



Reading Nest - A shared project of Estonia, Finland and Latvia for developing the pedagogy of reading environments

Maria Jürimäe, Kadi Lukanenok, Meeli Pandis
(Estonia);

Juli-Anna Aerila, Merja Kauppinen,
Pehr-Olof Rönholm and Ann Sofie Selin (Finland);

Sandra Kalnina (Latvia)

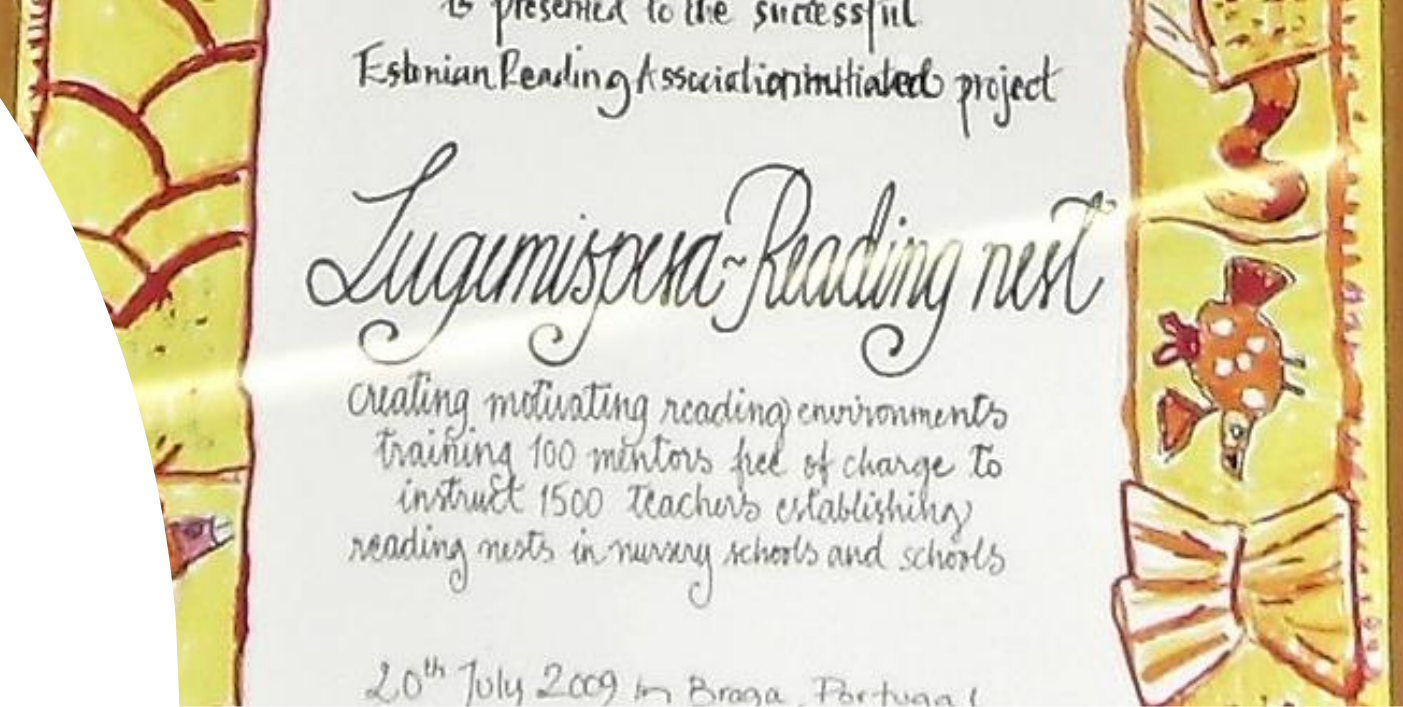
Roots and aims

- Idea from ISSA (International Step by Step Association) practice of activity centers on the Kindergartens. Start in Estonia 2004
- **Aimed to establish, promote and activate, update with new ideas and teaching methods reading corners in Kindergartens, schools, libraries, homes**
- To strengthen cooperation on local level (educational institutions, parents, community) state level (sharing information, ideas, success between schools, kindergartens, universities, local governments)
- International project 2021-2023 (Estonia, Finland, Latvia) NordPlus Horizontal



FELA Award for Innovative Literacy Project in Europe

recipient Anneli
Laaman, and IDEC
chairperson Ann-
Sofie Selin in Braga
Portugal 2009 at
the 16th European
Conference



Reading Nest as a physical learning environment

- Is separated from other rooms
- Has something soft in it (a carpet, cushions, armchair etc)
- Has a variety of publications (books, magazines, etc)
- Has games, toys and other things children might like
- Has means for creative work (paper, scissors, glue etc)
- Has means for creative games (finger puppets, costumes etc)
- Contains children's own creation (pictures, books etc)
- Is well lightened
- Is labeled as a Reading Nest



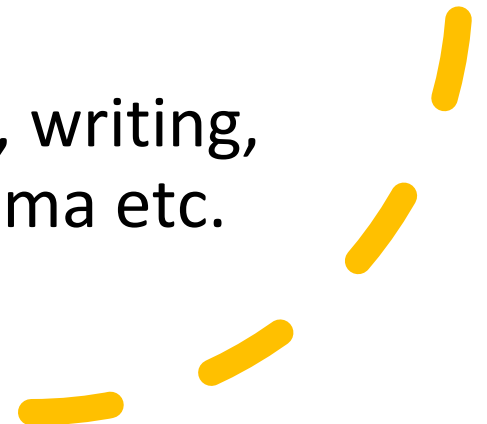
Reading Nest as a mental environment

- Positive attitude, an example and joy from collaboration – both peers and teachers
- Inclusive learning culture, acceptance of differences
- Recognition of every success and achievement
- Facilitation of children's initiatives and interests
- Setting and example in literacy
- Giving a support to linguistic, metalinguistic and general development
- Planned activities and set rules together



Reading Nest as activity center

- Children know where the reading nest is and use it
- Children enjoy being in the reading nest and doing something there
- A child can be on his/her own
- Possibility to work in pairs and groups
- Organized attractive activities for children
- All the books and other means are always available to children
- All kind of activities – reading, writing, drawing, crafting, singing, drama etc.



Reading Nest project activities

- Sharing materials online
lugemispesa.eu
Photos, videos, games, stories
- Reading Nest Handbook in English, Estonian, Latvian, Russian
- Reading Nest virtual map
- Posters and leaflets
- Study visits to Finland and Estonia
- Country specific activities
- Final seminar for sharing and planning
- Reading Nest research



International comparative research in Finland, Estonia and Latvia

- Finnish, Estonian and Latvian teachers' readership and their beliefs about literature education
- The meaning of Reading Nest activities to the teachers' development in literacy pedagogy
- The qualities of effective cognitive, affective, social, cultural and physical reading environments
- The research was lead by Turku, Jyväskylä, Tartu, Tallinn and Latvian Universities



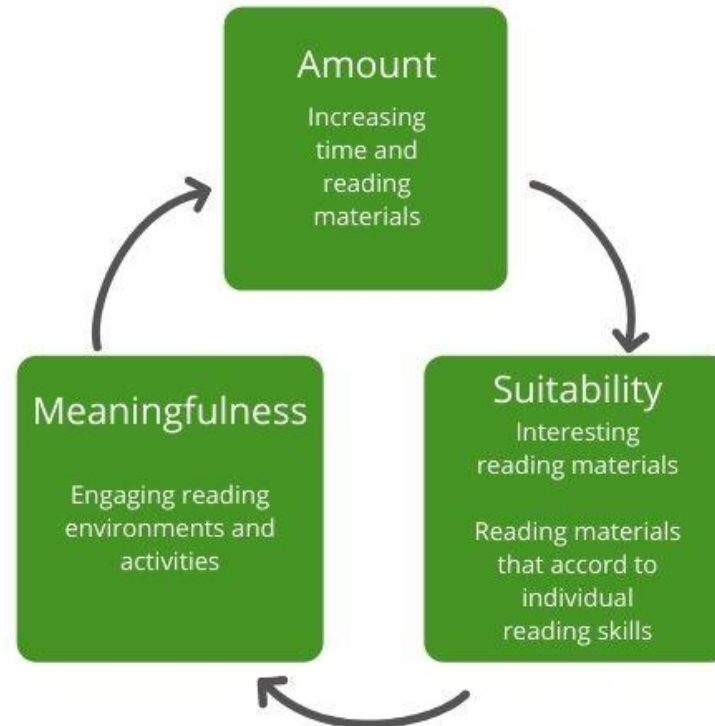
The research design

Teachers' questionnaire

Both qualitative and quantitative

Based on ASM-model by

Aerila and Kauppinen (2019)

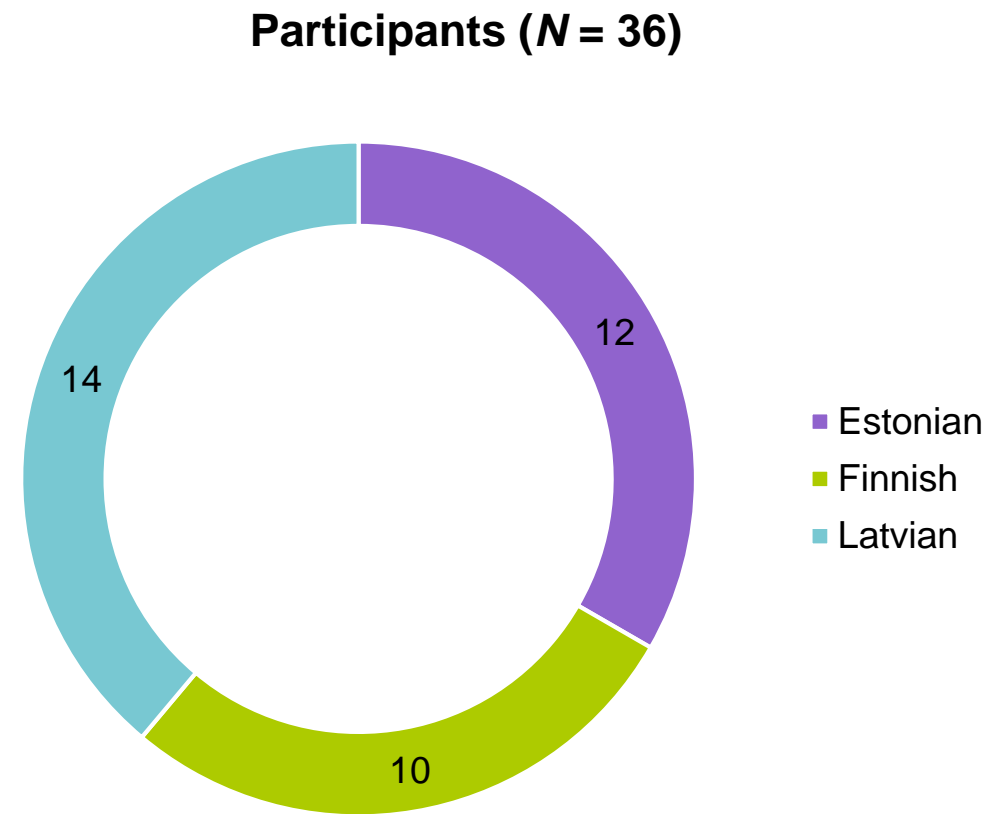


@TARU

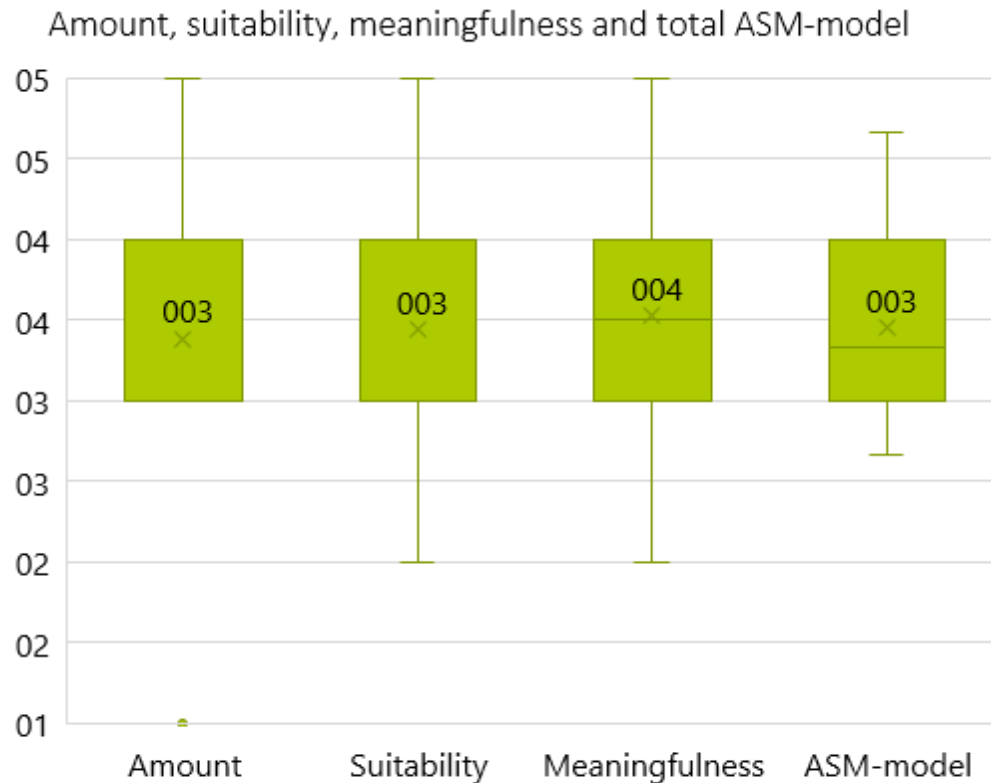


The Experiences of Reading Nest: Survey responses

- The Reading Nest projects were implemented by teachers in
 - Early childhood education
 - Preschool
 - Primary school
 - Middle school



The amount, suitability and meaningfulness of the reading materials have changed to some degree during the Reading Nest project



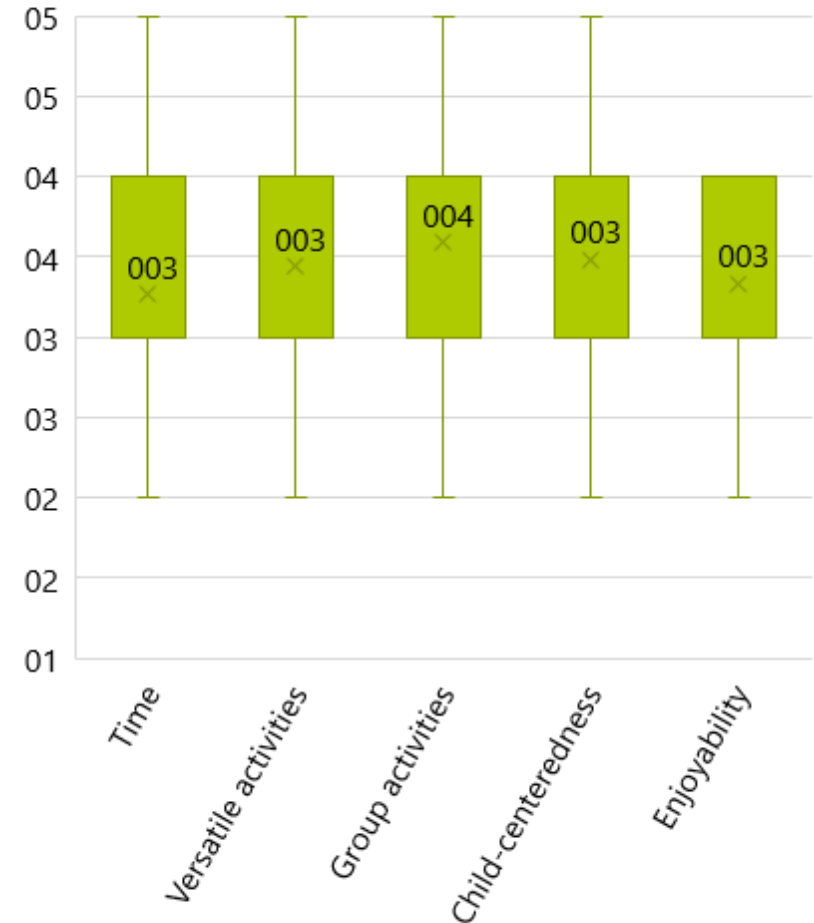
1 = Not at all, 2 = A little, 3 = Somewhat, 4 = Remarkably, 5 = A lot

► ASM-model (Aerila & Kauppinen, 2019)

- Amount
= The amount of reading materials available for children/students has increased.
- Suitability
= The selection of reading materials based on the children's literacy and language skills has increased.
- Meaningfulness
= The selection and coverage of reading materials has been increased in accordance to the interests of children.

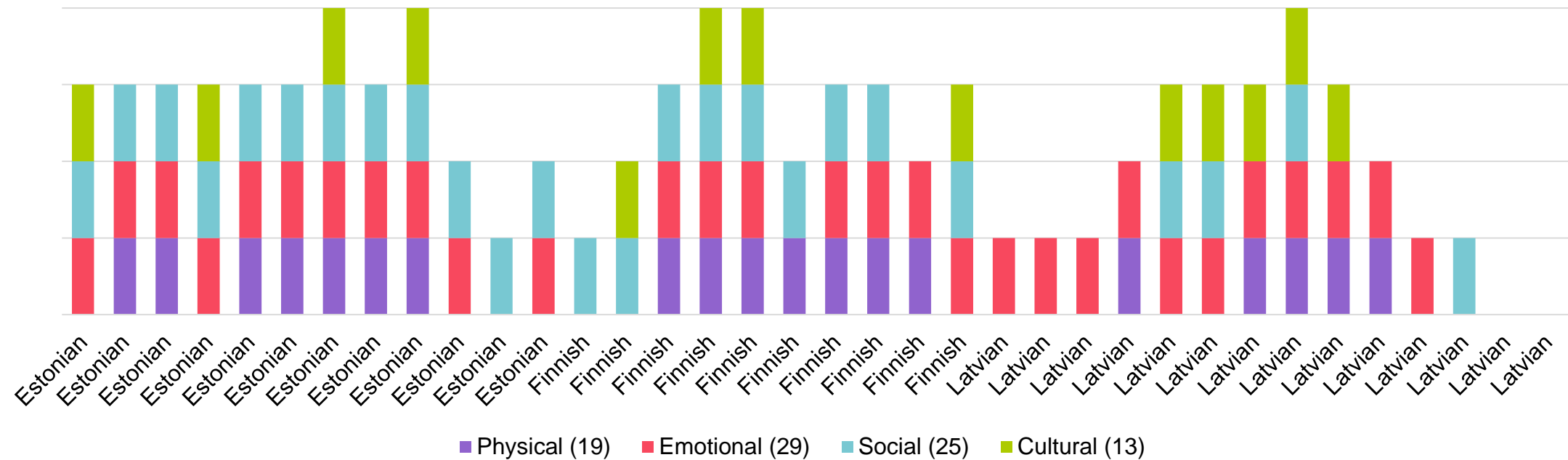
Reading practices have changed to some extent throughout the Reading Nest project

- The **time consumed in reading** in our group/class has increased.
- The **activities** for the reading materials are more **versatile**.
- The amount of **group activities** attached to reading materials has increased.
- The **freedom and child-centeredness** of the reading material -based activities have increased.
- The **meaningfulness and enjoyability** of reading moments have increased.

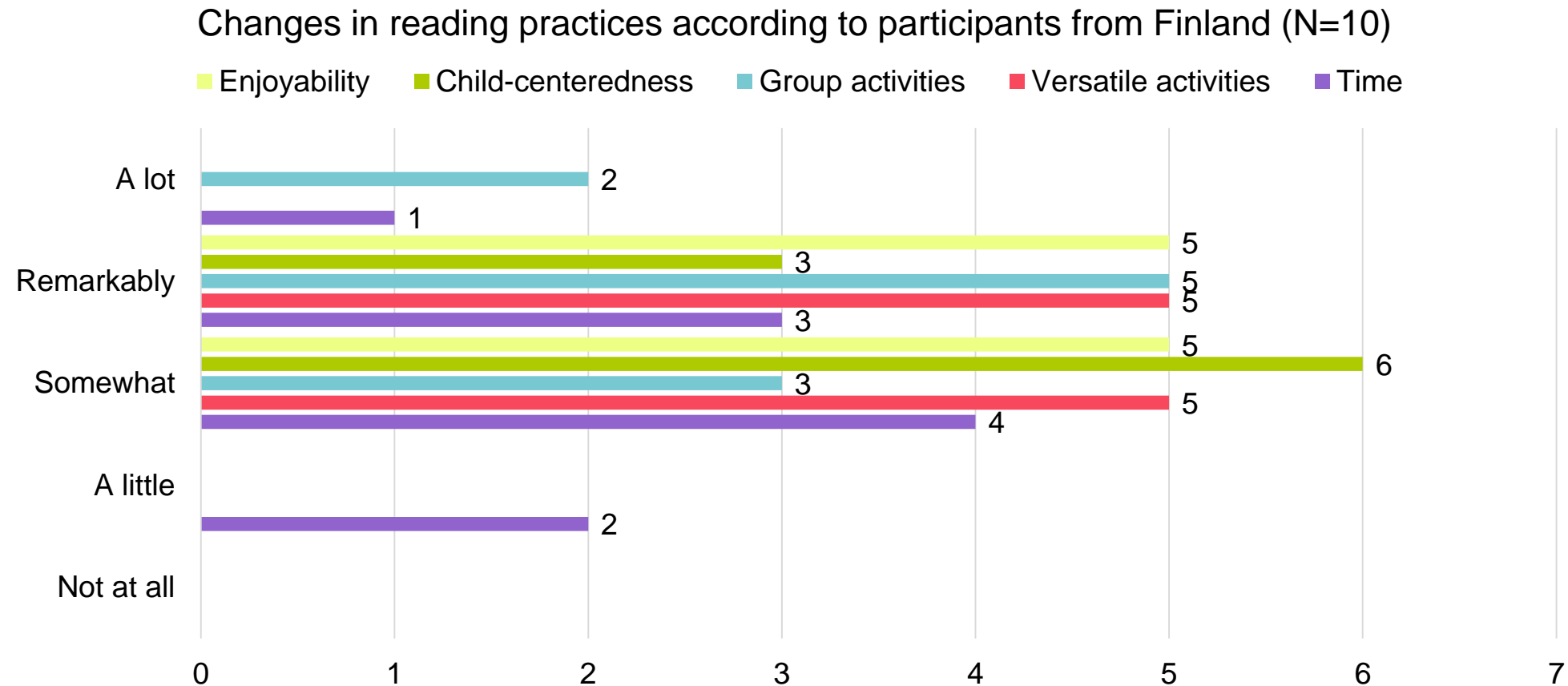


1 = Not at all, 2 = A little, 3 = Somewhat, 4 = Remarkably, 5 = A lot

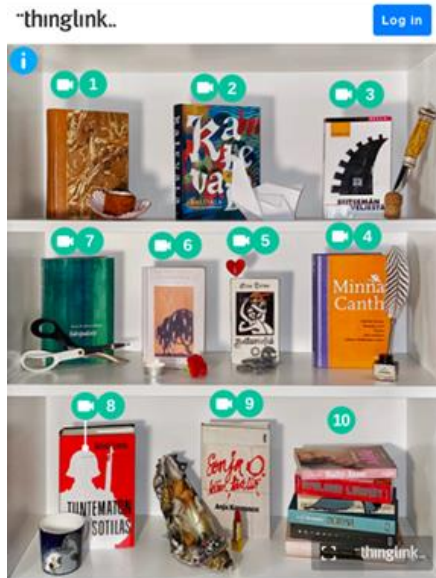
The reading environments that participants ($N = 36$) had chosen to focus on during the project: various combinations among the participants



Finnish teachers reflect on their experiences 1: interaction both with peers and with teacher support the development of reading practices in a class/group

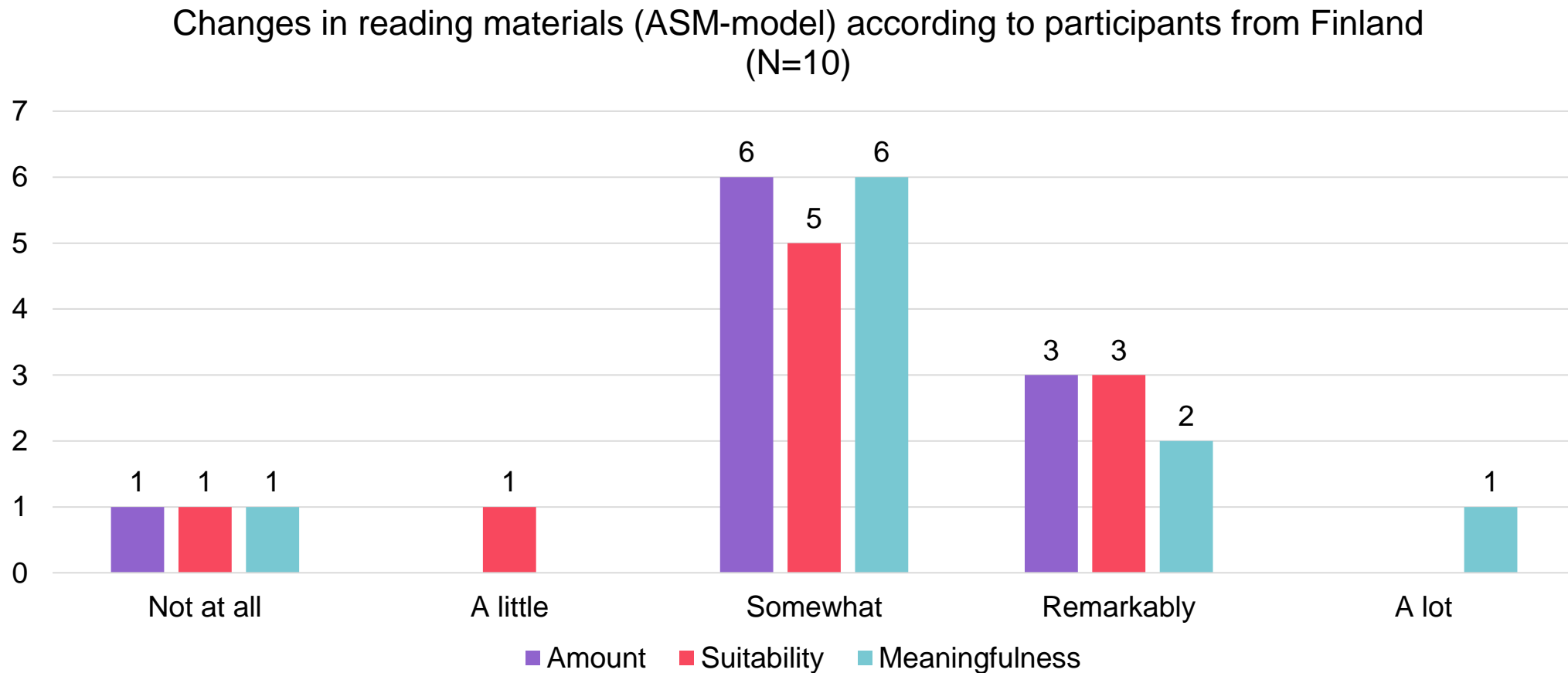


What did the participants do to accomplish changes in reading time, activities, child-centeredness and enjoyability?



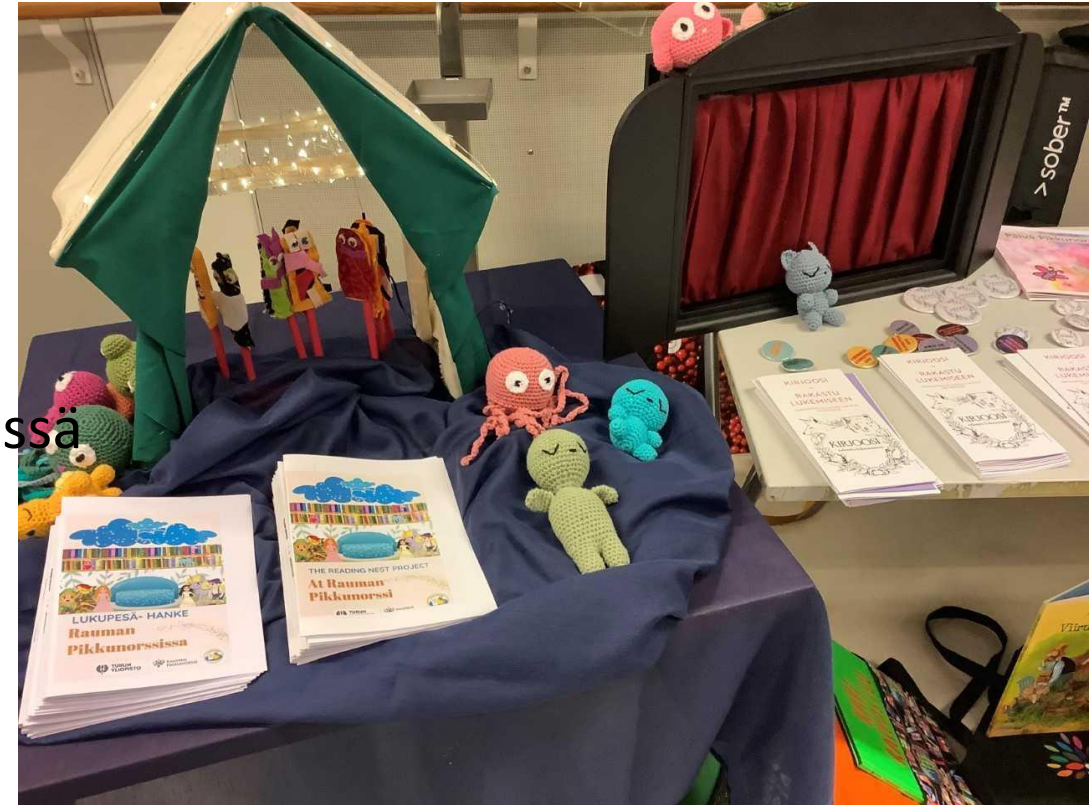
- ✓ Guide children to read with peers (Lukukaveritoiminta)
 - Increases interaction and being present in the moment
- ✓ Reading nests
- ✓ More books in the classroom
- ✓ Thorough elaborating of the text that has been read
 - Discussions about the books
- ✓ Assignments related to books
 - While implementing these practices, participants perceived that children seemed to be enthusiastic about reading
 - Time-related issues might be hindering the implementation of new reading practices

Finnish teachers reflect on their experiences 2: listening to children's wishes and collaborating with a library will help to make changes in reading materials



The activities and changes applied in the Finnish reading environments

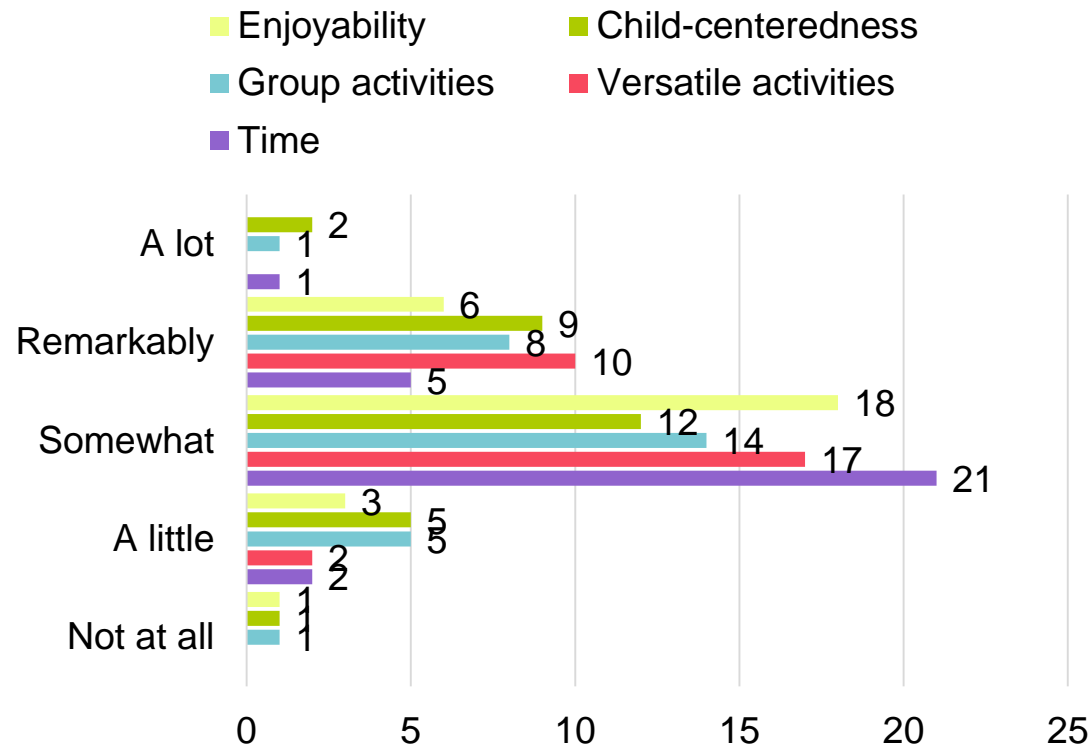
- Physical environment
 - Building reading nests together with children
- Emotional environment
 - Creating peaceful moments for reading
- Social environment
 - Reading together with peers (Lukukaveri – yhdessä lukemaan)
 - Time to read together with a teacher
- Cultural environment
 - Gamification: Escape rooms and virtual learning environments (ThingLink, Google Forms)
 - Arts-based approach to reading: drama methods, craft



Participants from Estonia reflect on their experiences: reading nests have become cultural norm in many kindergartens, but they are still not so common in schools



Changes in reading practices according to
participants from Estonia (N=29)

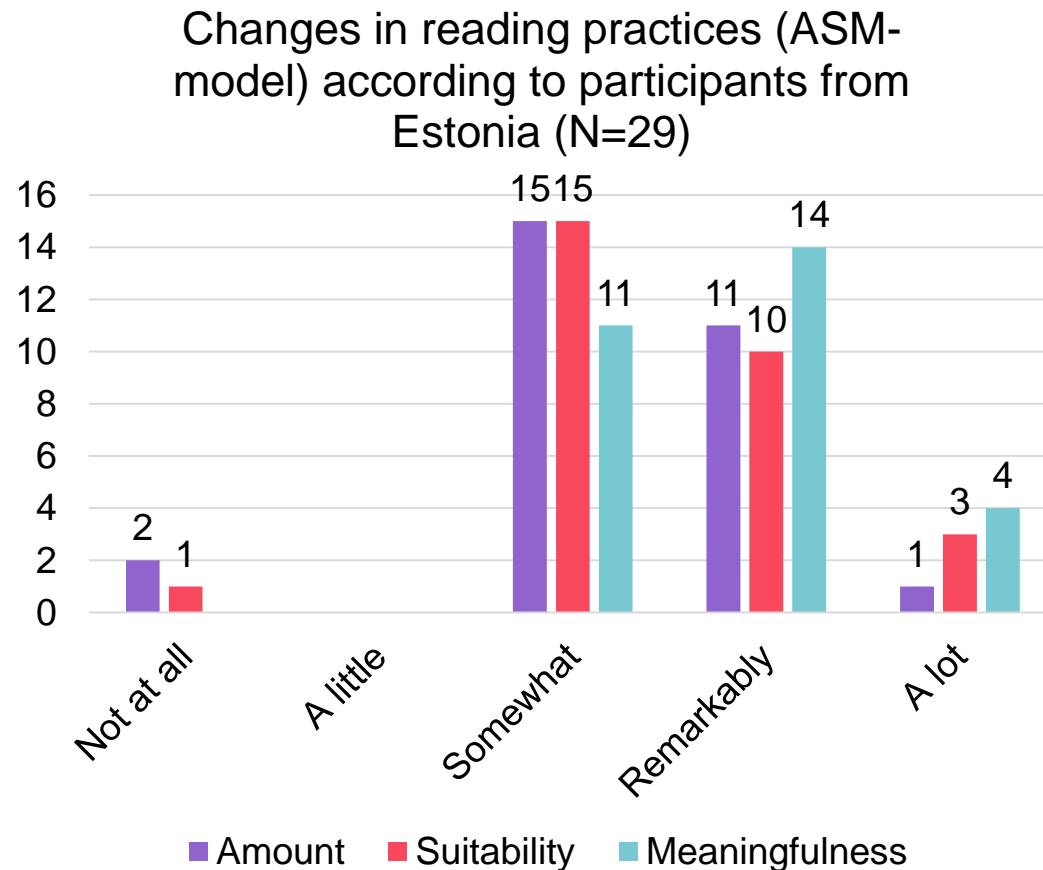


What did the participants do to accomplish changes in
reading time, activities, child-centeredness and enjoyability?

Note – the Reading Nests are in Estonia since 2004, and some teachers said they have "always had it in their classroom" :)

- **Physical environment** - Creating Reading Nests (or making them even comfier), changing reading materials more often, finding ways to find new books, offering props (like finger puppets) for dramatizations and role plays
- offering a wide(r) range of **literacy-related activities** – read alouds, reading games, dramatizations, using digital tools in literacy – **based on children interests** and the topics of projects/themes of curricula
- Making **meaningful literacy moments** parts of every day not only in reading nests - morning circle readings, bed-time stories, reading before or after outdoors playtime in kindergarten
- The resources (time, money)

Participants from Estonia reflect on their experiences:
considering more children's interests, and ideas; participating in
literacy projects; collaboration



What did the participants do to
make changes in reading
materials?

- ü Being more child centred – letting children to choose more, initiate topics, and games in reading nest
- ü Collaborating with colleagues, parents and libraries to offer richer range of reading materials
- ü Changing the books and other materials related to the current themes of projects and learning

The activities and changes applied in the reading environment

- **Physical environment**

- Building and renewal of reading nests together with children, equipping the nests with reading & writing materials, games, etc; supporting colleagues and parents in building reading nests

- **Emotional environment**

- Creating enjoyable, comfy, fulfilling moments for reading, book browsing, literacy games

- **Social environment**

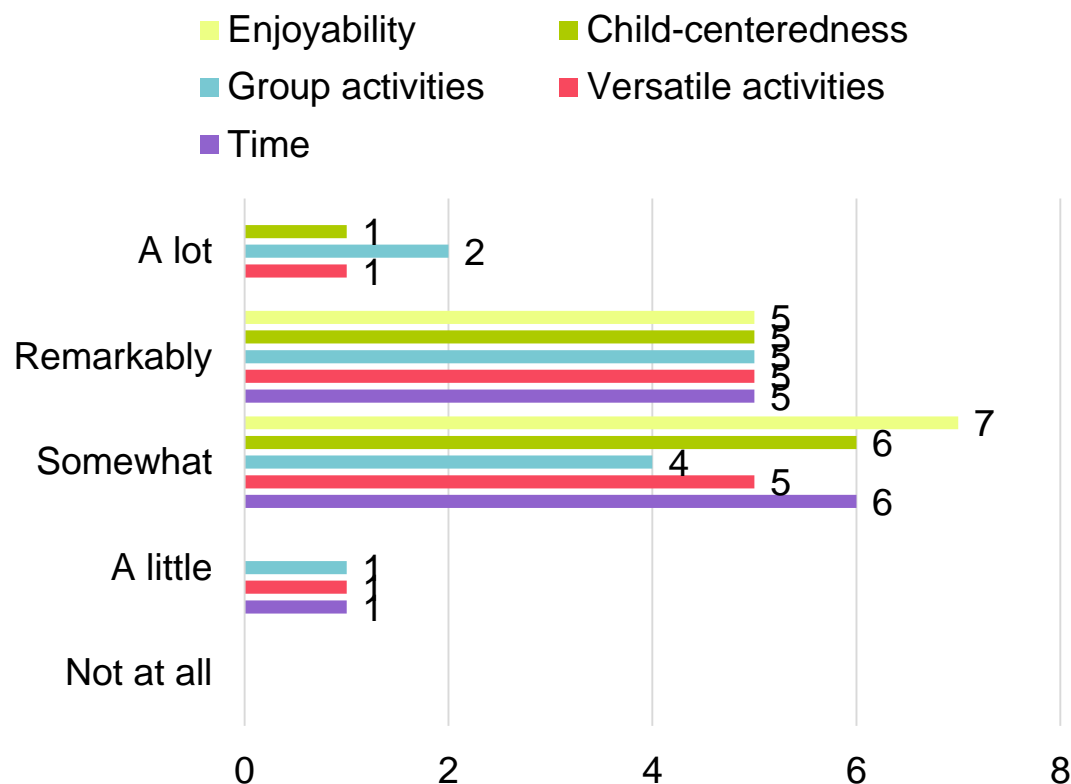
- Being a role model, reading to children and with children, modelling reading games, dramatizations and role plays that move into children's independent play
- encouraging children to read together, to create books

- **Cultural environment**

- Gamification: using different types of games to support literacy development
- Integrated approach to reading - using visual arts, crafts, drama and movement to support reading and writing development

LATVIA

Changes in reading practices according to participants from Latvia (N=12)



What did the participants do to accomplish changes in reading time, activities, child-centeredness and enjoyability?

- New books were regularly added to the Reading nests/Group libraries
- The books are freely available to children (any time during the day)
- A reading routine – every day before the lunch and before going home
- Active engagement of parents (bringing books, reading aloud to children)
- Using books in play activities; offering a wide range of literacy-related activities –word games, matching words and pictures, drawing the plot and heroes, imagining their own continuation of the story, role plays, drama activities

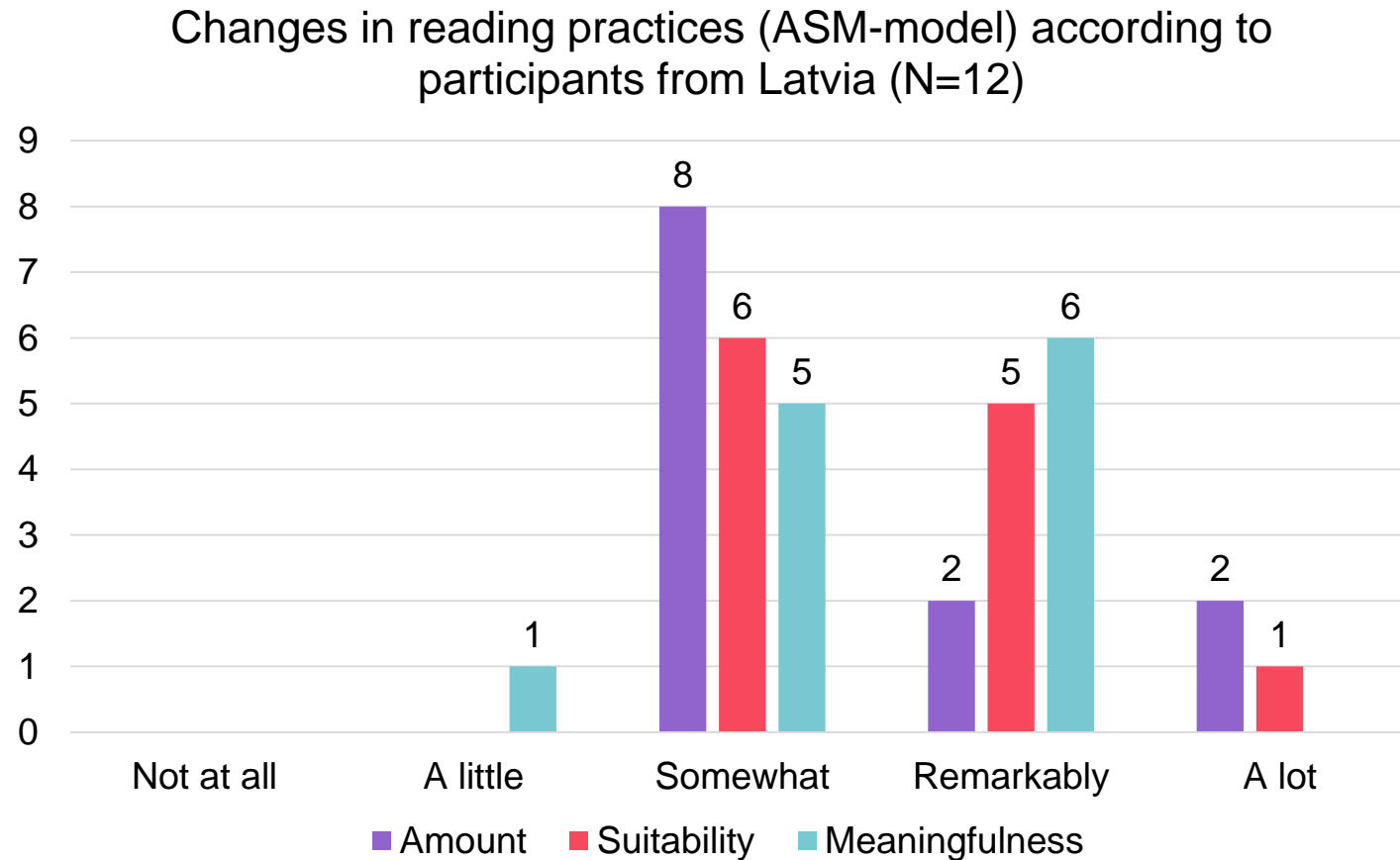
LATVIA



Children's achievements:

- Inquisitiveness (trying to find answers to different questions) and imagination, creativity
- Willingness to learn/find something new
- Gradual development of personal interest in the reading matter/ personally relevant issues
- Readiness to communicate, discuss = they have become more socially active
- Joy about every new book that can be taken in hands and 'read'
- The pleasure of reading

Participants from LATVIA reflect on their experiences: reading to children before their nap time has become an integral part of the day



What did the participants do to make changes in reading materials?

- Ask children what they want to read
- Let children read what they want
- Weekly/Monthly topics supported by diverse visual material
- Collaborate with a nearby school
 - Ø Book discussions together with the pupils
 - Ø Making thematic booklets
 - Ø Exploring different books and asking questions
- The teacher chooses books related to the current themes of learning and the learning outcomes to be reached

Developing the idea of Reading Nest for future projects

- More cooperation between countries – also among children and pupils.
- More domestic cooperation and sharing the good practises and results – inside the project schools and nation wide
- More time and financial resources for the project work – project financed time for the interventions, networking and sharing
- More cooperation vertically in education systems (from kindergartens to schools etc.) as well as between schools and libraries



The more comfortable the environment it takes place in, the more a child wants to read voluntarily.

Supporters



Nordplus



KÜSK National Foundation
of Civil Society



FinRA
Finnish Reading
Association

<http://finnishreadingassociation.blogspot.com/>
finrainfo@gmail.com
Facebook @FinRA

