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Exploring Green Futures: Integrating the New European Bauhaus into Art and Design Education

Report:

A Consolidated Report on NEB aligned Workshops and Micro-Credential Development Across Europe

Co-funded by the European Union

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Part I – Introduction of Consolidated Analysis

Glossary

To support consistent understanding across diverse educational and professional contexts, this glossary introduces key terms referenced throughout the report:

NEB – New European Bauhaus, an EU initiative combining sustainability, aesthetics, and inclusion in design and innovation.

Micro-Credential – a short, focused learning experience targeting specific competences, often stackable and recognized by institutions or employers.

Design sprint - five-phase process that uses design thinking with the aim of reducing the risk when bringing a new product, service or a feature to the market. The process aims to help teams to clearly define goals, validate assumptions and decide on a product roadmap before starting development.

Design Thinking – a user-centered, iterative methodology for problem-solving that includes research, ideation, prototyping, and testing.

Toolkit – a curated set of tools, templates, and methods used to guide learners and educators through the design process.

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Introduction

This report presents a consolidated overview of pilot workshops implemented in four countries —Italy, Cyprus, Greece, and Lithuania — as part of the "Futures Designed" project. These workshops introduced over 80 participants to NEB principles through practical design thinking activities. Participants included students, educators, professionals, and members of the general public. Activities combined collaborative and individual tasks, integrating analog and digital tools for inclusive and effective learning.

”Futures Designed“ focuses on the development and delivery of Micro-Credential courses and integrated workshops specifically for the fields of Art and Design in Higher Education (HE). Proposed courses equip students with skills deemed necessary for the green transition, thus increasing employability, encouraging behavioral change, consumption habits and lifestyles (personally and in future careers) and allowing them to become the facilitators of the aims and goals of the European Green Deal and the New European Bauhaus (NEB).

Workshop locations and settings

The activities [workshops] were in varied environments that grounded learning in local contexts:

- Italy (MateraHub): workshops were held in collaboration with Liceo Artistico Carlo Levi in Matera and Irsina. The settings included school laboratories, a museum space, and outdoor urban areas. The activities focused on co-designing inclusive, aesthetic, and sustainable public spaces, often drawing from local culture and heritage.
- Cyprus (Frederick University): conducted both in Limassol Old Town and on campus, the sessions involved hands-on observation of urban dynamics and space reuse. Teams analyzed public and semi-public areas to identify issues related to accessibility, identity, and ecological sustainability.
- Greece (KMOP): sessions were held in Athens, combining in-person workshops at the KMOP Social Action and Innovation Centre with online activities. The focus was on digital interpretation of inclusive design and its role in community spaces, with special emphasis on educator training.
- Lithuania (KK): workshops took place at the „Pelėdų kalnas“ gallery and nearby green parkland — both state-protected zones with strong cultural and historical value. Participants explored the non-commercial use of a heritage site for local people, academia, foreigners, people with disabilities and other needs..

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Photo 1-3: Workshop at FredU Campus and Old Town of Limassol (Frederick University, Cyprus)

Workshop goals

The workshops were guided by a set of shared goals closely aligned with the principles of the New European Bauhaus (NEB). Central to their purpose was the integration of NEB values—sustainability, inclusion, and aesthetics—not merely as abstract concepts, but as active elements embedded within each design challenge. It is important that students take the knowledge they have gained from the microcredentials course and put it into practice in the experimental workshop. Participants of the pilot workshops were encouraged to operationalize these principles, ensuring they shaped both the process and the outcomes of their work.

A strong emphasis was placed on fostering collaborative and critical thinking. Through team-based activities, learners were required to collectively define problems and co-create meaningful solutions, reinforcing the importance of dialogue and shared responsibility in the design process. At the same time, the workshops acted as experimental grounds for developing micro-credentials—modular, skills-oriented learning formats that could be formally recognized and scaled across educational institutions.

Equally important was the support of learner agency. By combining structured guidance with space for personal reflection, the workshops enabled participants to actively shape their own learning journeys, aligning with the broader goal of empowering individuals within flexible and learner-centered educational ecosystems.

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Photo 4: The DIGITAL TOOLS workshop (KMOP, Greece)

Photo 5: Workshop (MateraHub, Italy)

Tools and forms used

A harmonized set of design tools was adapted in all participating countries to suit specific local conditions and student needs. While the tools themselves were shared, each setting shaped how they were implemented, ensuring relevance and responsiveness. The toolkit featured a diverse range of materials and platforms that supported creativity, collaboration, and reflection throughout the learning and design process.

- **Visual thinking tools** such as flipcharts, sticky notes, large A0 paper sheets, moodboards and mockups created using SketchUp or Photoshop were widely used to visualize thoughts and facilitate group ideation.

- **Mapping techniques** like stakeholder or movement maps and contextual diagrams helped participants identify key actors and understand the broader ecosystem of the problems they were addressing.

- A variety of **digital platforms** supported both in-person and remote collaboration. KunstMatrix enabled immersive 3D visualizations, Google Meet facilitated virtual meetings and workshops, and Miro provided a shared digital space for co-creation and brainstorming.

- For **prototyping**, participants relied on accessible materials—paper, markers, tracing paper and basic physical model-making tools—allowing for rapid sketching and iteration. To capture and reflect on progress, **feedback and documentation tools** were used, including evaluation forms, observation worksheets, photos, videos, and field notes.

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At the same time, these measures encouraged creative thinking and multi-faceted learning, guiding participants through a process that smoothly transitioned from gathering insights and opinions to concept creation and constructive idea development.

Target groups

The seminars involved a variety of participants, but students played a key role in exploring and applying the principles of the New European Bauhaus (NEB). For example museum visitors in Matera were also involved and introduced to the ideas of sustainability, inclusivity and aesthetics through practical activities and discussions about the design of their local urban spaces. University students, like in Cyprus and Lithuania, developed ideas by working with sprint design/design thinking tools and methods, conducting group analysis, space diagnostics, and creating conceptual solutions in response to real-world challenges.

At the same time, educators and specialists not only participated in the workshops, but also evaluated students' ideas and proposals, offered possible solutions and comments, and considered how inclusive design could be integrated into their teaching practices or community activities.

In addition, local residents, community members, and cultural sector stakeholders actively participated in interviews, observations, and structured feedback cycles, ensuring that new design ideas were grounded in real local needs and experiences. This inclusive approach strengthened the relevance and impact of the workshops, with students becoming the center of learning, experimentation, and meaningful engagement.

Photo 6: Workshop in gallery “Pelėdų kalnas” (Kauno kolegija, Kaunas, Lithuania)

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Part II – Consolidated Analysis and Recommendations

Results and learning outcomes

Across all four countries workshops showed high levels of participant engagement and learning, particularly in tasks that allowed exploration of NEB values through real-world problems. Participants used the knowledge gathered from “Futures Designed“ micro-credential courses, developed critical and creative thinking by engaging in human-centered and collaborative design activities, with local relevance and sustainable impact.

In Cyprus university students worked on real urban accessibility challenges in Limassol’s historic center. Their analysis led to specific proposals, such as modifying uneven pavements and rethinking pedestrian paths, reflecting a growing understanding of inclusive design and public usability. They also used observational worksheets and mapping to capture the spatial experiences of users.

In Italy students from higher education institutions have converted abandoned educational buildings into multifunctional community centers. Their work included detailed sketches, moodboards and material analysis, showing not only creativity but also a practical application of NEB values. They used visual tools to simulate transformation scenarios and incorporated feedback from their school peers and educators.

In Greece participants were involved in hybrid-format sessions that emphasized the role of digital design tools in fostering inclusivity. Through case-based scenarios and digital journey maps, they created mockups of educational spaces that promote accessibility and learner engagement. The participants highlighted the value of integrating inclusive design in their own future teaching practices.

In Lithuania students explored the cultural, historical and ecological layers of „Pelėdų kalnas“, a protected green site in Kaunas. Their solutions focused on minimal interventions that would preserve the integrity of the environment while improving its use as a public, educational, and cultural space. The ideas included accessibility, paths, quiet rest areas, and interactive art installations.

Participants across all countries responded positively to stakeholder mapping and journey mapping, noting that these tools helped them better understand user needs and systemic challenges. These practices encouraged empathy, structure and user-centered creativity in the design process. In Greece, educators created prototypes for inclusive educational spaces using digital tools, while in Lithuania, attention was given to design-based solutions for the preservation of natural and cultural landscape.

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Photo 7: Workshop in museum (Museo di Palazzo Lanfranchi, Matera, Italy.)

Identified needs and challenges

The workshops highlighted a range of challenges that informed both short-term adjustments and longer-term considerations for micro-credential development. While overall participant engagement was strong, environmental, pedagogical, and logistical limitations occasionally hindered full effectiveness.

In Lithuania one of the main problems was the weather. Since the seminar research site, Pelėdų kalnas, is outdoors, the cold temperatures made it difficult to conduct long-term field observations and in-depth interviews with the public. This limited students' access to primary user data and reduced the time available for surveys and public engagement-based decision-making. Lithuanian moderators adapted the plan by assigning reflection tasks indoors and paying greater attention to materials, environmental values, and heritage-preserving design alternatives.

In Italy, students from higher education institutions highlighted the importance and value of teamwork. Participants' feedback emphasized that seminars encourage group communication and provide a space for expressing personal opinions. Students appreciated the opportunity to collaborate in identifying and reflecting on problems in their environment, such as aspects of their school that are not working well, and to think critically about possible improvements. They emphasized that it was challenging to observe their environment more closely, pay attention to details, openly share ideas, and discuss issues that are not usually addressed in higher education institutions.

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In Cyprus, participants faced challenges related to time and expression. Some participants had difficulty managing their time during the workshops, particularly when creating and refining their sketches. This was partly due to ambitious goals and the short creative period. In addition, although many students demonstrated strong conceptual thinking, some found it difficult to translate their ideas into visual form. There was a need for more advice on drawing techniques, spatial layout, and composition, with a foundation in visual communication training to be included in future workshops to ensure engagement regardless of skill level.

In Greece, the digital and blended nature of the seminar posed challenges in terms of consistency and participant progress. While the format provided flexibility, it also revealed differences in digital literacy among the participant group. As a result, participants' progress was uneven and collaboration between colleagues was not as smooth.

A recurring theme in all circumstances was uneven participation in groups. In some cases, stronger participants took over the tasks of generating or presenting ideas, while others were or became passive. This highlights the importance of clearer role distribution, mutual accountability mechanisms, and process checking throughout the workshops. In addition, different levels of design knowledge meant that some students progressed faster than others, requiring differentiated teaching or tiered tasks.

In summary, these observations indicate the need to:

- adapt workshop planning to the environmental conditions.

- prepare educators to respond to group dynamics and participant engagement

- simplify the tools used in remote or blended learning environments.

These needs highlight the importance of developing flexible and inclusive systems for future micro-credential workshops, ensuring that students and other learners from different contexts and with different skill levels have equal opportunities to contribute and benefit.

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Photo 8: First workshop in Matera (Istituto Carlo Levi, Irsina, Province of Matera, Italy)

Futures Designed educator toolkit

After evaluating the activities of the courses and workshops, the project partners developed the Futures Designed Educator Toolkit for educators who want to use the course materials and methodology. The Educator Toolkit is a comprehensive, openly accessible resource designed to help educators, especially those working in creative fields, integrate sustainability into their teaching practice. Published in several partner languages, the toolkit offers a structured approach to integrating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the New European Bauhaus (NEB), and the European Green Deal themes into micro-credential-based learning. Designed with adaptability in mind, it provides educators at different levels with practical tools, workshop guidelines, case studies, and research findings to promote innovative, sustainability-based education.

The toolkit includes key components such as needs analysis findings, insights into alternative learning spaces, ready-to-use teaching materials, teacher instructions, workshop guides, and real-life case studies.

Following its release, the Futures Designed Educator Toolkit was evaluated through structured feedback from educators, revealing a broadly positive reception. Respondents affirmed the toolkit's relevance, noting that it effectively addresses current educational needs and aligns with contemporary priorities in sustainability and design education. Many found that it introduced new perspectives and methods not previously available to them, while also praising the clarity and usability of the content, including its practical instructions and engaging materials.

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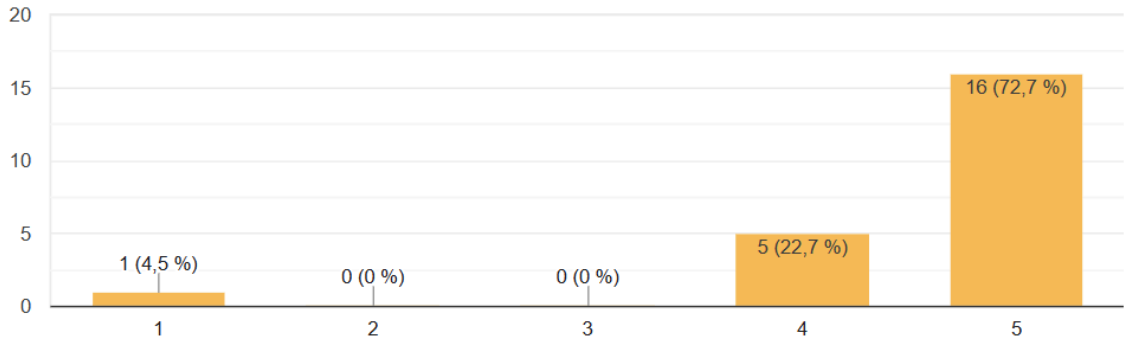
1/20. **The material produced within futures designed addresses important and timely educational needs**
Scale: Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree

22 atsakymai



18/20. **I would recommend this toolkit and the future Designed courses to colleagues.**
Scale for all: Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree

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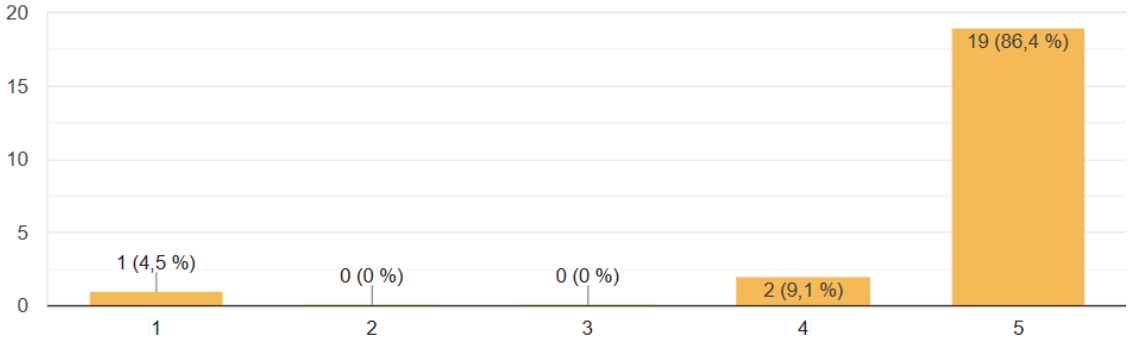

The overall structure and quality of the toolkit were seen as well-balanced, with case studies and workshop resources considered both relevant and appropriately detailed. Suggestions for improvement focused primarily on enhancing user experience through refinements in visual and structural design. These included clearer navigation via clickable tables of contents and page numbering, as well as improved visual hierarchy through consistent typography, increased white space, and a more cohesive graphic style.

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4/20. **The micro-credentials approach is suitable for integrating sustainability into teaching programmes.**
Scale: Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree

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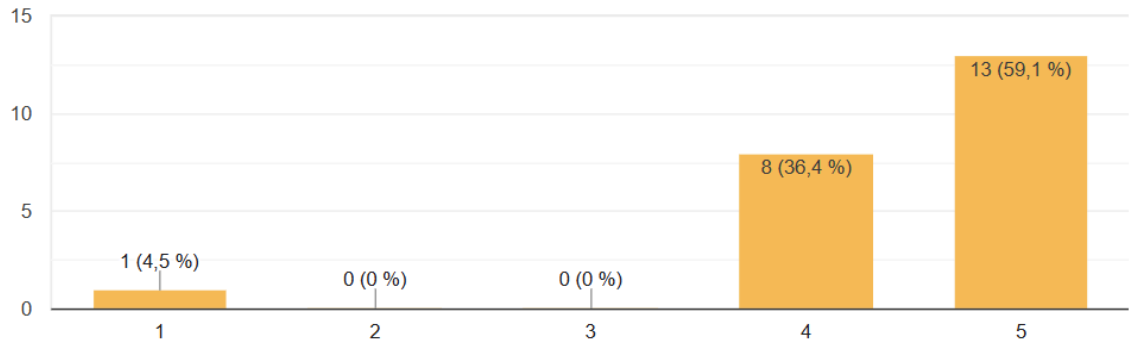

A small number of participants also recommended the inclusion of certificates as an added incentive, particularly in contexts where the toolkit is used outside formal curricular structures. While feedback emphasized the toolkit's strong foundation and practical value, respondents also highlighted that modest adjustments to layout and interactivity could further elevate its effectiveness and appeal.

Overall, the toolkit has been well received as a timely, practical, and insightful resource for educators striving to deliver sustainability-focused, creative education through flexible learning pathways.

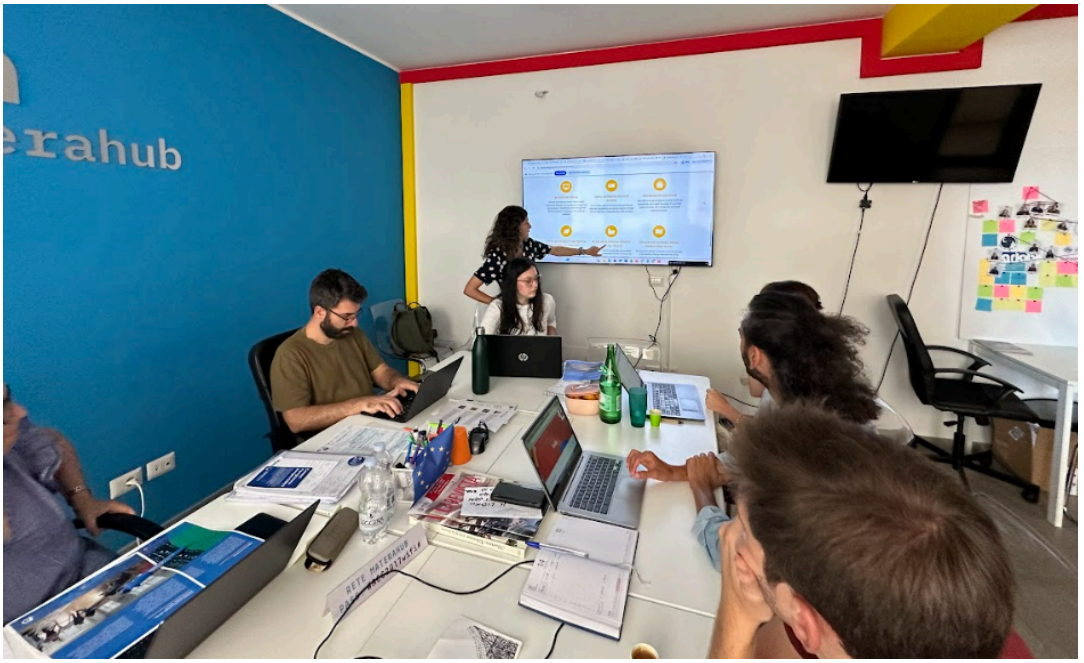

Photo 9: Toolkit workshop in MateraHub (Matera, Italy)

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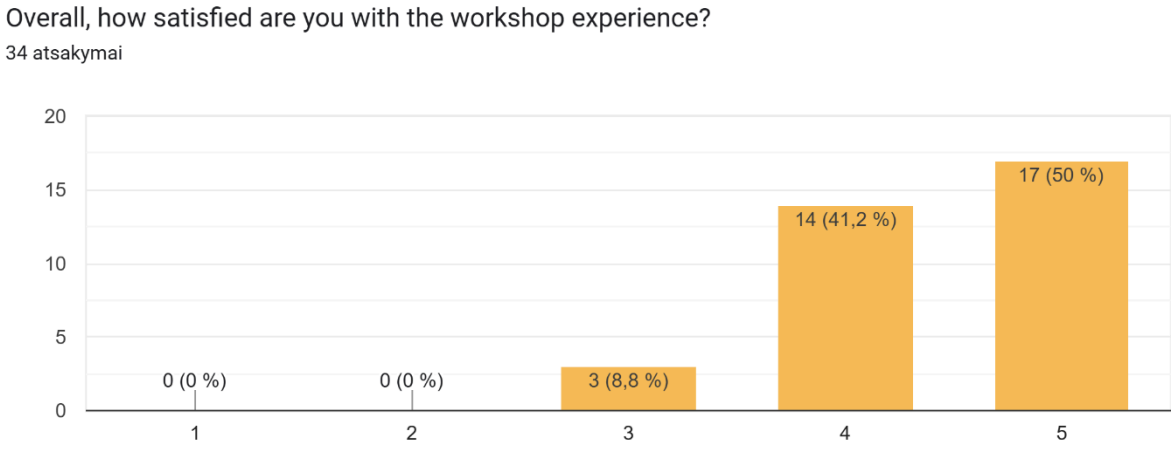
Post-Course and workshop survey overview

To evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the pilot workshops conducted across partner countries, a post-course survey was shared with participants. The aim was to gather feedback on learning outcomes, engagement with the New European Bauhaus (NEB) values, and overall workshop experience. The survey also sought to identify areas for improvement in future micro-credential course development.

The survey included both closed-ended Likert-scale questions and open-ended prompts, allowing participants to rate their experience and share qualitative insights. Responses were collected from a diverse group of learners, including secondary and university students, educators, and cultural professionals who had participated in learning process.

The feedback is instrument in shaping conclusions about workshop effectiveness, participant needs, and opportunities for refining course content and structure in alignment with NEB goals. The following information presents a summary of key findings and their implications for future course development. More than 70 people from the four partner countries participated in the survey.

Positive Participant Experience. The majority of responses [91%] indicated high satisfaction with the workshop structure, content, and facilitation. Participants felt the workshop contributed meaningfully to their understanding of NEB principles.



According to the survey, 78% of participants indicated that the workshops met or exceeded their expectations. This high satisfaction rate reflects the relevance of the workshop content, the effectiveness of facilitation, and the value of combining NEB principles with hands-on, real-world design tasks.

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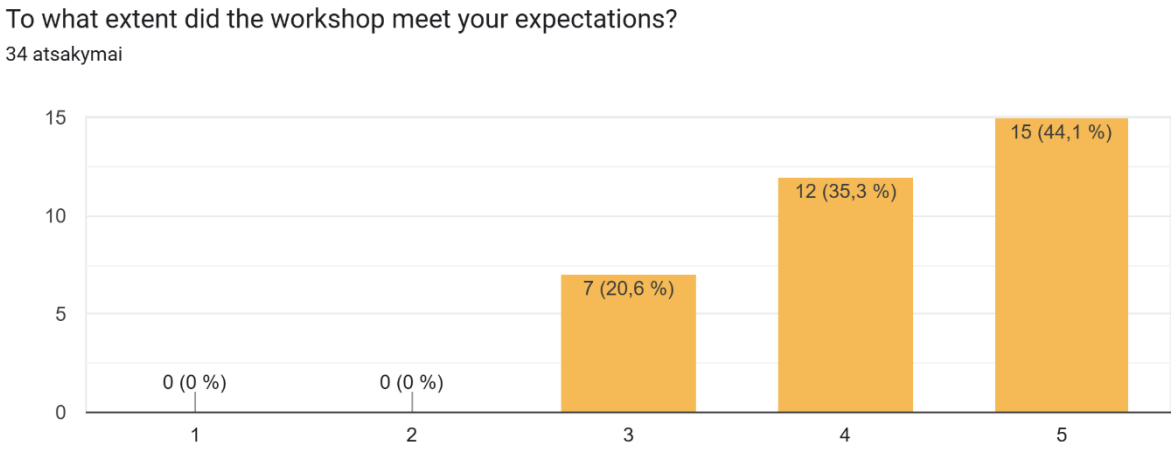
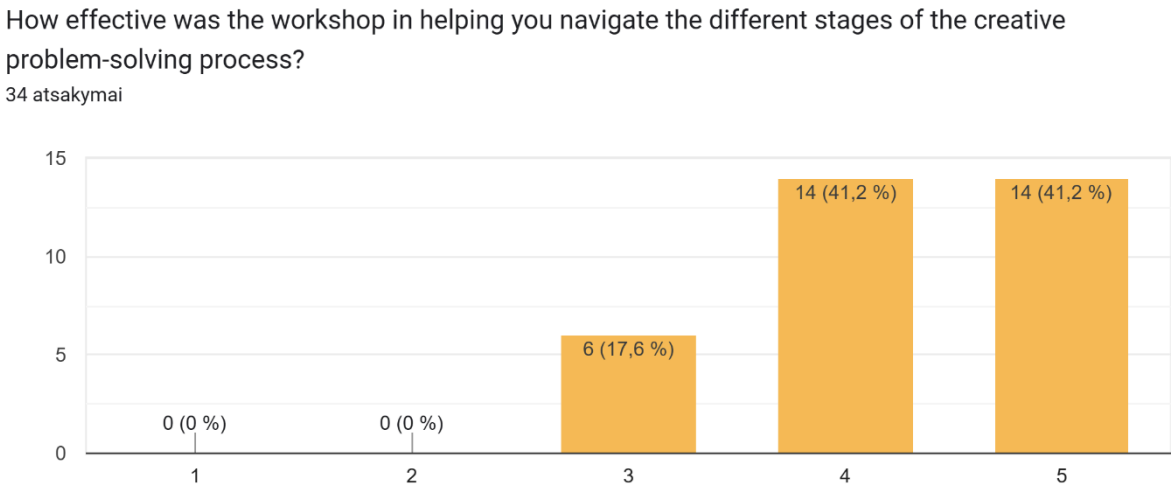


80% of participants reported being very satisfied or satisfied with how the workshop helped them navigate the stages of creative problem-solving, indicating strong alignment with the design thinking framework.



The balance between group and individual work was rated highly effective by the majority of respondents, with 80% expressing strong satisfaction. This suggests the blended structure supported diverse working styles.

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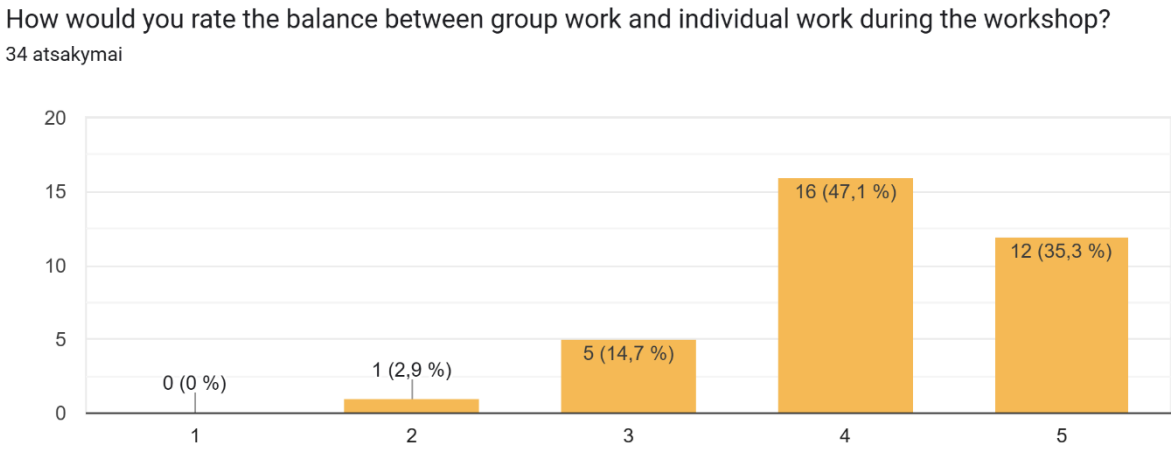
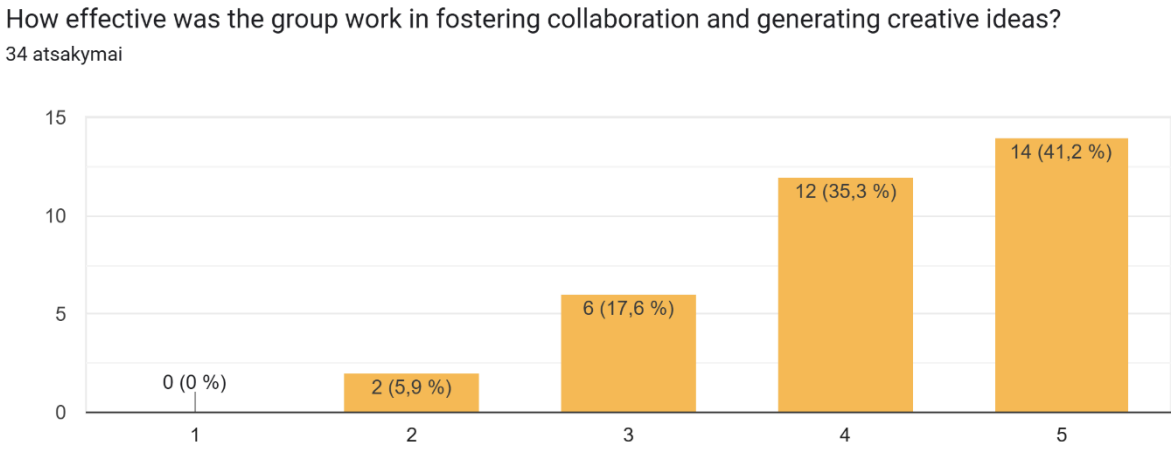


Participants highlighted several key benefits of group work, emphasizing the importance of collaboration in the design process. They noted that working in teams helped them learn how to collaborate effectively and solve problems together. The process of combining diverse ideas and perspectives enriched the outcomes and fostered creativity. Reaching consensus and developing shared themes strengthened group cohesion, while mutual support and teamwork created a sense of unity and collective purpose. These insights underscore the value of peer collaboration as a central element of meaningful and inclusive design learning.



Participants valued the individual work component of the workshop for the flexibility and autonomy it offered. They appreciated the opportunity to plan and reflect independently, allowing them to develop their ideas without time pressure. Many highlighted the benefit of working at their own pace and within their own time zone, which supported deeper thinking and creativity. The chance to experiment with tools like SketchUp further enhanced their ability to explore and visualize concepts on their own terms.

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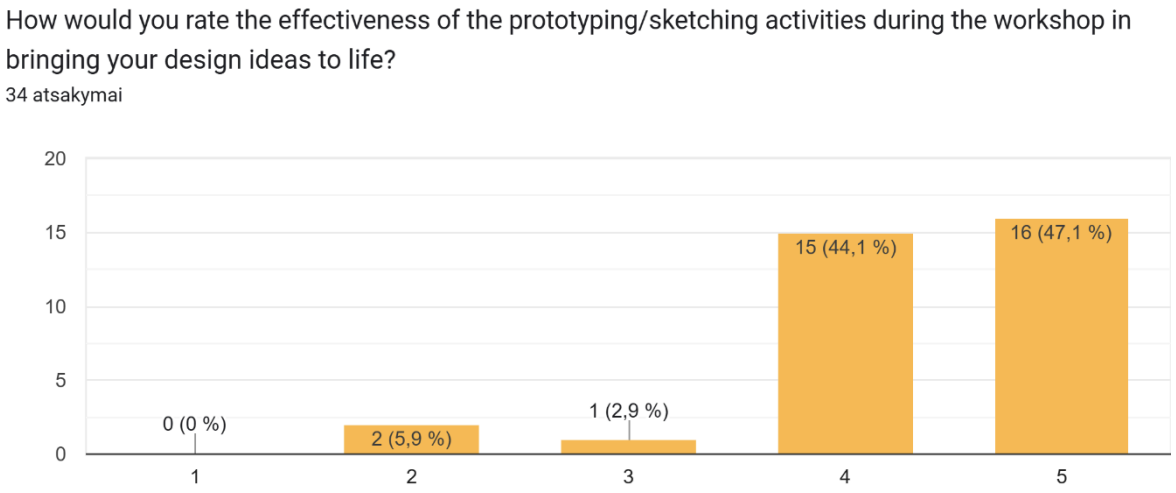
90% of respondents found the prototyping and sketching activities to be very effective in helping them visualize and communicate their design ideas. This reinforces the importance of visual thinking tools in design education.



The participants in the survey provided valuable suggestions for enhancing future workshops. They emphasized the importance of ensuring equal participation within groups, recommending clearer role distribution and accountability. Additionally, they highlighted the need for more continuous support from facilitators, particularly during complex tasks or ideation phases. Participants also expressed a desire to broaden the thematic scope of workshops, allowing for deeper and more diverse exploration.

Looking ahead, there was strong interest in expanding content to include topics such as interior design styles, nature-integrated design, and the use of plants in space-making. To enrich engagement, participants suggested incorporating more interactive and multimedia elements—like videos, quizzes, and visually rich materials. Finally, several responses indicated a preference for including not only public, but also commercial or hybrid spatial contexts, pointing toward a more versatile and real-world-oriented approach in future workshop development.

Micro-credential recommendations and practical steps for future workshops

The pilot workshops across partner countries generated targeted insights into how micro-credentials can be effectively designed, delivered, organized. These learnings point to key content areas and delivery strategies that align with NEB values and meet the diverse needs of learners.

One of the core recommendations is to focus micro-credentials around thematic content areas that proved successful in the pilots:

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One of the main recommendations is to focus microcredit courses and workshops on relevant and practical activities:

- **Inclusive design**: includes elements such as stakeholder surveys, accessibility audits, and user experience evaluation. This was particularly relevant when students evaluated real public spaces in terms of inclusivity and accessibility.

- **Understanding materials and sustainability**: the workshops emphasized working with environmentally friendly, sustainable, and sensitive materials. These elements help students connect ecological responsibility with aesthetic decisions.

- **Collaborative design and communication**: in all countries, teamwork and visual communication have become key skills. The value of creating shared narratives and visual boards helps design ideas to be expressed, evaluated, and critiqued.

In terms of form, micro-credential courses should be:

- Modular, allowing learners to progress gradually and easily.
- Mixed, combining individual work, independent tasks, and collaborative group work.
- Reflective, incorporating feedback cycles, prototype evaluations, and repetition phases.
- Qualifying, with clear learning outcomes and expert assessments.

Photo 8: Presentation of workshop results (Kaunas, Lithuania)

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Reflection and finalization

In order to effectively implement these recommendations, several practical steps should be followed when preparing and conducting workshops in the future:

- Workshops should be organized based on sprint design, a design thinking methodology, while maintaining flexibility, speed, and the ability to adapt to different cultural and environmental conditions.

- Use real environments, such as city streets, schoolyards, commercial structures or cultural heritage sites, as living laboratories to link theory and practice.

- Develop a well-structured but flexible activity schedule that allows time for reflection, repetition, and feedback.

- Ensure access to both analog tools (sketching, prototyping, mapping) and digital tools (collaboration platforms, visualization software) to meet diverse learning needs.

- Train facilitators not only in technical content but also in inclusive, multidisciplinary team management, providing differentiated guidance where necessary.

These recommendations form a blueprint for developing accessible, adaptable, and micro-credential-based learning experiences that are in line with the objectives of the New European Bauhaus.

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