

MFC-EMN ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2018 – EVALUATION REPORT

Between the 3rd and 5th October 2018, the Microfinance Centre (MFC) and the European Microfinance Network (EMN) held a joint Annual Conference in Bilbao, Spain.

Every year, the two networks survey the participants that take part in their conferences to collect feedback on the level of satisfaction. The aim is to be able to improve the services and organisation of the next editions.

At the end of the conference in Bilbao, participants were asked to fill in an evaluation form with their feedback. For the joint 2018 annual conference, the secretariats only received 77 completed evaluation forms (13%). Given the very low number of responses, this report will look not only at this feedback but also at the profiles of the participants from information provided at registration.

This year, a total of **597 people** attended the Conference, including organisers, speakers, facilitators, fintechs, sponsors, investors and more.

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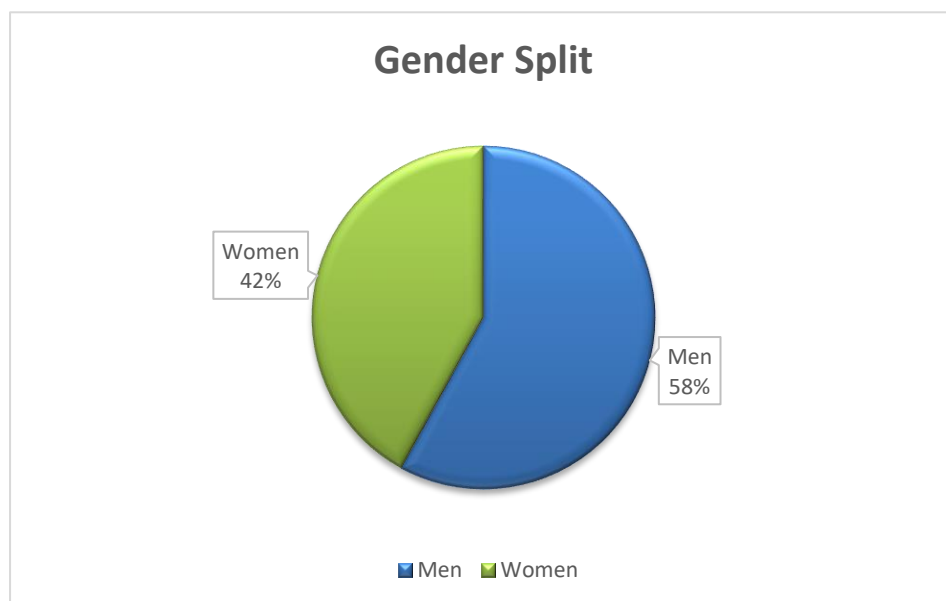
Participant profiles

Members of MFC and/or EMN.

During the registration process, participants were asked to state whether they were members of MFC and/or EMN. Of the 597 participants, 367 (61.5%) were representatives from one or both of the networks, 215 (36%) were not members and 16 (2.7%) were staff of MFC and EMN. In total, 118 different organisations who are members of one or both networks were present at the conference.

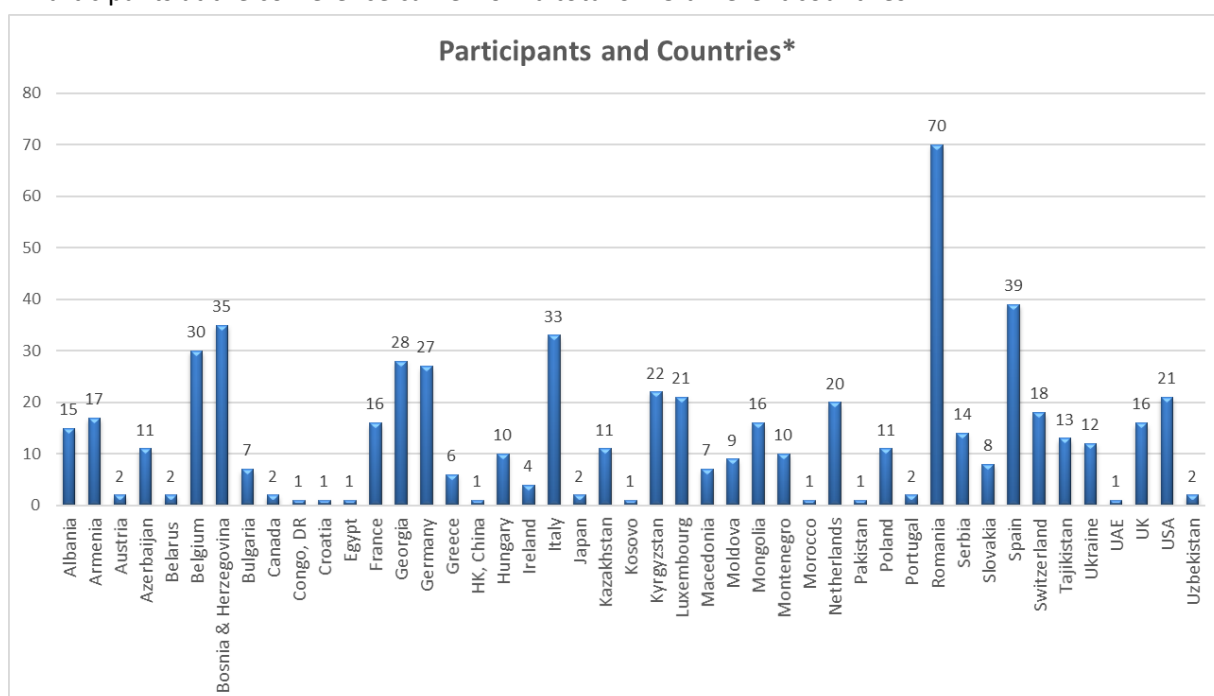
Gender split

Participants were invited to indicate their gender upon registration for the conference. 58% (346) of the total participants were men and 42% (251) were women.



Geographic Profile

Participants at the conference came from a total of 45 different countries.

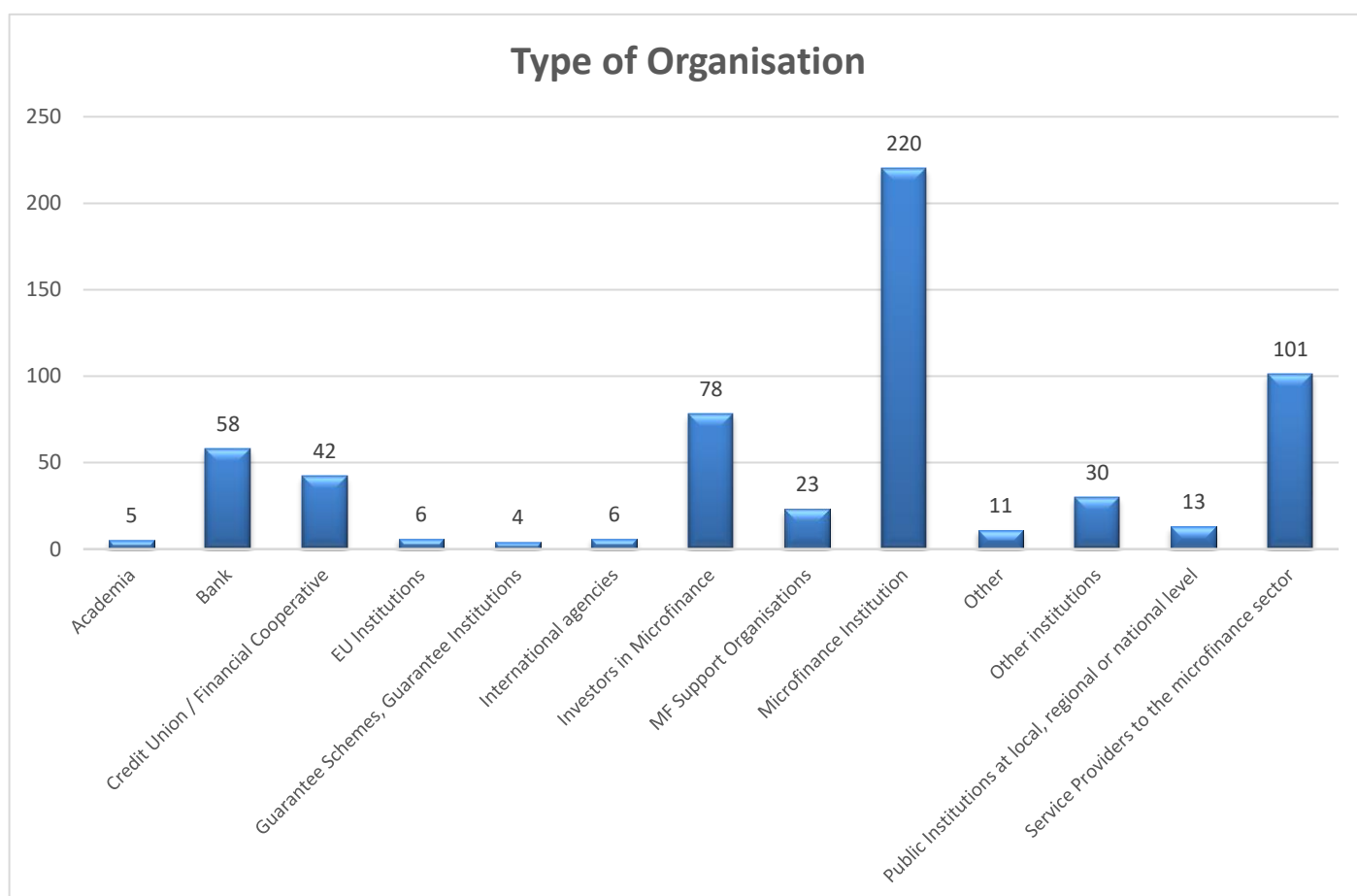


*Based on the country in which the participant works not their nationality.

The majority of the participants came from European countries, with the highest number of participants coming from Romania, followed by Spain. The highest total number of participants came from organisations based in the EU-28. The conference also had participants from further afield including Armenia, Georgia, Mongolia, Morocco, Canada and the United States.

Type of organisation

The organisations that participants represented at the conference can be grouped according to different types. Just under 60% of the total participants were representing some type of *Financial Intermediary* (e.g. Banks, MFIs, Cooperatives, Guarantee Institutions). The remaining 40% is spread among support organisations to the sector.



The highest number of participants (220 people, 36.8%) indicated that they represented *Microfinance Institutions* (NBFIs or NGOs), followed by *Service Providers to the sector* (101, 16.9%) and *Investors in microfinance* (78, 13%).

11 people indicated they represented other types than the ones provided in the list, including NGOs, leasing companies and microfinance clients.

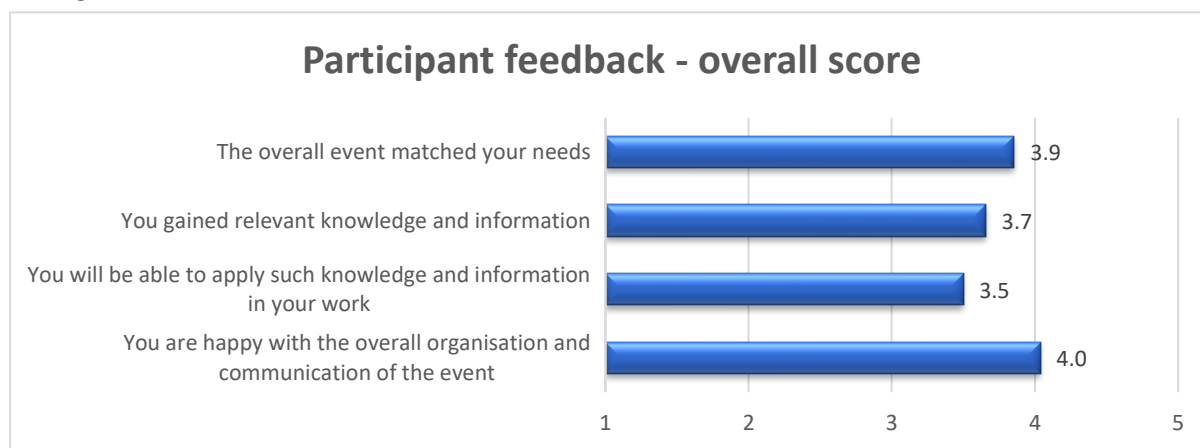
Participant feedback

Overall feedback and experience

Participants were asked to fill in an evaluation form about their experience as a whole at the conference. They were asked to rate four different statements on a sliding scale:

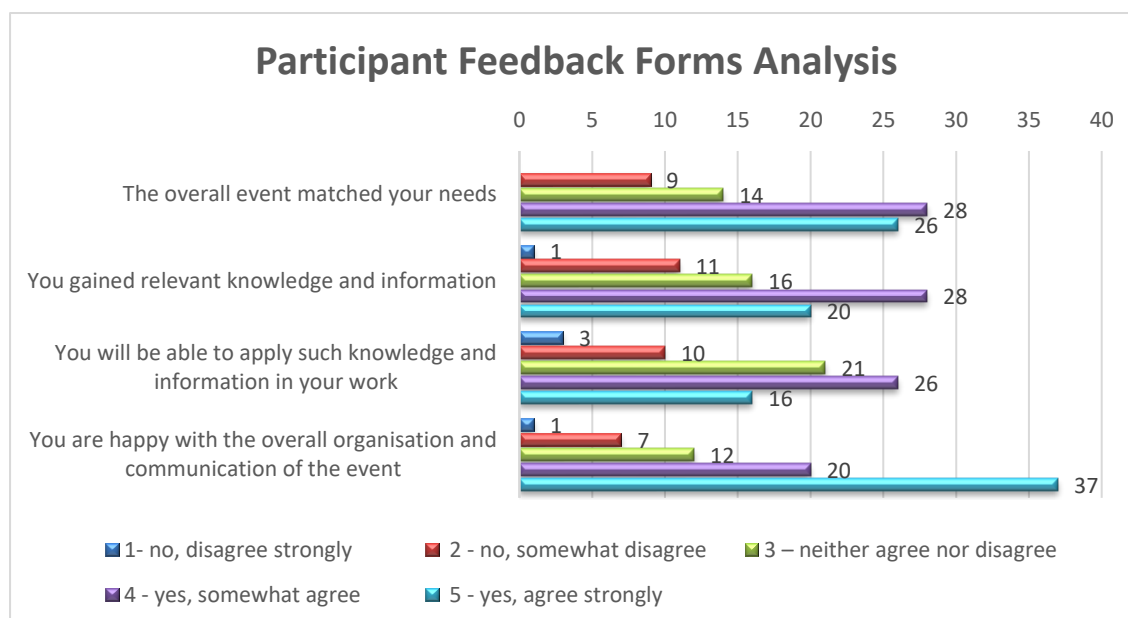
- 1 – No, strongly disagree
- 2 – No, somewhat disagree
- 3 – Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 – Yes, somewhat agree
- 5 – Yes, strongly agree

The low number of returned feedback forms makes it difficult to fully analyse the results, but we can still glean some information from them.



Looking at the average overall scores, participants *mostly somewhat agreed* that the event had matched their needs with an average score of 3.9 out of 5. Indeed, an almost equal number of participants rated this statement at 4 or 5 (see below graph).

Participants showed the highest appreciation for the overall organisation and communication of the conference with an average score of 4 out of 5. Participants mostly somewhat agreed that they had gained relevant knowledge and information with an average score of 3.7, and they also mostly somewhat agreed that they would be able to apply such information and knowledge in their work.



Main reasons for attending the conference

Respondents were asked to specify their main reasons for attending the Annual Conference. The main reason for attending for the majority of respondents was **Networking** (mentioned 53 times) followed by **Content** (23) and **Personal Growth & Development** (16). Other reasons for attending the conference were related to: learning, sharing and knowledge exchange; meeting investors, possible new partners and/or discovering new funding opportunities; speakers and sponsors.

What was most liked about the conference?

Participants were asked what they liked the most about the annual conference. Among the various comments, we can highlight:

- “Everything, content, the organisation of the event”;
- “Most of the presentations were first class”;
- “Closing speech!! Excellent!!”;
- “nice atmosphere, well organised”;
- “conference venue, high-quality of speakers”;
- “both [networks] together”;
- “The use of slido!”;
- “Diversity of institutions”;
- “new IT solutions”

The topic of the conference was very appreciated by respondents and many noted that they had liked the content of the workshops. In particular, the breakout sessions focusing on impact measurement were specifically highlighted. Many respondents were happy with the choice of location for the event and appreciated the social event and the many opportunities for networking. Further, some respondents showed their appreciation for the marketplace area as it allowed them to meet and exchange with investors, possible new partners and also MFIs that they did not yet know.

What could have been done better?

Participants were also asked to highlight what could have been done better. Among the various comments, we can highlight:

- “the size of the conference made it difficult to meet the people you had planned to meet”;
- “more news and innovators”;
- “focus more on smaller MFIs”;
- “timings need to be kept tighter. Ran behind schedule”;
- “new speakers and better presentations”; “Speakers from outside the sector”
- “separate MFC from EMN meeting”;
- “Sessions should be more practical”;
- “Improve quality of workshops, avoid self-promotion, focus on microfinance beneficiaries”;
- “Satisfaction survey in electronic version”;
- “catering”;
- “More client and more examples, real examples”

It was noted many times in the feedback forms that the networking area was not suited to the multiple private meetings between organisations, respondents would have preferred a larger area. Some respondents also mentioned that a special mobile application for meetings and the whole event would

be useful. One respondent specifically mentioned that the conference should provide more insight from undeveloped markets in the larger European region while another said that SPM should be discussed in more depth and that “the word social was used very generically”. Lastly, while a list of participants was available upon request before the event and was printed and provided in bags for the event itself, it’s clear that this wasn’t well communicated as a few respondents specifically stated that a list of participants should have been available.

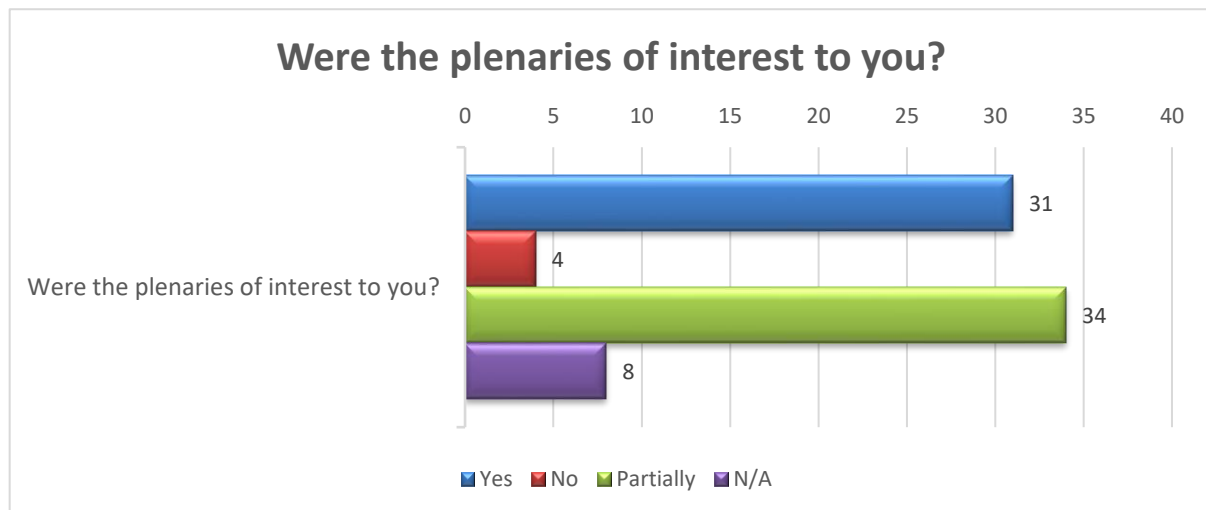
Plenaries

Two main plenary sessions were held during the Annual Conference as well as an opening and closing ceremony.

Plenary I: Who will reap the benefits of the digital revolution: do people get more control over their money?

Plenary II: Investor’s plenary on social investment

Participants were asked if the plenaries were of interest to them and to provide some comments.

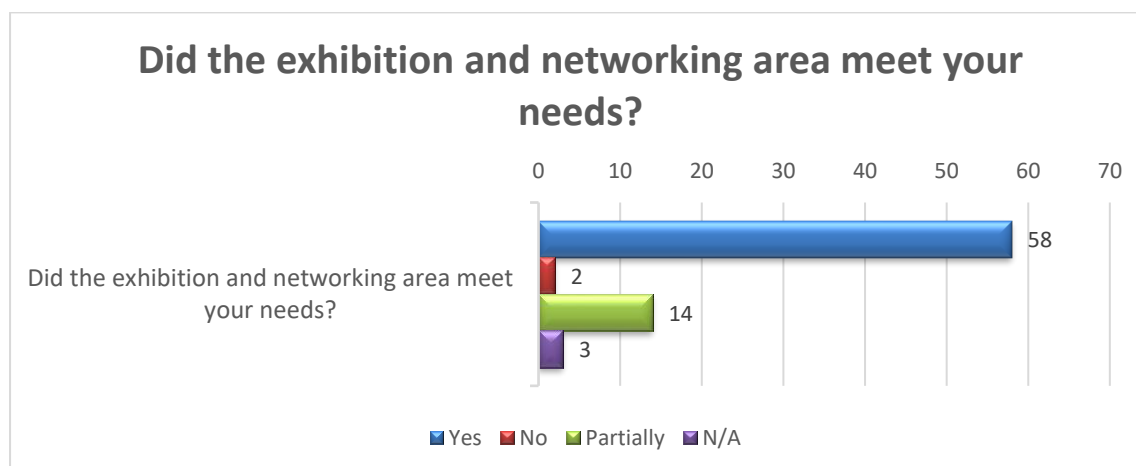


Respondents made the following comments about the plenaries:

- “I would like it more if the facilitators tried to ask more challenging questions & MFIs should be better represented”;
- “[They were] only [of interest] when self-promotion is limited and when external speakers are inspirational”;
- “Interesting topic on social investors”;
- “Sometimes the content didn't match the topic of the workshops”;
- “Not enough relevant information. Good final speaker”;
- “The Slido tool made them very interactive”;
- “I was disappointed in the plenary with social investors. These investors define social as outreach - so simplistic and the industry has moved beyond this. No talk of real measurement of SPM. It was like attending a conference 5-7 years ago”;
- “Too many commercials & known statements, not enough thinking outside of the box”;
- “I was hoping for a more "effervescent" first plenary”;
- “I liked the Slido app, great way to approach/gather questions”.
- “Plenary 2 had too many people”;
- “Was not concerned by all subjects, sometimes the speakers did not deepen the topics”.

Exhibition and Networking Area

Respondents were asked if the exhibition and networking area met their needs and to provide any additional thoughts.

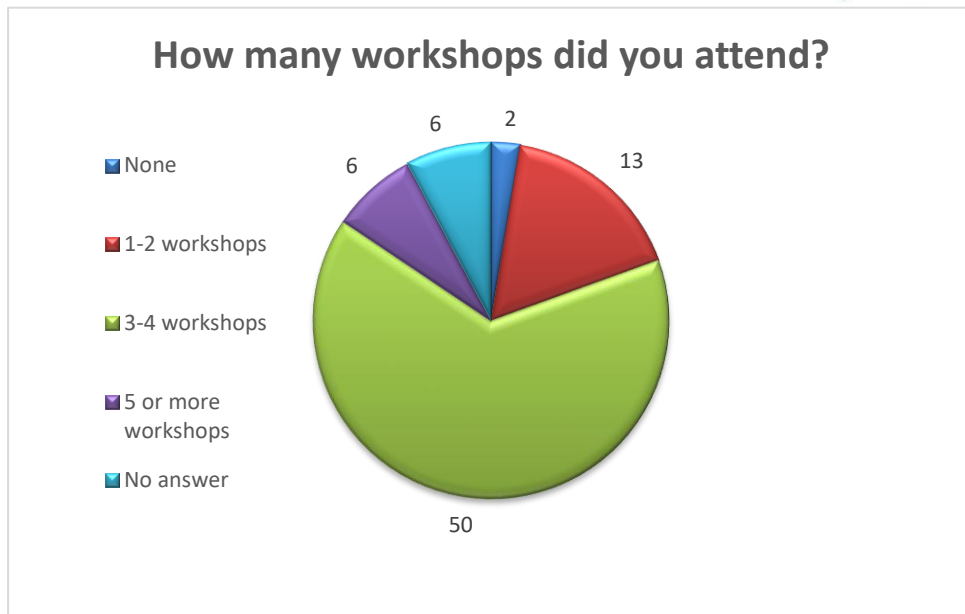


- Places for meetings were not evident
- More fintech companies would be great
- You should restrict the number of delegates for each MFI
- Lovely and light
- I had great meetings; new contacts
- More tables and chairs for meetings
- It was challenging to find people
- Is there a way to motivate networking (ex: speed dating...)?
- I had the chance to meet good people
- Too commercial & too luxurious
- The participants list is a huge help.

Workshops

16 workshops were held during the Annual Conference.

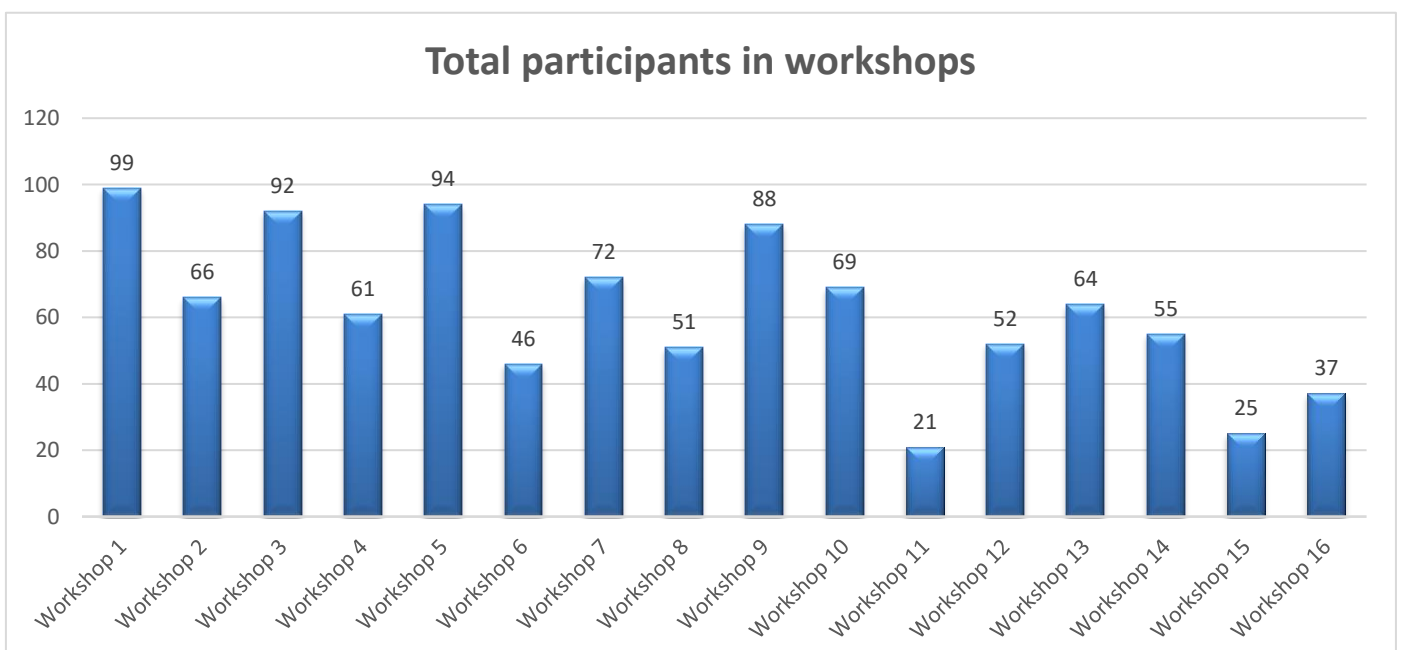
<p>WS1 How to start the digitalisation journey in your MFI (EaSI TA)</p> <p>WS2 Fundraising for MFIs</p> <p>WS3 Big data for financial inclusion (EaSI TA)</p> <p>WS4 How can communities benefit from crowdfunding?</p> <p>WS5 Affordable Technology for small(er) MFIs (EaSI TA)</p> <p>WS6 Migrant entrepreneurs: Crossing borders thanks to fintech</p> <p>WS7 Fintech and financial inclusion</p> <p>WS8 MFIs and Banks: more than competitors</p>	<p>WS9 New instruments for risk management</p> <p>WS10 EU Funding for Microfinance: Latest News and Changes!</p> <p>WS11 Maintaining the social promise of financial inclusion in a competitive market</p> <p>WS12 Microfinance clients & the digital revolution</p> <p>WS13 Technological Innovation for MFIs</p> <p>WS14 Impact Comes from Action (EaSI TA)</p> <p>WS15 Financial Health: from diagnosis to medicine</p> <p>WS16 How can digitalisation improve your BDS Services?</p>
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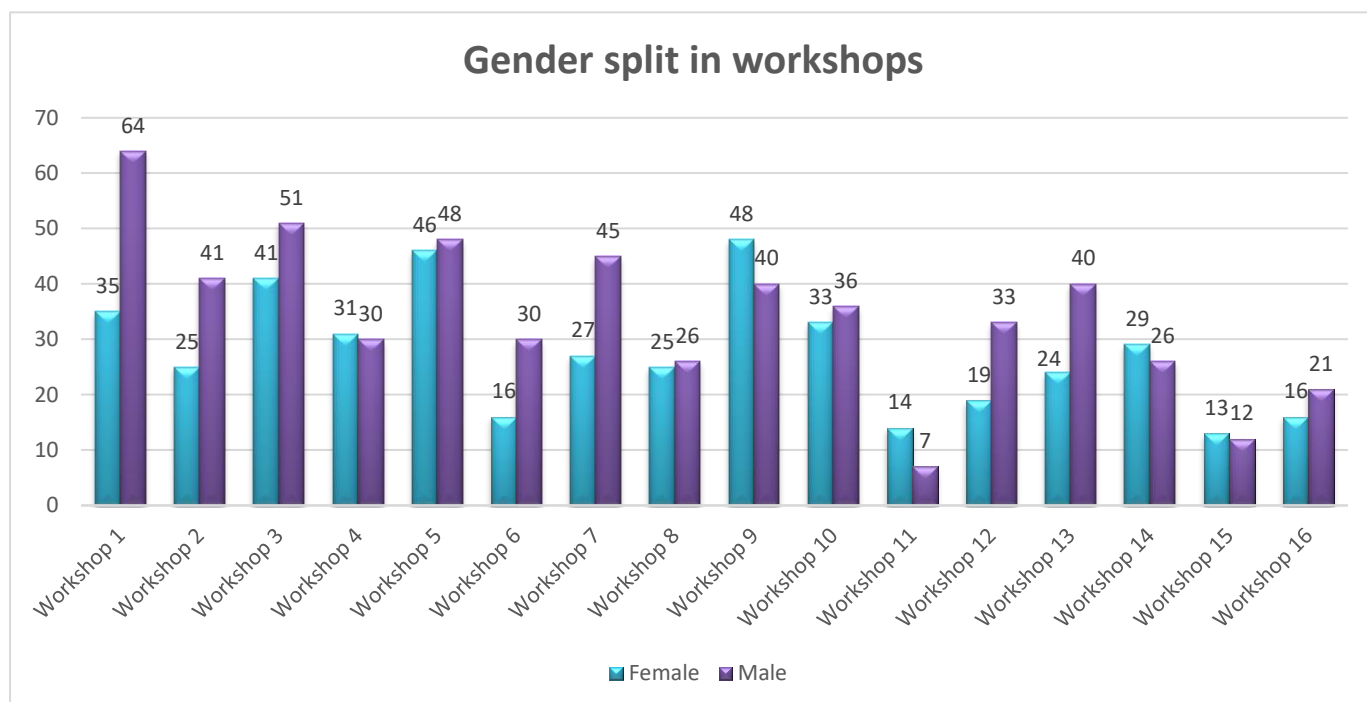
Respondents made the following comments about the workshops:

- Good tips from practitioners from their experience implementing FINTECH projects;
- Focused and interesting; workshops were beneficial
- overall very good workshops, 10 & 15 were excellent;
- very participatory / high attendance;
- [quite] old fashioned but good;
- informative and well designed;
- Too much self-promotion oriented -> Digitalisation & BDS;
- Poor quality, poor content, poor intervention. However interesting small group discussions;
- Content of workshops, too much corporate presentation, not enough business cards/best practice;
- They were very substantive, and the speakers were well prepared;
- They were good, interaction via slido was perfect;
- Mixed. Very interesting participants but activities with apps and trying to break into small groups was distracting, rushed, etc;

Total number of participants in workshops



Gender split in workshops



Additional Questions

Next Annual Conferences 2019

Respondents were asked to suggest what they would like to see & discuss in the next Annual Conferences.

They suggested the following topics for discussion:

- “More on resource development and fundraising”;
- “impact investing”;
- “more practical tips and tricks about optimising our working”;
- “Tutoring and monitoring services”;
- “investing in local currencies”;
- “risk management”;
- “Fintech market between European and developing countries”; “More fintech”;
- “Crowdfunding”;
- “innovation in finance industry”;
- “Client satisfaction report, how to grow economies”;
- “Hedging solutions for MFI's: alternatives to TCX/MFX”;
- “Partnership models, working with communities”;
- “Fundraising for digital projects”;
- “The use of BDS services in credit application, prospection and social *mining*”;
- “Investor possibilities for collaboration to meet/respond to MFI needs”;
- “Deeper look at outreach, targeting neglected populations”;
- “financial education for young people”;
- “social returns and more specific aspects of fintech”.

What should the networks do to support an organisation in their digitalisation journey?

They suggested the following:

- Information exchange, community of practice;
- Potentially some joint system developments;
- Share the "best in the class" platform for customer journey;
- provide guidelines for MFIs;
- cases!! Share cases, practice;
- Web seminars end 2019 conference;
- TA x MFIs engaging in the process => EaSI? Other?;
- Some free tools and video learning;
- More promotion of the IT providers in the MFIs;
- Standardisation;
- more examples on implementation;
- Help to consider IT Technology an instrument not a goal;
- Mentorship programmed status updates;
- TA support for investment in technology and software;
- Provide funds at affordable costs, negotiate with suppliers to provide technology (Pro Bono);
- More concrete topics on digital tools & best practices existing & used in daily contact with clients;
- facilitate dialogues with fintech/facilitate directed T.A.;
- Obtain reduced prices IT products and introduce them to the members;
- Circulate data on social impact/client protection in relation to digitalisation;
- Fund tech assistance for strategy and pre-interpretation work, which needs to be funded.

Profile of feedback respondents

