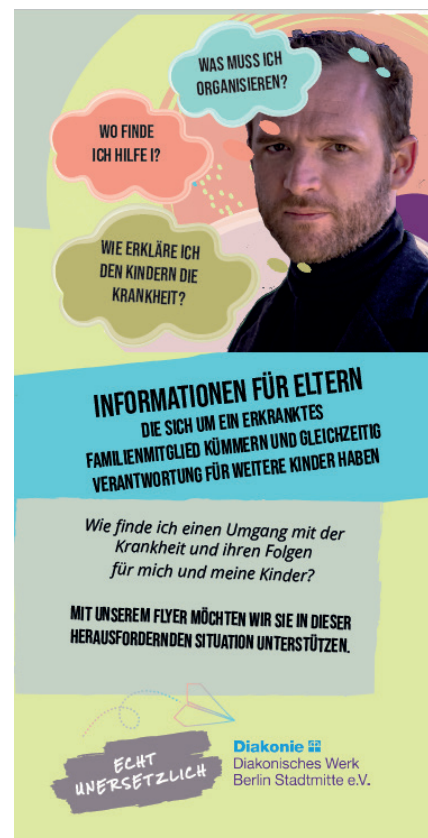
ALL THE RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE IN ITALIAN AT THE [LINK](#)

FLYER FOR YOUNG CARERS AND FAMILIES

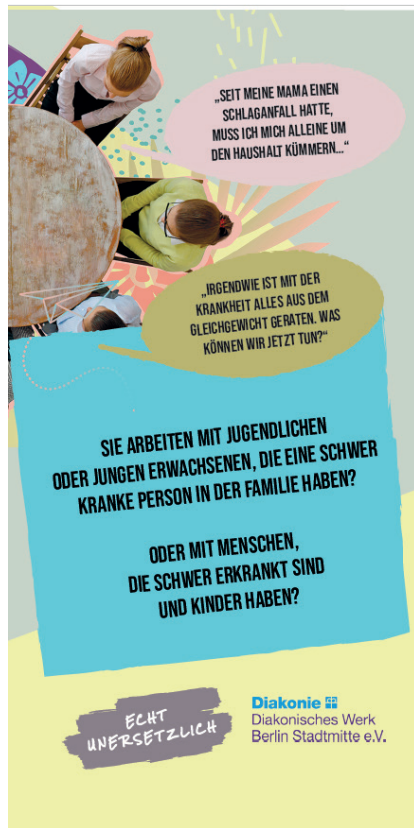
Based on the project's objective of promoting a dialogue about caring responsibilities, a flyer was created for families containing information about young carers and an invitation to try to communicate with them about the impact caring can have on their lives as young people.

The eight-page flyer gives an overview of how challenging the caring situation is for the whole family and invites parents to consider the impact it can have on children and young people. Questions in thought bubbles such as "How do I explain the disease to the children?" create attention and an initial identification with the topic. In this way, a first identification with the target group takes place. This is where the whole family approach comes into play.

As a first approach to a solution, it describes how important it is to handle the topic openly within families. This is followed by suggestions and examples for entering into dialogue with their own family. Finally, further information on the topic is given and contact details are provided to offer wider support.



German leaflet



German practitioners leaflet

LEAFLET FOR PRACTITIONERS

In the first research phase, it became apparent that there is little information and materials available to support professionals' understanding of young carers.

We have developed a four-page leaflet to raise awareness of the target group. The leaflet is addressed to professionals working with children, teenagers and young adults, but also to health and care professionals.

The leaflet gives a short explanation of how illness affects families, how children and young people might react in such situations and provides statistics on how many young people are affected by such a situation.

The leaflet also invites people to talk to our organisation and to visit the future online course.





SCOTLAND

In Scotland, the following resources were developed:

- ✓ Conversation cards to support young carers and family members to discuss caring roles in an interactive way. These cards also include information and links to support families with caring responsibilities.
- ✓ A toolkit for practitioners providing practical steps, guidance and useful resources to adopt a whole family approach.
- ✓ A project poster to raise awareness of the whole family approach and the wider Together project.
- ✓ A bookmark for young carers to support self-identification and promote information and support available.



ALL THE RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE IN ITALIAN AT THE [LINK](#)

CONVERSATION CARDS

Caring within the family: starting that conversation, together.

Young carers involved in Carers Trust Scotland's national youth projects helped shape these resources to ensure they supported young carers and their families in the best way possible. Our conversation cards are made up of young carer and family cards. Each card has one discussion point on one side and prompts and information on the other. There is no right or wrong way to use these cards, they have been created to help families understand more about young caring and the impact it can have. They encourage family members to be open and honest and offer some questions to help families to start talking together.

They also include information and useful links to organisations and services to support families with caring roles in Scotland. Young carers and family members can use these individually to reflect on key questions or use together to learn more about the impact caring is having on the individual. Practitioners can use these cards to individually support young carers to express how they are feeling. This resource also provides an introductory understanding of who young carers are and the impact caring can have to family members. When used in an interactive way, practitioners can support families to go through the cards and provide prompts or additional information on the links that are signposted. These cards can be used during whole family workshops or shared with families to take home and use in their own time.



'Caring within the family: Starting the conversation, together.' Conversation Cards

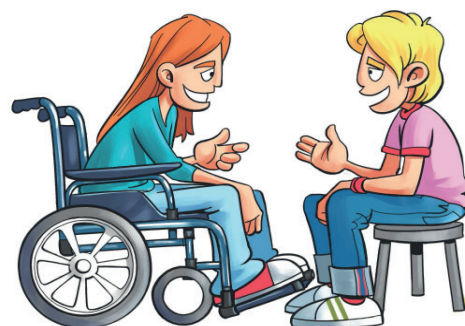
PRACTITIONER TOOLKIT

Due to the advanced carer landscape in Scotland, it was important that our practitioner resource would complement the work that so many are already doing to support young carers, particularly young carer services. Despite this advanced policy landscape, desk-based research and consultation shed light on key challenges and barriers in adopting a whole family approach when supporting young carers.

In response to this, we created a practitioner toolkit that provides practical steps, guidance, examples and useful resources. The toolkit is designed to support and complement the work practitioners already do across Scotland in supporting young carers.

The toolkit provides a project background and highlights the importance of adopting a whole family approach. It includes practical steps for practitioners, including a brief guide to having difficult conversations. This section was included specifically based on consultation from youth services, who found that initiating conversations with families at times a difficult conversation to have. Due to the complexity of families and the variety of caring roles that exist, we also included resources that support different family structures and condition specific materials.

Together: A Whole Family Approach for Young Carers



CARERS
TRUST
SCOTLAND



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of the European Union



'Together: A Whole Family Approach for Young Carers'
Practitioner Toolkit

Information on Young Carer Statements and small steps that practitioners can include to adopt a whole family approach is also included, as are good practice examples from different local authorities in Scotland.

Consultation with young carer services also informed the final part of this toolkit. There was a need to record outcomes in one place to ensure greater communication across services. Therefore, the toolkit concludes with a personal outcomes approach and a family action plan that can be developed alongside a Young Carer Statement or during whole family workshops. Practitioners can use this action plan to take notes of issues, perspectives, and experiences of all individuals, and develop key actions to support the whole family. As resources must be flexible to adapt to different local authorities and their approach to supporting young carers, the plan is straightforward and can be used as a starting point for practitioners.



GREECE

In Greece, the following resources were developed:

- ✓ bookmarks with the aim to support young carers in self-identification.
- ✓ a brochure addressed to families pointing out the difficulties young carers face and how important is for the family to express their needs.
- ✓ a poster for practitioners working in the youth sector to raise their awareness of young carers and support them in recognising young people with caring responsibilities



ALL THE RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE IN ITALIAN AT THE [LINK](#)

BOOKMARKS FOR YOUNG CARERS

Research shows that there is little awareness of young carers in Greece. Young carers often don't realise the responsibilities they take on. The aim of this resource is to help young carers identify themselves as well as inform them about the support available. The bookmark will be distributed in youth friendly spaces to support young people to use it and be informed about what it means to be a young carer.

ΕΙΜΑΙ

ΝΕΑΡΟΣ/Η

ΦΡΟΝΤΙΣΤΗΣ/ΣΤΡΙΑ

LET'S STAY TOGETHER

TOGETHER
a whole family approach
for young carers

έδρα κοινωνικές συνεργασιαστικές δραστηριότητες ευπαθών ομάδων

WWW.EDRA-COOPGR
INFO@EDRA-COOPGR

ΕΙΜΑΙ ΝΕΑΡΟΣ/Η ΦΡΟΝΤΙΣΤΗΣ/ΣΤΡΙΑ!

Οι νεαροί φροντιστές είναι παιδιά και νέοι κάτω των 18 ετών που παρέχουν σημαντική ή ουσιαστική φροντίδα και υποστήριξη σε μέλη της οικογένειας που έχουν αναπηρία, πάσχουν από χρόνια ασθένεια, πρόβλημα ψυχικής υγείας ή άλλη κατάσταση που σχετίζεται με την ανάγκη φροντίδας. Αναλαμβάνουν ευθύνες που συνήθως συνδέονται με έναν ενήλικα. Οι νεαροί φροντιστές ηλικίας 18-24 ετών αναφέρονται ως νεαροί ενήλικες φροντιστές

ΔΕΝ ΕΙΣΑΙ ΜΟΝΟΣ/Η ΚΑΙ ΕΙΣΑΙ ΣΗΜΑΝΤΙΚΟΣ/Η!

Είναι τόσο σημαντικό να ζητήσεις υποστήριξη όταν τη χρειάζεσαι. Μίλα στην οικογένειά σου και μοιράσου πως αισθάνεσαι. Θυμήσου ότι η φροντίδα δεν πρέπει να πραγματοποιείται εις βάρος της δικής σου υγείας και ευεξίας - υπάρχει υποστήριξη και για εσένα!

ΕΠΙΚΟΙΝΩΝΗΤΕ ΜΑΖΙ ΜΑΕ!
TOGETHER PROJECT
WWW.TOGETHEREUPROJECT.EU

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2019-3-DE04-KA205-018801

Greek bookmark front and back side

BROCHURE FOR FAMILIES

As the project's name indicates the aim of TOGETHER is to promote a family approach for young carers. This brochure was therefore created to support families and raise their awareness of the difficulties young carers can face.

This brochure includes a simple story of the everyday life of a young carer. It seeks to raise awareness of the responsibilities that young carers take on and the support they often need from their family. Moreover, in the brochure there is some practical advice about how the family can support young carers. The brochure will be distributed to families with caring responsibilities as well as the general public in order to raise awareness of young carers.



Greek brochure

POSTER FOR PRACTITIONERS

An informative poster about the family approach for young carers addressed to practitioners. The role of a practitioner in recognising young carers is the first and the most important step to ensure young carers can be supported. The poster aims to raise awareness about the importance of a whole family approach when supporting young carers.



Greek poster

IMPACT

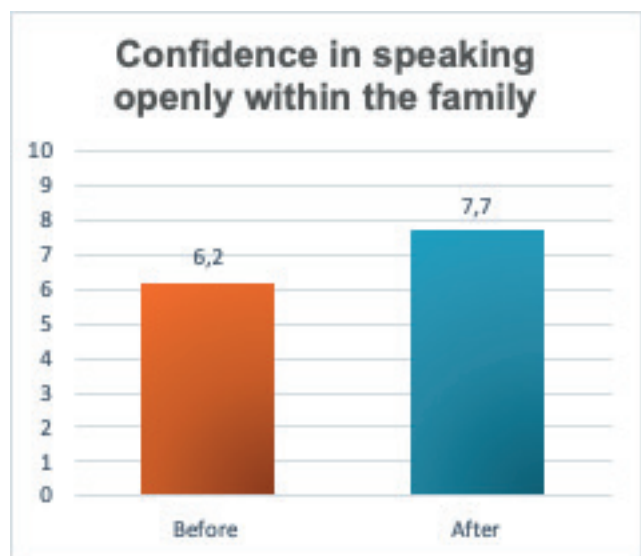
From January 2021, partners launched a pilot survey alongside the launch of project resources. The aim of this pilot was to gather feedback from young carers, family members and practitioners to ensure all project resources are fit for purpose. Young carers, aged 13 – 25, family members and practitioners were invited to share their views. Surveys included baseline questions to measure confidence and awareness of participants using a whole family approach. Pilot surveys were widely shared through project press releases, partner websites and social media. The survey was open until September 2021.

This pilot received over 100 responses from young carers, family members and practitioners. 24 young carers, aged 13 – 25, and 19 family members shared their views in our pilot survey. 64 practitioners, across 18 professions, also fed into this pilot including teachers, social workers, nurses and psychologists.

YOUNG CARERS AND FAMILY MEMBERS

Overall, young carers and family members scored the design and information within the resources highly. Majority felt they had learnt something new from these resources.

Our evaluations included baseline questions to measure awareness of the impact caring roles can have before using the resource. We also measured confidence young carers and family members feel when speaking with each other about the caring role. When we averaged the scores (with 10 being excellent, and 1 being poor), we received the following results before and after using the resource:



These results indicate that our resources have led to an increase in awareness of the impact of caring and improved confidence in speaking about the caring role within the family.

Majority of young carers and family members felt these resources had a positive impact on their family.



'I learned that there are many families in a similar situation to mine and that I am not alone because there are people who can help me.' Family member, Italy.



'It provides helpful advice on how to openly communicate with your family which I have found particularly helpful as I am someone who struggles with this. The design is a good way to keep the communication between carers and family members lighthearted and easy.' Young carer, Scotland.



'I think the tips on talking are great – many forget that children hear everything and have a right to information.' Family member, Germany.



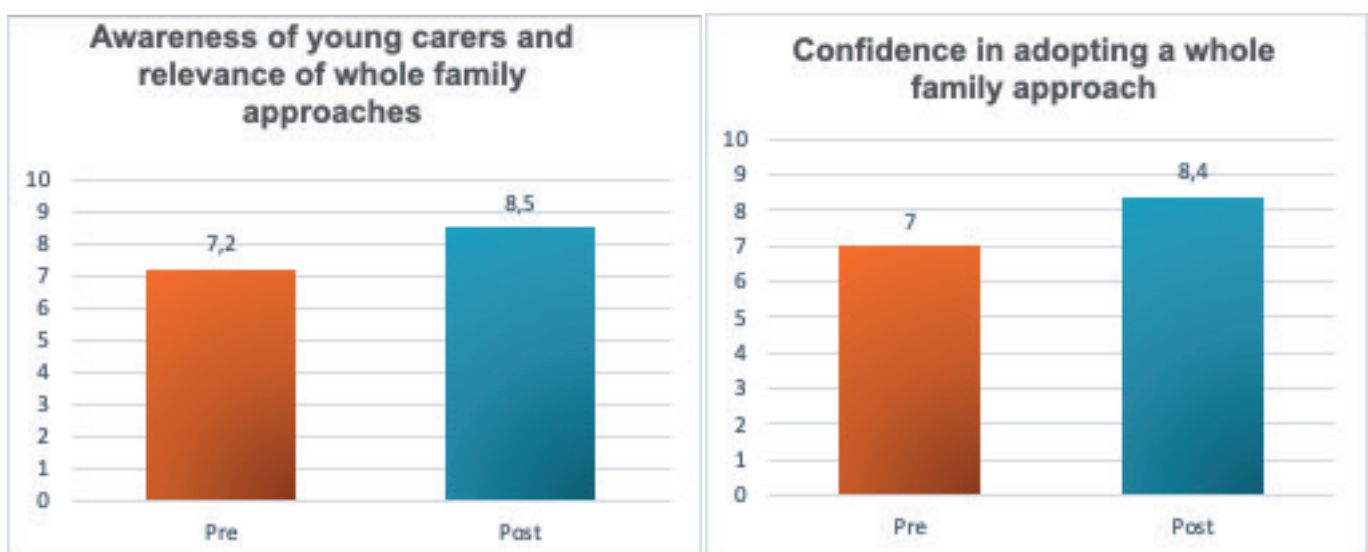
If you want to read the detailed and country-specific results of the pilot phase involving young carers and families, [SEE THE ANNEX 1](#).

PRACTITIONERS

The pilot received feedback from a wide range of professions, including researchers, psychologists, counsellors, teachers, social workers, young carer support workers, family workers and nurses.

Overall, practitioners scored the design and information of the resources highly. Majority felt they had learnt something new from these resources.

Our evaluations included baseline questions to measure awareness of young carers and the importance of a whole family approach before using the resource. We also measured confidence in adopting a whole family approach. When we averaged the scores (with 10 being excellent, and 1 being poor), we received the following results:



These results indicate a slight increase in awareness of the whole family approach and improved confidence in adopting this. High scores from the baseline questions may be due to the practitioners we engaged with and their existing knowledge and experience.

Majority of practitioners felt that the resources would have a positive impact on their work.



'It helped me to reflect on the complexity of aspects to be taken into account when working with young caregivers and their families.' Psychologist, Italy.



'Excellent guidance, great to have a guide to follow, to provide consistent approach.' Support Worker, Scotland.



'Because of my profession I am already aware of the issue, however the material is really informative.' Occupational Therapist, Greece.



If you want to read the detailed and country-specific results of the pilot phase involving practitioners, **SEE THE ANNEX 2.**

This pilot feedback has informed our work and partners have made appropriate edits to the resources as a result. This ensures that the project resources are fit for purpose and will be well received by young carers, family members and practitioners.



**ALL PROJECT RESOURCES ARE
AVAILABLE ON THE TOGETHER WEBSITE:
[HTTPS://TOGETHEREUPROJECT.EU](https://togethereuproject.eu).**

SCAN THE QR CODE FOR DIRECT ACCESS



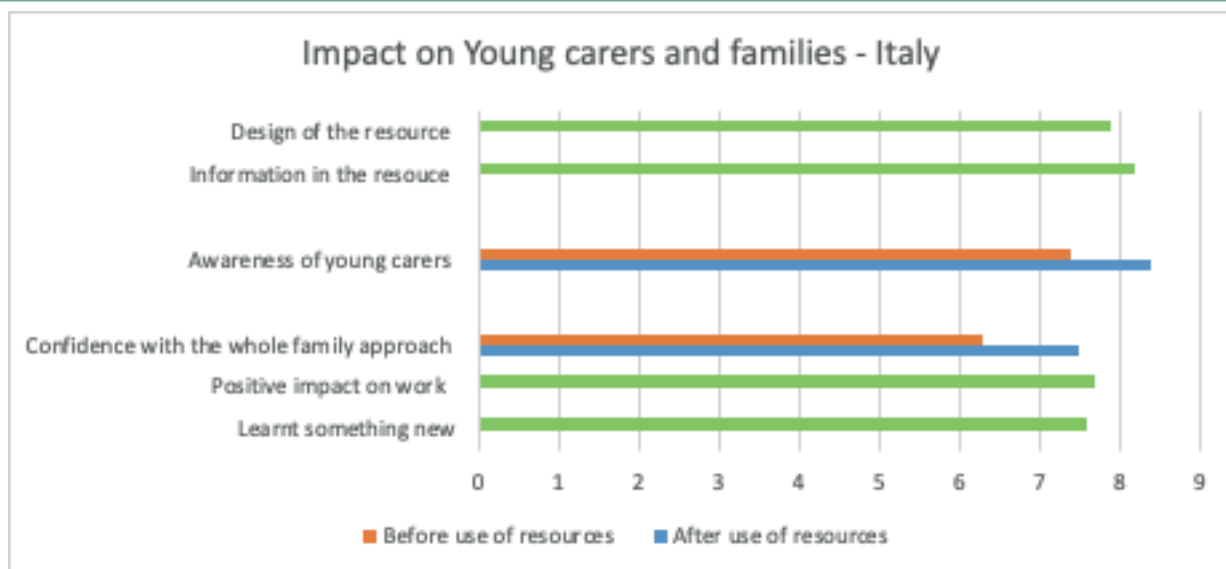
ANNEX 1

In order to monitor the impact and adequacy of the resources, during the pilot phase young carers and family members were asked to fill in a questionnaire evaluating the resources provided to them, expressing their opinion on a scale from 1 to 10 (where 1 = poor and 10 = excellent) on the following aspects:

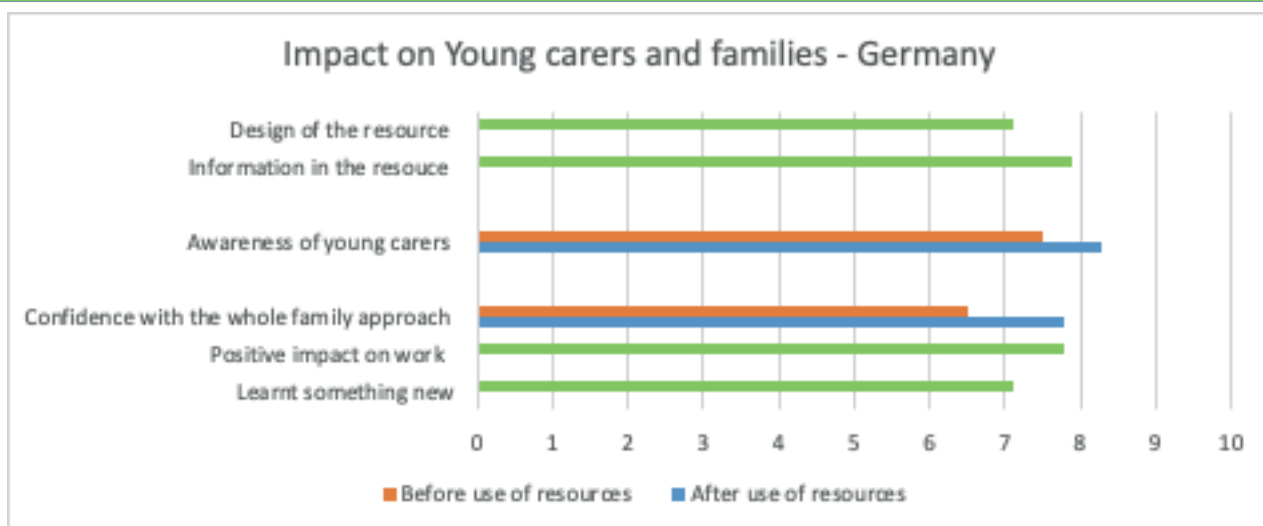
1. The design of the resource;
2. The information in the resource;
3. Previous awareness of the impact that caring roles can have before using the resource;
4. Awareness of the impact that caring roles can have after using the resource;
5. Confidence in speaking openly to the family before using this resource;
6. Confidence in speaking openly to the family after using;
7. Positive impact of the resource on the family;
8. Learning something new from the resource.

Each partner submitted the questionnaire after allowing time for the people involved to carefully view the resources and reflect on the content and on the potential impact of resources. The results below refer to the resources developed for their national context.

ITALY

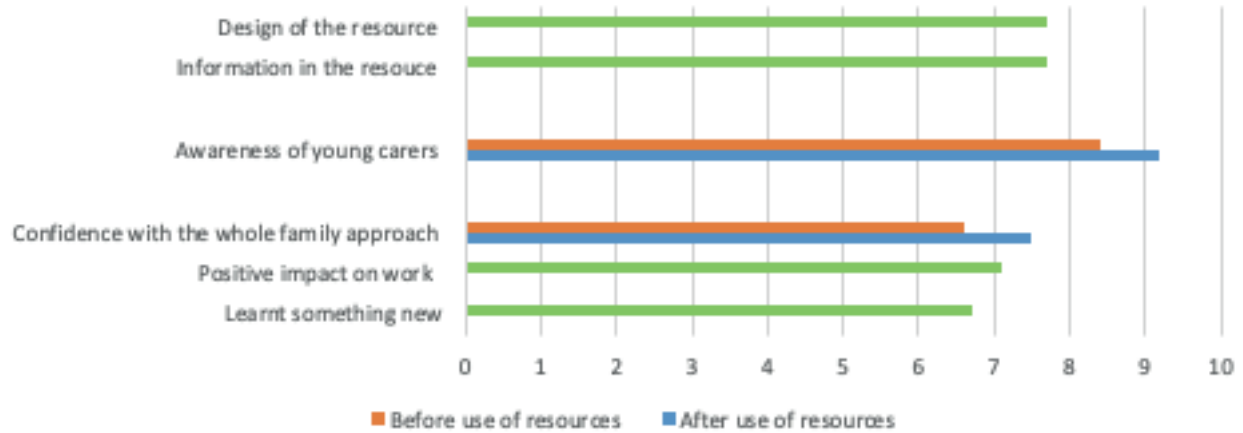


GERMANY



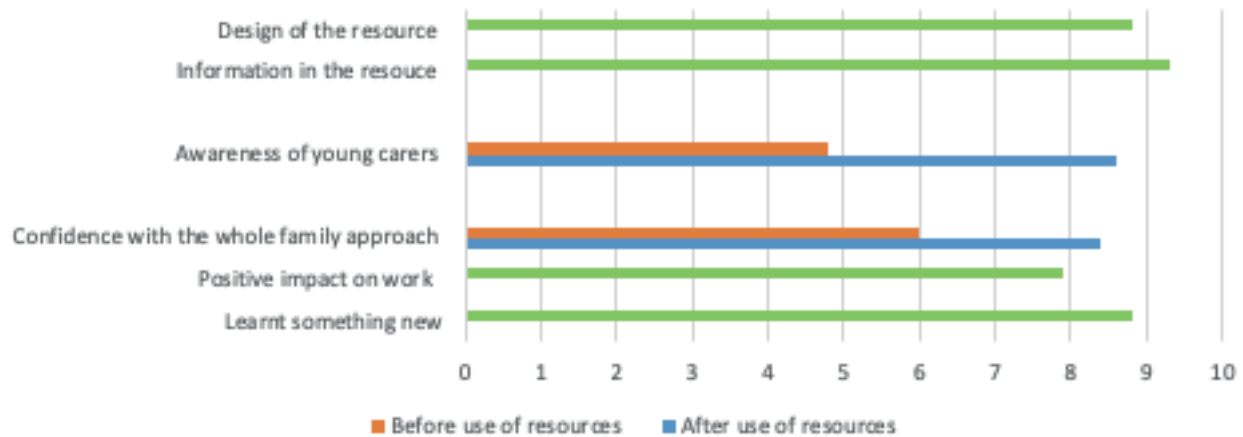
SCOTLAND

Impact on Young carers and families - Scotland



GREECE

Impact on Young carers and families - Greece



ANNEX 2

In order to monitor the impact and adequacy of the resources, during the pilot phase practitioners were asked to fill in a questionnaire evaluating the resources provided to them, expressing their opinion on a scale from 1 to 10 (where 1 = poor and 10 = excellent) on the following aspects:

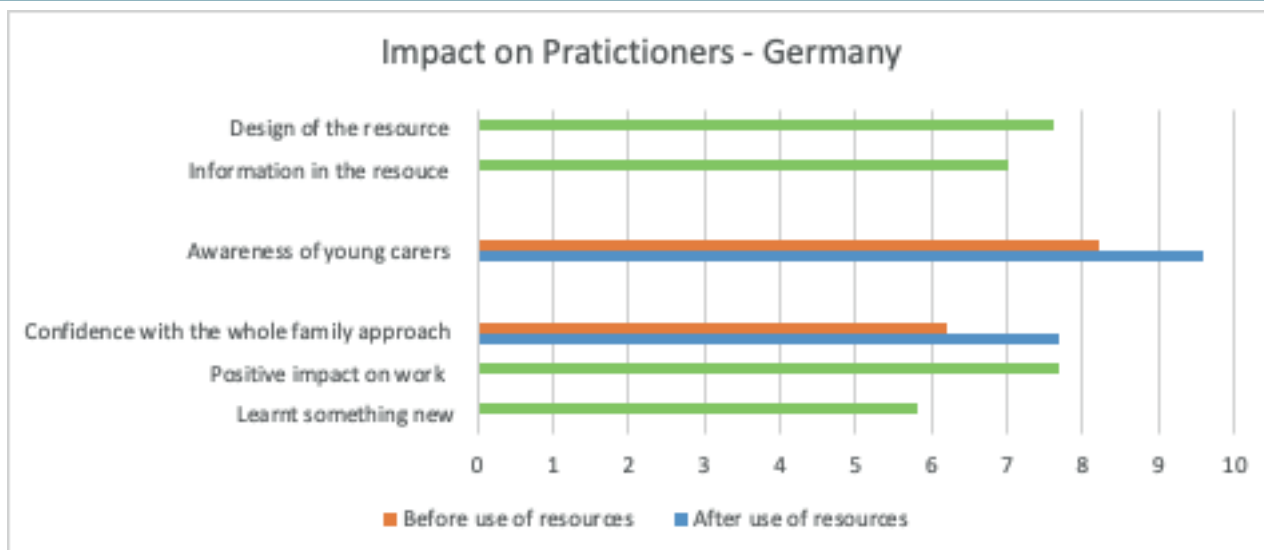
1. The design of the resource;
2. The information in the resource;
3. Previous awareness of young carers and the importance of whole family approaches before working with the resource;
4. Awareness of young carers and the importance of whole family approaches after working with the resource;
5. Confidence in adopting a whole family approach before using this resource;
6. Confidence in adopting a whole family approach after using this resource;
7. Positive impact on working with young carers and their families;
8. Learning something new from the resource.

Each partner submitted the questionnaire after allowing time for the professionals involved to carefully view the resources, reflect on the content and on the potential impact of resources on their work. The results below refer to the resources developed for their national context.

ITALY

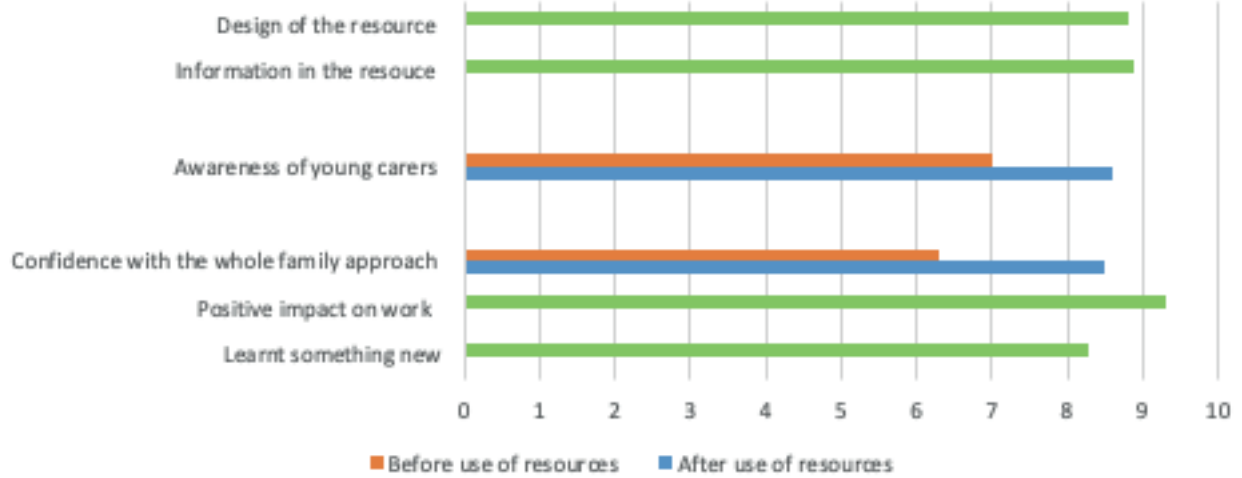


GERMANY



SCOTLAND

Impact on Practitioners - Scotland



GREECE

Impact on Practitioners - Greece

