

A Survey regarding The EAA Code of Practice for Fieldwork Training

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The EAA adopted its Code of Practice for Fieldwork Training at its Annual Meeting in 2004 in Lyon. When at EAA 2015 Glasgow, the Committee on the Teaching and Training of Archaeologists (CTTA) decided to examine practical skills training in archaeology at its RT at EAA 2016 Vilnius (for the results of this, see separate report), it seemed like a good idea to conduct a survey to assess to what extent that Code of Practice was known to and complied with by EAA members. A survey form was created and the survey advertised in TEA 46, Autumn 2015. The survey, incidentally, is still open, should any EAA member who has not heard about it before be interested in still completing it. It can be found under <http://surveygoldcloud.com/s/70026159A5B546DD/36.htm>.

The survey was aimed at providing a basis of discussion for the CTTA's RT and for more specific work on reviewing the Code of Practice for Fieldwork Training in the inter-conference period between EAA Vilnius 2016 and Maastricht 2017. This work will be ongoing for the next few months on the CTTA's community webpage.

Despite having been advertised in TEA, the response rate to the survey sadly was not overly good: in total, only 45 responses were received. While this is too little to be truly statistically representative, the responses nonetheless did reproduce some interesting results, a summary of which is the purpose of this report.

Perhaps the most significant results of this small survey are that the Code of Practice for Fieldwork Training, despite being one of only 3 such Codes formally adopted by the EAA, is not very well known, and compliance is relatively low even among those who know about it. Of the 45 respondents, a whopping 17 (38%) had never heard of it, with another 10 (22%) aware of its existence, but never actually having looked at it. A mere 13% of respondents stated they knew it well (fig. 1). The figures for compliance were similarly low (fig. 2): 13% said they didn't know it and didn't care, 49% they didn't know it but at least planned on looking it up. Only 7% said they complied completely, 11% mostly, with the remaining 17% saying they complied only partly, or even not at all.

Hints that there are a series of problems with some fieldwork training were also identified through more specific questions, the answering of which was optional.

For instance, the CoP states clearly what kinds of information training providers should give to participants of fieldwork courses. Yet, almost a third of the respondents (30%) stated that other than the time, date and location of the training course, no information was being provided. Many of the information the CoP requires trainers to give to participants was only made available by a small number of providers; e.g. information on the qualified staff to student ratio by as few as 7% of all respondents (fig. 3).

Other serious issues highlighted are that at least some percentage of fieldwork training projects do not seem to be fully insured (fig. 4), with even 2 formal and one informal training providers answering this question with a plain no. Similarly, not all projects seem to be fully compliant with all legal requirements (fig. 5), nor seems due concerns always be given to the local socio-political

environment (fig. 6), or even only to the preservation of the archaeology examined during the fieldwork training programme (fig. 7).

Perhaps even more concerning is the fact that a considerable number of individuals who responded about their own personal experiences as participants in fieldwork training felt that at least sometimes, if not mostly, students had been exploited as cheap labour during their fieldwork training (fig 8). Particularly concerning in this context is the marked difference in the perception of training providers, hardly any of which felt students were being exploited, and the participants themselves, a majority of whom felt they had at least sometimes been exploited, if not regularly. This problem is further exacerbated by the fact that while the majority of training providers feel they inform participants about formal complaints procedures at least most of the time, a clear majority of participants feel they have not been sufficiently been informed about possibilities to raise formal complaints, if at all (fig. 9).

While the overall number of responses was too low to produce statistically reliable results for national comparisons, what was received seem to hint at a number of inconsistencies in both affordability and amount of practical training received, both within particular countries and in a transnational comparison. For instance, in Germany, fieldwork training seems to be relatively easily affordable to students, while in Italy, it seems mostly unaffordable (fig. 10); with comparable results for a separate question regarding objective costs of fieldwork training rather than subjective affordability for the individual participants. While where costs are concerned, discrepancies mainly seem to be visible in transnational comparisons, where the length of practical training received seems to vary hugely even within individual countries (fig. 11). Where the length of the training received is concerned, this can vary from under a week to more than 6 months even within a single country, which highlights the fact that there seems to be a complete absence of minimum standards.

These facts – that there seems to be little awareness of and limited compliance with the EAA CoP for Fieldwork Training, that there are considerable problems in some regards like documentation provided, insurance of projects, concern for the local socio-political environment and the preservation of archaeology, exploitation of students and lack of formal feedback mechanisms and complaints procedures, as well as considerable differences in cost and affordability of fieldwork training and training hours – raise several difficult questions.

If more than half of European archaeologists unaware of the EAA's CoP for Fieldwork Training, is there a point of having such a CoP at all? If yes, how do we make European Archaeologists more aware of it? if no, should EAA abolish it completely?

Given that there seem to be many issues with compliance, what use is a CoP if there are no apparent consequences for non-compliance? Should we create a system for penalising non-compliance? Or should this be a job for institution like the ClfA? If the latter, should we suggest to ClfA to work more strongly towards establishing international minimum standards for archaeological fieldwork training?

Indeed it raises the question as to whether the current CoP is fit for purpose? If no, we must consider changing it, and how to change it? Or do we need standards and guidelines for fieldwork training like those of RPA (<http://rpanet.org/?FieldschoolGuides>), or should we adopt theirs?

These questions will also be one focus of the inter-conference work of the CTTA on its community pages on the EAA's website (also see the CTTA's separate report in this TEA). All EAA members who have an interest in this topic are warmly invited to join the CTTA community and contribute their thoughts and ideas to the CTTA's ongoing discussions on this topic.

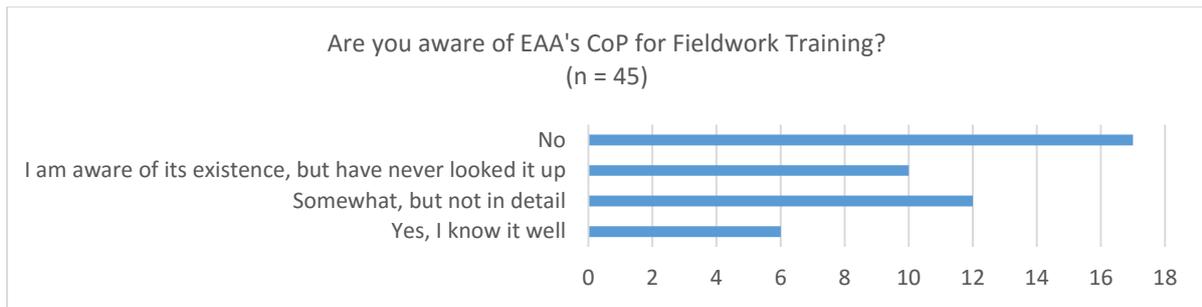


Fig. 1: Awareness of EAA CoP for Fieldwork Training.

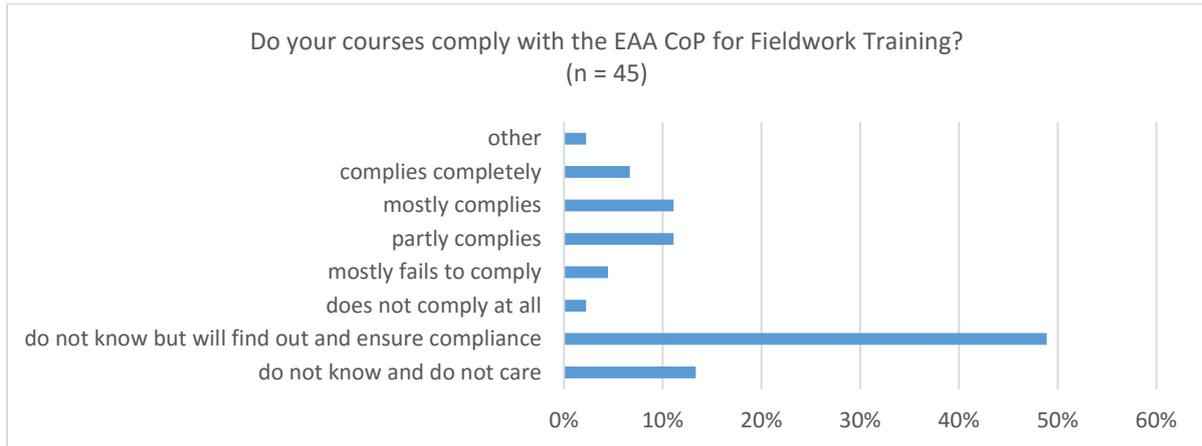


Fig. 2: General compliance with EAA CoP for Fieldwork Training.

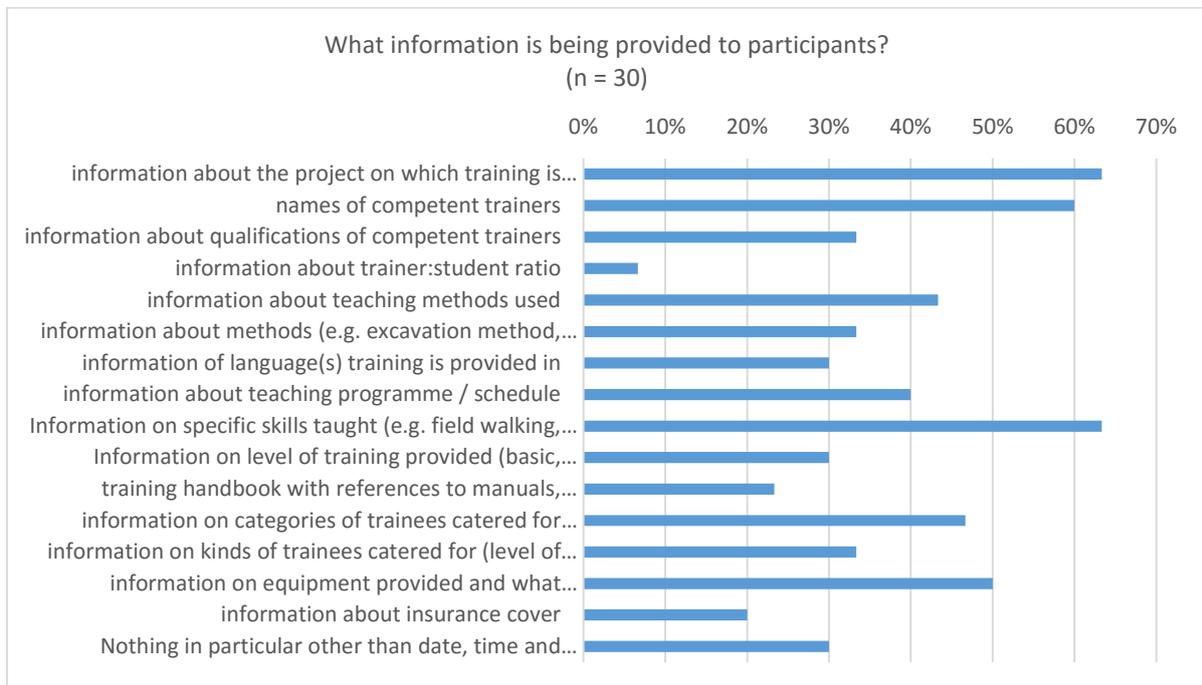


Fig. 3: Information provided to participants by training providers.

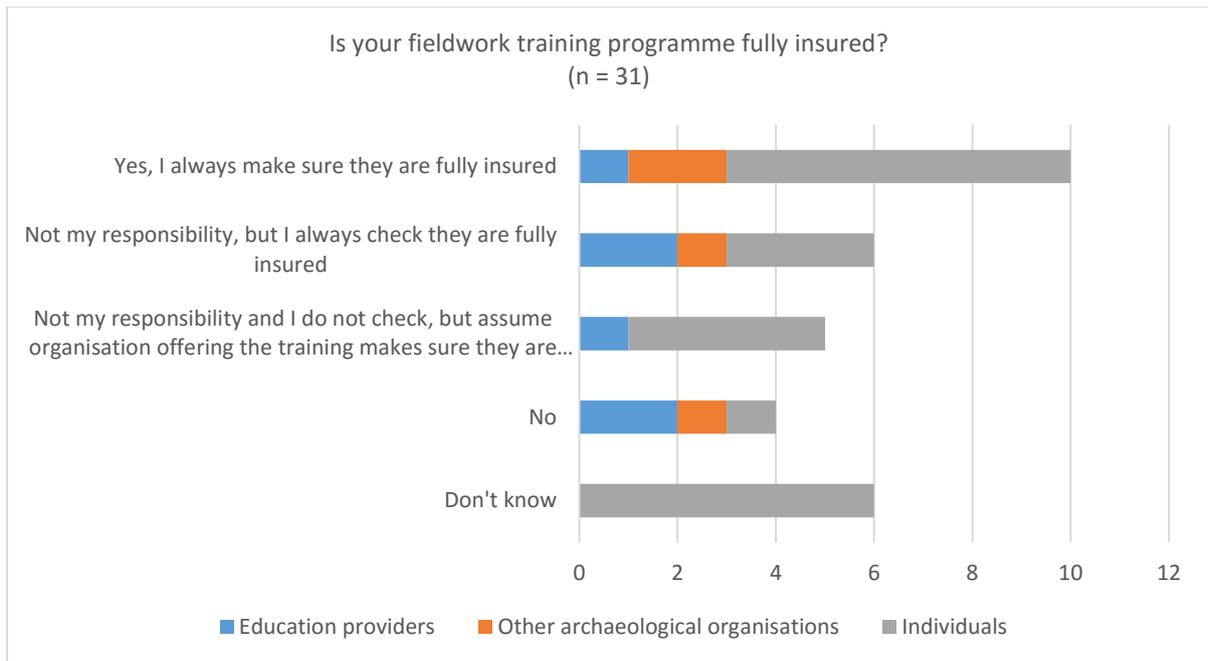


Fig. 4: Insurance status of fieldwork training projects.

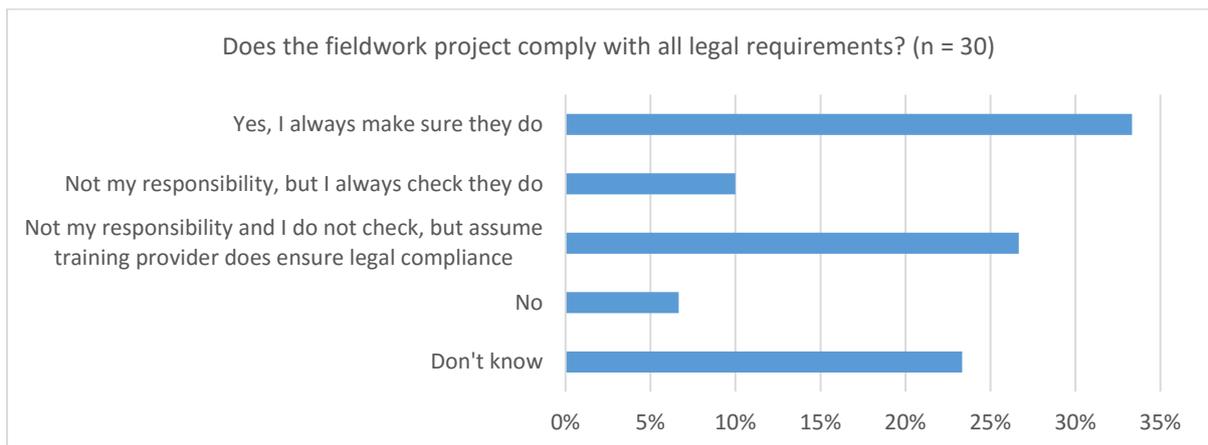


Fig. 5: Compliance with legal requirements.

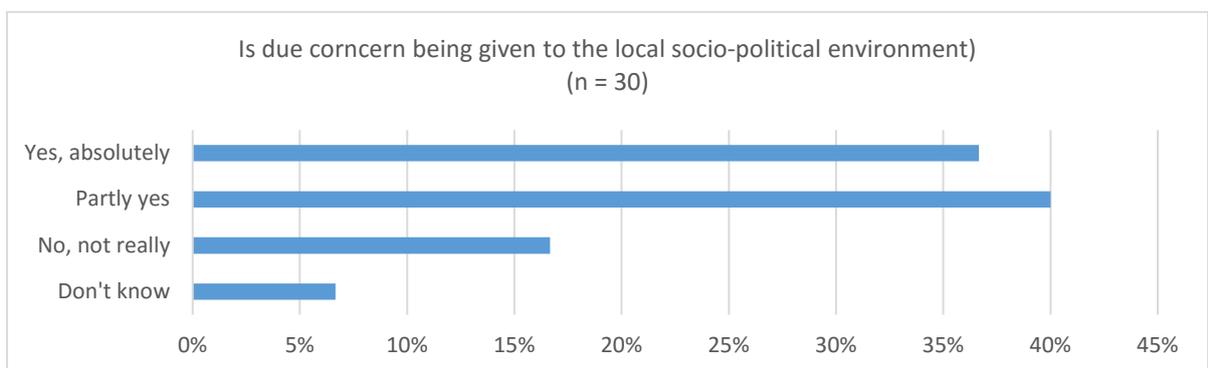


Fig. 6: Due concern given to local socio-political environment.

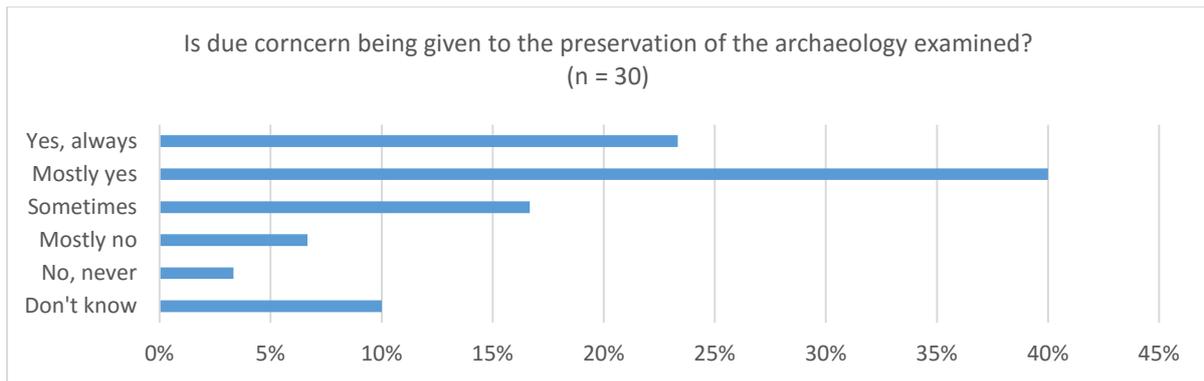


Fig. 7: Due concern given to preservation of archaeology.

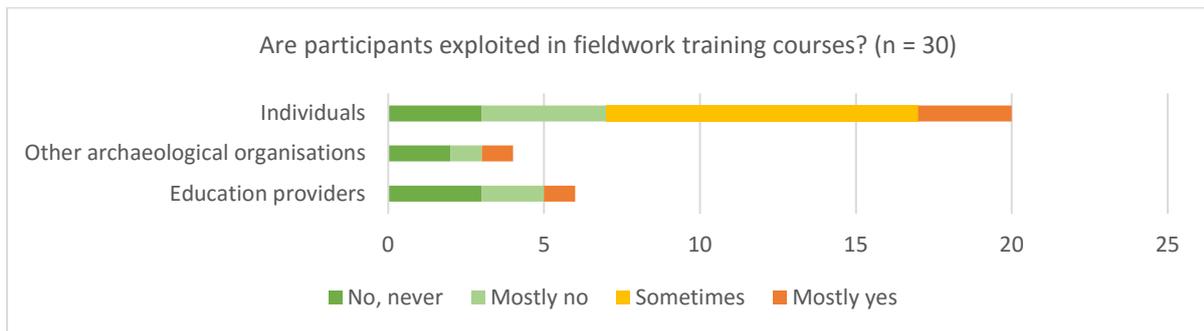


Fig. 8: Participant exploitation.

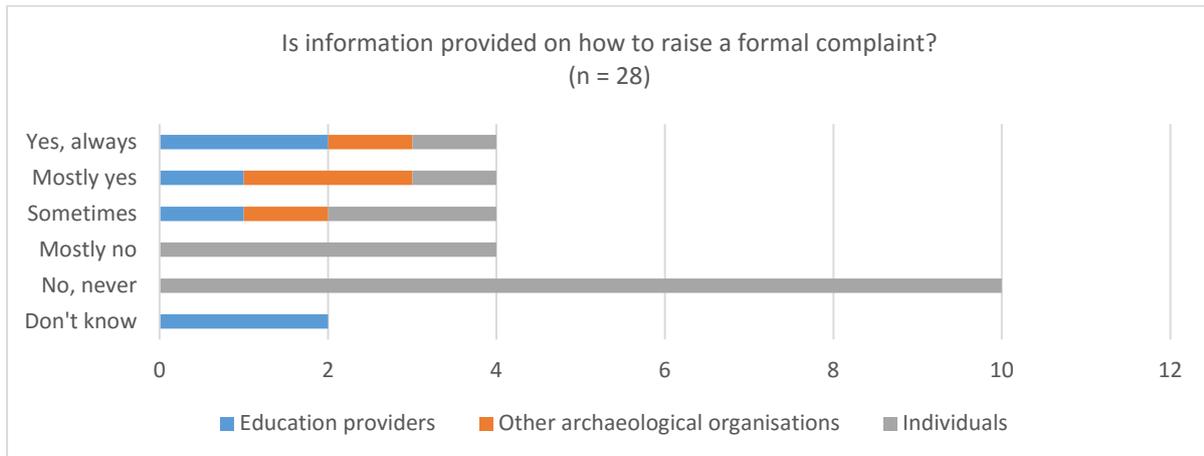


Fig. 9: Information about formal complaints procedure.

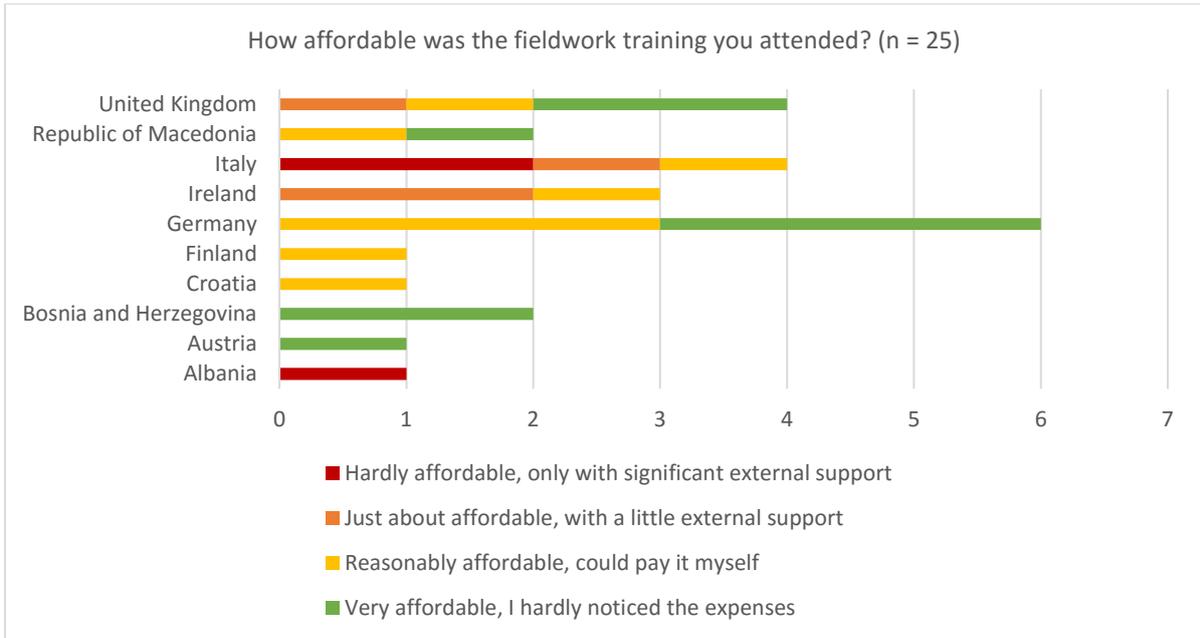


Fig. 10: Affordability of fieldwork training to students.

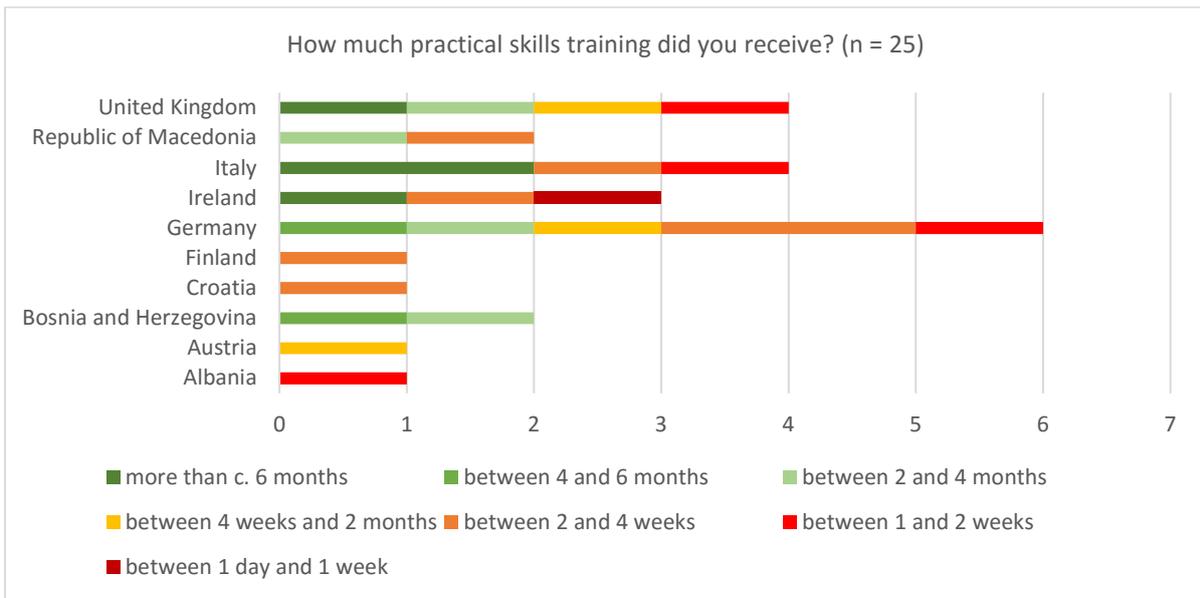


Fig. 11: Amount of practical skills training received.