

TRAINEE TO TRAINED TEACHER

Case study Greece

As part of the Trainee to Trained Teacher project, all partner organisations have produced case studies illustrating the use of the project resources, the partners' support and the overall impact on the associated schools involved in this project. This document provides detailed information about a case study from the participating five schools in Greece.



Context of participating schools:

Primary school of Pefkochori in Greece has quite good experience of hosting trainees in the Primary sector and is a part of a network of Primary Schools on Chalkidhiki, Macedonia region of Greece. Pefkohori Primary School is new to the Erasmus+ programme and will use its schools' network in the area to test and develop the practical training materials in the Primary sector in Chalkidiki peninsula network of schools.

Primary school of Pefkochori is a small rural primary school on Kasandra, Chalkidhiki peninsula, Macedonia region of Greece. The school hosts 261 students and 32 teachers, but under the management of the school are three smaller schools in the neighbour villages: Primary school with kindergarten in Chanioti (76 pupils in kindergarten and primary students and 12 teachers), Primary school nr1 in Kassandria (218 pupils and 21 teachers) and the Primary school of Polychrono (176 pupils and 15 teachers). Also the school is responsible for teachers training and CPD for all these schools and is working in close relation with the Chalkidiki Regional Directorate of Education concerning NQTs improvement and CPD for experienced teachers. In our region we have to deal with pupils from migrants' families and we work as well with SEN children. Our teachers are dedicated to their students' needs and essential for them is the additional professional support for their daily work. Teachers in Greece are hired centralized by the Ministry of Education and the

schools and school principals don't have any relation to this matters. We evaluate this centralization as relatively negative aspect of our educational system, because of the CPD of more experienced teachers and the new coming teachers to our schools. This fact has some negative impact on the new qualified teachers' motivation for the profession. The school principals don't have the freedom to decide quite a lot of questions connected the school management, teachers' appointment and creation of their own management team. Teachers cannot apply to a school of them choose, but are appointed by the Ministry directly. Financing is centralized as well, so that NQTs support and CPD is depending on the financial decisions of the government and in some cases on the personal decision of each teacher at school. There are now more and more expressions for decentralization due to slow change of the governmental vision for educational sector, due to the difficult financial situation in Greece and last but not least thanks to the good results of a number successfully realized LLP and Erasmus+ projects in Greece with universities and schools from EU-member states that have had a very positive impact on educational policy.

This was the critical point for our decision to participate in this project and to involve partner schools with different profile and background, because its focus is on improving the practical experience of both trainee teachers in initial teaching education (ITE) and teachers in the first year of employment – newly qualified teachers (NQT). We find that the school based training model ensures that these two groups are working alongside more experienced teachers and addressing in situ classroom practice.

In Greece we have some experience with using the coaching and mentoring model in order to provide individual support to these two project target groups. It is quite difficult to set aims for improvement of confidence, motivation and performance in Greek schools, but as a project result we succeed to develop it as we have the freedom to decide our own school policy in this aspect. Furthermore, our project provides opportunities for more experienced teachers to take on a coaching and mentoring role, which has developed their own skills and also enabled them to reflect on their own practice. Therefore, we think that the results of our participation could impact the national policy and directly targets the priority of strengthening the training of educators.

Because of this project objective we decided to attract as partner schools for this project as well the Primary school of Arethousa in Thessaloniki and the Prototipo Peiramatiko Sxoleio Panepistimiou Thessalonikis, which is an Experimental school at the Aristoteles University Thessaloniki with kindergarten, primary school, secondary school and gymnasium (Lyceum). All experimental schools in Greece belong to particular university that provides initial teacher training, they are allowed to host, train and evaluate NQTs and to experiment newly developed school curricula. The Experimental school was very interested in testing the training modules developed by the T2TT-partnership consortia.

Support provided to Newly Qualified Teachers and Trainee Teachers before T2TT:

In Greece there is statutory duty to provide Newly Qualified teachers (NQTs) with support and training by universities. Situation about Newly Qualified Teachers is as well centralized, but varied from school to school for new teachers in their first year. Most of schools, public system for instance, don't have any programme for them except the experimental schools that are obligated to provide such type of support to NQTs. Teachers have practices before their first job but they don't receive any help when they are already working. Public system offers courses and seminars but there isn't personal assistance except as previously mentioned within the system of experimental schools. Rest of schools in cooperation with the regional authority of education, for instance the advisors who are responsible for implementing teaching standards and achieving curriculum content, usually design their own programmes for NQTs but they are unpretentious and play-acting. Before the five schools started working on this project, the support for new teachers involved mainly the appointment of a more experienced colleague who introduced the newcomer into the specifics of the school curricula for the particular subject, facilitated the integration of the new colleague into the school team, including communication with parents and pupils – except the Experimental school of Thessaloniki, where the school leadership is working on professional follow-up and ensures support for NQTs, including through the created system of mutual visits to the classrooms of more

experienced colleagues in different subject areas, mentoring and coaching, evaluation of NQTs teaching skills etc.

Training, impact and implemented measures:

Only the experimental schools in Greece, in particular the case of Thessaloniki where we have six experimental schools which belong to the Aristoteles University apply NQTs training throughout the year and includes: an NQT mentor, evaluation process during the year of training and final assessment. The programme doesn't include NQT program lead, face-to-face sessions to deliver training and to respond to individual needs. The impact of this is evaluated through questionnaires, discussion and through the quality of lessons observed and final practical exam. The programme is quality assured by the university. This programme includes only NQTs, but not teachers in their first year of working at school. The impact of the support offered is that NQTs are enabled and empowered to nurture their developing teaching confidence and skills, and as a result are able to access support formally from the university and through more experienced colleagues at Experimental school. Continuing the culture of development and professional learning the case in Greece is that new teachers are not inducted into a learning community that recognises all teachers are learners and need to access continued professional development.

Our training sessions were held in the 5 participating schools and there was significant need for that schools to build the support system for NQTs in their schools. After this project the participants shown satisfaction about their achievement and that they can continue to improve their support system as the school year goes by and new various challenges arise.

The follow-up comments on the trainings played significant role for improvement of pedagogical cooperation and skills within the school community, and the exchange of specific pedagogical skills and techniques.

The coaching and mentoring model as well the assessment process in Greece is quite different than this model in UK and some other countries in this partnership. Therefore, essential part for our project results and outputs development was the participation of Thessaloniki Experimental School and the Aristoteles University of Thessaloniki. The improvement and testing of these two modules was very successful thanks to their active involvement into the project activities and the given feedback on the training modules.

Support provided to Newly Qualified Teachers and Trainee Teachers after T2TT:

We are developing the T2TT programme in our network of rural schools where the support is important. Our Regional Direction of Education in Chalkidiki wants this t2tt programme for NQTs is proprietary in next three years, because the Greek government is on the way to develop a training system for NQTs and support for new teachers in their first years of pedagogical carrier as well as for experienced teachers outside of universities and create effective CPD environment.

T2TT has afforded our new trained teachers' trainers rich understanding of provision in partner countries. The comparative training given to trainees and NQTs across Greece, Bulgaria, Spain and Lithuania has helped to focus the delivery of training modules. Working collaboratively has afforded real learning about the need to facilitate and support those new teachers to the profession to ensure recruitment and retention into the teaching profession.

School's vision for the future

Having worked on this successful project Pefkohori Primary School will continue to apply and adapt the developed modules to train and induct teachers to improve their work, new material will assimilate learning from T2TT. We also have teacher development programmes to support NQTs and new teachers, but only under the management of universities. For teachers who wish to return to teaching and those who wish to retrain to teach shortage subjects we don't have any appropriate programmes, but there is a great opportunity to use the t2tt-modules to create proper schools' internal programme for support of the new teachers in their first year. We are also very committed to develop and improve our internal qualification plans in in our schools' network by involving the school advisor from the Regional Direction of Education and to maintain professional relationships with Erasmus Partner Schools to ensure this valuable collaboration is the vehicle for on-going sharing of practice.

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In our opinion, if the first waves of applying the T2TT modules are successful, logically NQTs will improve their competence in education, then schools could implant the system and spread it as we have done during the project implementation time. Where the training teachers programme runs perfectly this can be the positive result that we forward to the Thessaloniki Periphery of Education which is the decentralized educational authority for Northern Greece.

Through the successful participation of Thessaloniki Experimental School and the Aristoteles University of Thessaloniki, we succeed to be involved into the university system for Initial Teachers Training (ITT) in Greece and offer them our training modules that were evaluated very positively by them. We are going to develop this system in semi-public and private schools and afterwards, show our work to the public administration and involve other universities.