KeyCoNet (2012 – 2014) is a European policy network focused on identifying and analyzing initiatives on the implementation of key competences in primary and secondary school education. It is a constantly growing network of more than 100 members from 30 countries gathering together Ministries of Education/related agencies, universities/research institutes, European organizations, and practice related partners.

On the basis of the evidence collected through literature reviews, case studies, peer learning visits, country overviews, videos and exchanges between network members, the project’s final objective is to produce recommendations for policy and practice regarding the enablers and obstacles to a holistic implementation of key competence development.
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ABOUT THIS CASE STUDY

Part of a series

This case study is part of a series of case studies being produced by KeyCoNet, to highlight various initiatives concerning key competence development, taking place across Europe. Each case study analyzes the initiative’s implementation strategies in depth, and will feed into the network’s recommendations for policy and practice on how to implement a key competence approach in schools most effectively.

How and why was this case selected?

Each year the KeyCoNet network identifies initiatives concerning key competence development across Europe, and a case note is provided producing basic information about each one. Following this, network partners participate in an online selection according to pre-established criteria, as well as an in-depth face-to-face discussion, in order to select the most interesting initiatives to develop into case studies. The Maltese case study is about the Core Curriculum Programme (CCP). Its implementation commenced in September 2013 and therefore this was the first year of implementation for this systemic change. The network showed particular interest in this programme as the CCP aims to reach the low achievers at secondary level before they finish compulsory education. Its aim is to instil the basic key competences at least at EQF Level 1. This will increase the students’ possibility for further and higher education and give them more employability skills. Moreover, it aims at developing a learning environment that is accepting of and has an appreciation for the diverse abilities/backgrounds/interests of learners and to develop an environment that addresses each learner’s unique nature and learning ability in a responsive manner. Ultimately, it is a programme that is sensitive to the learners’ life challenges and realities, and that seeks to overcome such challenges in a socially just and equitable fashion. This is mainly done by administering alternative and authentic assessment methods that recognise the achievement of learners.

Which methodology has been used?

Case studies are the main tool used by the network to probe beneath the surface of each selected initiative and provide a rich context for understanding the implementation issues involved. The initiatives selected by the network differ in many ways, according to the nature of the key competences addressed, the implementation process used, the number of students and teachers directly concerned, the type and number of actors involved, and the duration and stage of development etc. A multiple-case study design, whereby each initiative generates its own case study, but uses one single prism for a common analysis, was therefore chosen. This method makes it possible to explore diversity, as well as the enablers and obstacles to the initiative’s implementation, as perceived by the initiators and stakeholders interviewed. Moreover, through a multiple-case study design it is possible to identify choices, strategies, characteristics, situations or contexts leading to success or failure in a recurrent manner. This will particularly contribute to fuelling the set of recommendations for policy and practice at institutional, local, regional, national and European level, for the effective implementation of key competences in school education.

Each case study included interviews with the initiative’s coordinators and stakeholders, as well as desk research. In some cases, where considered feasible and fruitful, focus groups were also organized.

A representative sample of the key stakeholders involved in the Maltese CCP reform was asked to provide their perspective about this systemic change and its implementation. These included the Education Officer in charge of the CCP, A Head of School, an Assistant Head of School who is in charge of the implementation of the CCP in the school and two CCP mentors who are the reference point of the CCP group. The mentors were also subject teachers for the CCP group. A number of reports were used throughout this research which are referenced in the appropriate sections.
**Country:** Malta

**Title of initiative:** Core Curriculum Programme (CCP)

**Coordinator/Organization:** Curriculum Management Department (DCM) within the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education (DQSE)

**Key competences addressed:**
- Communication in mother tongue
- Communication in foreign languages
- Mathematical competence and basic competences in Science and Technology
- Digital competence
- Learning to learn
- Social and Civic Competence
- Sense of Initiative and Entrepreneurship
- Cultural Awareness and Expression

**Type of initiative and channels used for implementation** (e.g. curriculum reform introduced through legislation etc.)

This programme was a curriculum initiative to support Basic Skills learners (low ability learners) during the last three years of the secondary cycle. The continuum of achievement outlined in the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2012 states that the curriculum will meet the needs of learners according to their stage of development. It is envisaged to be a seamless process in order to ensure continuity in the educational pathways followed by learners. Moreover, the NCF endorses learner-centred learning, which requires the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes that promote self-directed and lifelong learning.

**Partners:** State secondary schools, with support from the DCM, education officers, programme mentors, teachers, Learning Support assistants, career advisors, Inclusion Co-ordinators and senior management teams within schools.

**Scope:**
- School level systemic change (within a small network)

**Learning context:**
- Formal

**School education level(s):**
- Between Form 3 and Form 5
- Final three years of secondary cycle
- Learners aged approx. 13-16

**Target groups:**
- Basic skills learners in Form 3, continuing until the end of their secondary cycle.
- Teachers of this cohort and the class mentor who will be leading the CCP group.

**Time frame:**
- September 2013 – on-going

**Relevant links:**
The Core Curriculum Programme in Malta is based on the three aims of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF p.6), which seeks to prepare all children to become lifelong learners who are confident, successful, creative, connected and engaged in the community and the world around them, and able to secure social justice (Ministry of Education and Employment, 2012).

This programme of learning that targets the needs of lower-level learners is characterised by a constructivist approach and three main theoretical understandings upon which this approach is based:

- The Assessment for Learning pedagogy;
- The theories of the Zone of Proximal Development and Scaffolding as proposed by Lev Vygotsky, Ausubel and Bruner;
- Inquiry-Based Learning.

The programme will give a core entitlement to learners, which covers the subject-specific key competences including Maltese, English, Mathematics, Science with Design and Technology and ICT as well as PE, Religion, Social Studies, History and Geography. The learners will also opt to study any one of the following: PE Certificate (Level 1), Music, Art, Home Economics, Textile Studies, Design and Technology or Graphical Communication.

Learners following the Core Curriculum Programme will carry out projects that enhance their ‘soft competences’. Evidence through different methods of assessment will be collected in a portfolio, which will be used to instil learning to learn skills.

Which contextual factors have been perceived as enablers to the implementation of the initiative, and why?

Since the early 80’s, we had a tripartite system: those students who passed in all five major subjects in their 11+ exam went to Junior Lyceums (or church schools), while the others went to local secondary schools and trade schools. Trade schools were eventually phased out and later on the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology opened its doors to students who wanted to acquire a technical skill. The College system was then introduced in 2011 as part of a systemic reform in the Education system. After six years of primary schooling, students sit for a bench marking examination in Maltese English and Mathematics. This will lead them to five years of secondary education with mixed ability classes. Students are set for the main subjects: Maltese, English and Mathematics.

Notwithstanding the fact that the teaching process was trying to address the different abilities of all the students, there still remained a number of students that lacked the basic skills, such as reading and writing and basic arithmetic after the first 2 years of secondary education. In 2011, the Office of the permanent secretary of the Ministry for Education and Employment issued a consultation document indicating that there were a number of vulnerable students that left school early without having the necessary skills for employment.

Moreover, the PISA study also uncovered weaknesses at national level that needed to be addressed immediately.
Thus, the need to address the reality of a small proportion of low ability learners who, for a variety of reasons, reach the end of Form 2 without the core competences to be able to undertake a successful learning journey up to secondary level was felt. Up to now these learners were largely invisible, or else were provided with programmes that did not lead to further progression.

With the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) issued in 2012 by the Ministry of Education and Employment the principles of Entitlement, Diversity, Continuum of Achievement, Learner Centred Learning and Quality Assurance provided the context for an initiative such as the Core Curriculum Programme.

This programme addresses this need. Secondary schools are offered the option to take on board a programme that has the following key elements:

- it ensures exposure and appropriate mastery of all the core components of the curriculum;
- it ensures that the learners involved are not completely segregated from the rest of the learning community;
- it provides learning programmes that have a strong element of continuous assessment whilst leading to an MQF (Maltese Qualification Framework) Level 1 certification as described in the Referencing Report of the NCFHE (2012), with the possibility of progression therefrom.

The schools are given the opportunity to modify the programme according to the needs of the students as perceived by the school.

Moreover, this is seen as an evolving experience that will be strengthened with input from different stakeholders as we learn and gain more experience over time.

Which contextual factors have been perceived as obstacles to the implementation of the initiative, and why?

At School Level

While the programme was well thought and had a sound theoretical background based both on research and on feedback from teachers and school administrators, the professionals who had to implement it had little time to adapt themselves for the required change. They were all aware of the difficulties encountered by these low achieving students and in fact a number of schools were ready to develop their own programme of learning targeting the needs of these learners. Thus, the Core Curriculum Programme issued in May 2013, and launched in September 2013, was envisaged as an answer to these requirements, but all stakeholders needed to acquaint themselves with the responsibilities that come with this new role. Without good networking between the people involved at school level, the programme was not going to work, and this required time.

Dealing with these learners entails the use of diversified pedagogical skills and a teaching methodology that embraces learning through authentic situations and experiential learning. This new methodology challenged a number of teachers in that they had to undergo a paradigm shift from one of exposition and practice to a more project and task-based approach. Teachers had little training about dealing with such situations. Some persisted in their usual ways, but there were others who embraced this opportunity to teach with a methodology that they believed would be more effective and efficient with these learners, but which they never had the possibility of using since these learners always formed part of a group that was going to be assessed yearly by standardised centrally prepared examinations, whereas now the CCP group had
a totally different kind of assessment that was based mainly on continuous assessment.

Another difficulty perceived at school level was when it came to integrating these students in school activities. Since this was the first year of implementation, all stakeholders were testing and experimenting. It was understandable that at first, a number of teachers found it hard to include the CCP students when organising an activity for a particular year group since these students are harder to handle. Furthermore, they have special requirements that need to be planned for.

At Directorate Level

Funds are always an issue. The CCP aims to cater both for the well-being as well as for the curricular entitlement of the students. The resources needed for this small group are different from what is needed by the rest of the school cohort. Consequently, schools are expecting the Directorate to address the need for such specific resources with the necessary funding.

A shift in pedagogy that demands hands-on activities is much more costly than an explanation and practice approach. The structure and furniture required to furnish a classroom that will host the CCP students has to be different since it needs to convey a sense of belonging.

Human Resources

The senior management team at school level and the teachers imply that the timetable needs to be less loaded for those who teach a CCP group and especially for those who have a mentoring role in this programme. Networking between teachers, creating teacher learning communities, and planning to use a trans-disciplinary approach requires time and energy.

Continuous Professional Development

Continuous professional development is a key aspect for the success of the programme and during the first year of implementation, not enough was provided. Stakeholders needed different sessions catering for the various roles. Teachers required meetings to discuss challenges, enablers, the resources they were using and the projects they were developing. However, it demonstrated to be a challenge in itself to get all the teachers together and discuss these issues, especially since it had to be done during school hours.

Social Inequality

Most of the CCP students are socially deprived and lack those pre-requisites for learning that would give them a sense of well-being. Sometimes, the needs are so big that the school finds it extremely difficult to cater for all of them. Besides, sometimes there are unsurmountable issues that are impossible to tackle at school level and thus other social services are called in to give their input.

2. SUBSTANCE RELATED ISSUES

Which substance related issues have been the most difficult ones to fix when deciding on the content of the initiative, and why?

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF, 2012) defines the curricular entitlement for each and every learner till the age of compulsory education which is sixteen. The curricular entitlement includes eight learning areas including: Languages; Mathematics; Science and Technology; Health and Physical Education; Reli-
gious and Ethics Education; Humanities, Education for Democracy; and Visual and Performing Arts, as well as six cross-curricular themes, namely: Literacy, Digital Literacy; Learning to Learn and Co-operative Learning; Education for Sustainable Development; Education for Entrepreneurship, Creativity and Innovation and Education for Diversity.

The NCF aims to develop the learners’ capacity to nurture values and learn key skills and competences that they require to establish their long-term quality of life as persons and as citizens – and in doing so educators are to regard learners as individuals with diverse capacities that must be supported to develop into lifelong learners, equipped with employability-related attitudes and skills.

The ultimate goal of the NCF is to enable individuals to become lifelong learners. This implies an effort by all to give learners the knowledge, skills, competences, attitudes and values necessary to be attracted to further and higher education, to re-skilling and up-skilling during working years and to active participation in the civic and social life of our country.

A teacher teaching the CCP group insisted that these students lack the basic skills necessary for life, such as reading, telling the time, and the ability to prioritise. They are extremely vulnerable. And when one thinks that in a few years’ time, these students will be adults and will have to shoulder responsibilities as mature citizens, one asks how they will be able to do it if they lack the basic key competences. Educators therefore feel the need to improve this situation.

Our first concern was to strengthen the basic/core subjects: learning to read and write in English and Maltese, learning mathematical concepts, which they have to apply in everyday life, as well as life skills that will help them function in this ever evolving society.

*We want our students to know how to read and fill in a form, consult a timetable, compare prices, keep accounts, be able to own a cheque book and use it, read an electricity meter, know if they have been given correct change, read a map etc.* [CCP Mentor]

Another concern was computer literacy. When learners reach a school leaving age they should have acquired sound ICT skills such as using the internet, searching for information, running an e-mail account. Therefore, since schools had the possibility to tweak the original CCP, some schools increased the number of lessons in this area.

In Malta, students choose two subjects as options at the end of their second year in secondary education. These subjects will then be studied during the final three years of secondary education. CCP students are given one optional subject and mentoring sessions during which the soft key competences are explored and developed through a project-based learning approach. Due to the academic needs of the learners, a particular school provided Home Economics and Textile Studies adapted programmes as options. These two options have proven to be a success. Entrepreneurship projects were merged with the outcomes of lessons of these options. This resulted in the students gaining both basic entrepreneurial competences and skills from the other subject. Moreover, such projects resulted in an enhancement of self-efficacy and higher self-esteem as the learners started to believe more in their capabilities when they saw the final product.

From the implementation point of view, an Assistant Head of School pointed out the following:
Developing timetables was quite a challenge since the CCP class had an adapted curriculum, and in the case of this particular school, it could not follow the timetable of the rest of the school since the subject distribution was different.

Selecting the right teachers has also been a challenge. Since most, if not all, lacked specific training, and taking into consideration the amount of work and effort necessary in the preparation/adaptation of the different syllabi, exams, etc., teachers had to have particular characteristics such as shifting to a much more student centred approach and be extremely sensitive to the different learning needs.

[Assistant Head in charge of CCP group]

3. PARTNERSHIP RELATED ISSUES

How did you select and work with other individuals and what have you learnt from the experience?

The role of the mentor as explained in the booklet “Developing Key Competences: The CCP Mentor Guidelines” (Grima, 2014) envisages a professional person capable of collaborating with the Senior Management Team, Education Officers, other teachers, Learning Support Assistants and all those who provide a service to the students, and of course, the students themselves and their parents. This person needs to have a co-ordinating role and thus much depends on the right choice of this mentor for the success of the programme as many ideas and initiatives originate from the intimate knowledge of the students and their needs. This person will then be capable of creating the right atmosphere for this network of people to collaborate and develop the potential of these students who have capabilities but have also a large number of needs.

Moreover, one of the Assistant Heads interviewed for this case study explained that the staff working with the CCP students work closely with providers of other student services such as the anti-bullying unit with whom they were developing a programme aimed at boosting self-esteem and positive behaviour; they were also collaborating with personnel in charge of the Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties unit, and with the Learning Support Zone teacher and the national Learning Centre that provides help to students with behavioural problems. The school is also in contact with NGOs and social workers who provide advice on how to deal with individual students and also on the general lines to follow with these students, many of whom come from socially deprived environments. The Inclusion Co-ordinator (INCO) is another partner in this programme. This person is the reference point for students with a statement report. It is the INCO who guides the Learning Support Assistants in their role in the class. The College Career Advisor is another collaborator who advises students about jobs and careers. It is envisaged that this will be linked with the entrepreneurship project/co-operative which will be held during the next scholastic year (September 2014).

Partnership is also created with the Education Officers with whom there is continuous contact in order to provide feedback and support.
4. STRATEGY RELATED ISSUES

Which aspects of the strategy implemented for the initiatives have proved to be particularly effective, and why?

Interviewed members of the senior management teams of schools appreciated the fact that the subjects taught were pegged at MQF (Maltese Qualification Framework) Level 1 and therefore students will finish the secondary cycle with a certification that outlines the outcomes mastered during the programme.

Moreover, the needs of the students are addressed and the outcomes that describe the various subjects are tackled at their level. It is evident that students can perceive that they are learning and that they are achieving through the tasks performed in class and the portfolios being developed. Learning is more hands on and much less content based.

Assessment is mostly continuous based on tasks completed throughout the year. Summative assessment is only a very small part of the whole procedure. Altogether these assessments provide both the teacher and students with evidence illustrating that the outcomes have been mastered.

An Assistant Head of School stated that they employed a ‘bottom up’ approach as prior to the implementation of the CCP, the school had already prepared their own programme to cater for students with learning difficulties. Eventually, the two programmes were merged to enable pupils to achieve a Level 1 certification in certain subjects. Thus, it was appreciated that the CCP was flexible enough as to allow for changes that could accommodate for the particular needs of the students in any particular school.

The schools appreciated the fact that teachers were practically handpicked and most responded extremely positively to the challenge of teaching the basic competences of their subject without the usual stress of a final summative examination. The teachers felt empowered to adapt the subject matter and reinforce the skills inherent in the subject, making them more accessible for the students. They had a framework to guide them but one which did not stifle them. Many subject teachers are working together on projects and this collegiality is very congenial to teaching and learning – based on competences, student potential and interests. This has also led to teachers’ sense of job satisfaction as well as students’ sense of achievement.

A main and challenging aim has been to raise students’ self-esteem and self-confidence. Having always considered themselves as failures, for the first time, they have been tasting achievement. This was very evident when the students received the positive results for their half-yearly assessments which consisted also of adapted papers.

Schools agreed that another enabler was the fact that teachers had the support of the Learning Support Assistants and therefore students were given timely feedback and there was also the possibility to verify that the feedback was taken up.

Finally, integrating these students with the mainstream students for activities organised for the whole year group aided inclusion and integration. This was viewed as being a positive and enlightening opportunity for all students.
Which aspects of the strategy implemented for the initiative have proved to be most problematic, and why?

The majority of learning difficulties stemmed out of a problem of social inequality. A network of professional people and support services including guidance teachers, career advisors, learning zone teachers, CCP mentors, Inclusion co-ordinators and the CCP subject teachers work together to try to provide what would contribute to the well-being of these students. Well-being is a prerequisite for learning to take place and it is extremely difficult to provide for the various needs of these students especially if they originate from family related issues. Envisaging such a scenario, the CCP created a role (CCP Mentor) whose main responsibility is to care for the well-being of the learner.

Mentors who do not have mentoring sessions slotted into their timetable are actually at a disadvantage from mentors who have four 40 minute sessions per week with these students. Mentoring is an on-going process and the teaching load makes a difference because it affects the availability of the teacher and the tasks that have to be prepared. This is a question of availability of human resources and how many teachers are available in a school.

The senior management team has to face another problem – the choice of teachers. CCP teachers need to be creative, be capable of preparing student centred tasks, be ready to take initiative, be willing to prepare tasks with different levels of difficulty and most of all still believe that these students need to be challenged in order to continue their scaffolding process of learning. So, within a school, even in a large one, choice is at times limited.

A major difficulty is to plan for a common free lesson during which CCP teachers can meet to discuss the ongoing programme. Though interaction between teachers happens continuously in an informal manner, it is important that there are scheduled meetings with pre-planned agendas during which challenges and enables can be discussed. The programme of work needs to be continuously evaluated and particular interventions have to be assessed in order to evaluate whether such a procedure is being fruitful or not and then take action accordingly.

Such a programme requires additional funding from what is normally given to a school and a school with a population of over a 1000 students has limited funds for a class of not more than 13 students. A number of Heads of Schools have allocated funds to decorate the CCP classroom with the scope of creating a sound reference point for these students. However, most of the CCP students come from socially deprived backgrounds and funds are continually needed to fund initiatives. This has necessitated fund raising activities. Such activities mainly aim to educate and reach set outcomes and to inculcate in the students a sense of responsibility, while also importantly raising funds. Nonetheless, the need for more financial backing is keenly felt.

5. Mainstreaming related issues

The CCP targets low ability students who are starting their third year of secondary schooling. The programme was offered to all state secondary schools from the beginning. Moreover, schools were also offered the possibility to modify it and make it more accessible to their students. The Directorate had to ensure that all the students were given their entitlement as defined by the National Curriculum Framework.
The majority of the schools opted for the mainstreaming of this group of students for all lessons except for those of Maltese, English, Mathematics, Italian and Science and Technology. However, there were a few schools which placed these learners as a group for all lessons. Teachers teaching this group of students stated that they could manage the group better when they were not with the mainstream students. The reasons for this being that; the CCP group was smaller and therefore the teacher could dedicate more time to each and every individual student; the programme allowed enough time to use a pedagogy based on experiential learning; and finally the assessment was not totally summative but rather a combination of the continuous assessment compiled during the year and a small percentage dedicated to the summative component, which was not necessarily pen and paper tests but included oral and listening components as well.

6. SYSTEMIC ASPECTS

The Core Curriculum Programme was designed for all students in the third year of secondary education who were still lacking the basic skills in the key competences. The programme’s aim was to impart these key competences at MQF (Maltese Qualification Framework) Level 1 before the end of compulsory education. Though the programme was developed centrally by the Maltese Curriculum Department within the Directorate of Quality and Standards in Education, schools were given the opportunity to modify the programme according to the needs of the students they were catering for. In fact a number of schools which had already been devising their own programmes amalgamated the CCP with their own. This proved to be beneficial because the schools’ Senior Management team felt empowered, the students’ needs were being catered for and finally the students started working towards a recognised qualification.

The Senior Management team of a school which modified the CCP according to the needs of their particular students commented as follows:

*Our programme first started on a school basis and the need for changes in the curriculum, assessment and school organisation were consequential and necessary to the very success of the programme. One can say that the programme itself arose out of the need to implement changes, first and foremost in the curriculum as the present one was obviously unsuitable for the identified group of students; the assessment which till now was summative and 100% examination based has proven itself detrimental to these students thus necessitating a change to a fairer form of assessment; changes in curriculum also led to changes in the school organisation. The need for teacher training and teacher trainees was sorely felt. Teacher learning communities were a necessity in order to exchange good practice, discuss issues pertaining to the well-being of the learners and also about pedagogy and to create a networking team of teachers with common goals for these students. However, establishing time to meet was always the main problem.*

[Assistant Head in charge of CCP]

Another systemic change introduced with the Core Curriculum programme was the introduction of the Soft Key Competences which were mainly the responsibility of the mentor. This was mainly done to ensure their implementation, and to avoid them being buried in the programmes of work of other subjects. A CCP mentor declared that the collaboration with the Inclusion Coordinator was essential in reaching the outcomes for these soft competences. This mentor describes their experience as follows:
There are guidelines in the Core Curriculum Programme and in the Mentor’s Booklet but the teachers have to develop and plan the projects. I thought this was going to be difficult but I was wrong. Teachers come up with great ideas despite our lack of experience in this matter. As regards cultural awareness for example, our students have worked for weeks with their Art and Crafts teacher to design and create a carnival float. The final product was great. Carnival is synonymous with Maltese culture. And even the theme of the float was Maltese Culture and traditions. It was a 3D hopscotch: a Maltese game played in the streets. Every number shows a different aspect of Maltese life and folklore. We have the Maltese bus, Maltese food, Maltese Games, and Symbols associated with Maltese prehistory.

As regards Social and Civic Competences, the Social Studies Teacher, who is also co-mentor, has proved invaluable. The students have participated in a campaign called “Flimkien Inrabbu l-Għeruq”, a project aimed at respecting diversity. Together they worked on the production of a video dealing with social issues. They had to come up with the idea, write the script, film and edit.

With regards to entrepreneurship, we have rolled up our sleeves since the beginning of the scholastic year. I refused to accept that because of their financial situation these girls would not be able to pay for any school activities organised. So I insisted that they work, produce products and sell them. The Home Economics teacher was an asset. The girls planned the work, baked and sold cakes and biscuits. As a result of the money they raised, we had enough funding to support ourselves.

One big project was undertaken by the Science teacher. She collaborated with the Home Economics teacher, the English teacher, Learning Support Assistants, Learning Zone teachers, and with me. We invited the Head of School, Assistant Heads, INCO, and teachers for lunch. The students prepared the food, the nutritional information, set up the table, greeted the guests and served at the table.

There have been so many other projects and initiatives developed within the CCP. It is difficult to list them all here. [CCP Mentor]

7. EVALUATION RELATED ISSUES

Almost at the end of the first scholastic year of its implementation, the Ministry has engaged an Education Officer from the Curriculum Department to evaluate the CCP. A number of interviews were conducted with all stakeholders, schools were visited and lessons were observed. This evaluation revolved around four main themes: learning outcomes, methods/pedagogies, resources, and assessment. Teacher training education needs to address the paradigm shift that has to be accomplished in the understanding and use of learning outcomes. Learning outcomes should not be fixed or as Eisner (2000) puts it they should not lead to a “uniformed army of young adolescents all marching to the same drummer”. Neuroscience is nowadays showing us that our brains are “as unique as our fingerprints”. Therefore having fixed learning outcomes would not be responding to the reality of today’s classroom. Learning outcomes have to be “both responsive and flexible, not only in terms of their interpretation in relation to specific discipline areas, but also in relation to the ways in which they are pursued and addressed in the learning and teaching settings” (Hussey & Smith, 2003).
The evaluation revealed that Assessment for Learning strategies need to be embedded in the pedagogy used. The strategies need to include techniques that reveal each student’s prior knowledge in order to be in an informed position and start from where the learner stands in his/her learning.

With regards to resources, the evaluation suggests the use of assistive technology as part of the resource package needed by this group of students.

When it comes to assessment practices, more workshops are necessary where teachers can discuss the assessment criteria so that standardisation is ensured.

At school level, the Head of School or the Assistant Head of School (depending on who is the co-ordinating person at school) together with the CCP mentor and teachers and Inclusion Coordinator, should organise meetings to discuss issues concerning the programme. One mentor commented:

_We discussed many issues such as the importance of working as a team and of building up a portfolio for each child which should be available for the mentor and Assistant Head. We also discussed problems we were facing at that time, such as the stability of the class and how students were interacting with each other and how we were going to deal with certain situations. [CCP Mentor]_

### 8. Achievement of Initiative’s Aims

**Have the original aims of the initiative been achieved?**

Work is still in progress as the programme started to function in October 2013 and the first batch of students will finish the course in June 2016. However, during this first scholastic year students have already provided evidence of having achieved outcomes. Most of this evidence was observed and also recorded in their portfolios. The sense of efficacy and their self-esteem were enhanced immensely when the students perceived that given the right instructions they could prove that they were able to learn. One cannot yet confirm that the initiative’s aims have been fully achieved as this will only be possible to verify in 2 years’ time. However, the evidence which is currently being collected along the way demonstrates that teachers teaching this group are slowly undergoing a mind shift, they are learning to explore alternative assessment methods, they are matching pedagogy with the learner’s needs and also using learning to choose the right assessment tool according to the purpose it intends to serve.
9. NEXT STEPS

In the near future, the CCP will incorporate a vocational aspect. These students will be offered the possibility to choose a vocational subject that would make their learning more relevant to their future aspirations after schooling. It will allow students to finish secondary schooling with a greater amount of skills and competences that would make them more employable or else give them the possibility to pursue their studies at a higher level in an educational institution.

10. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION


European Schoolnet is the coordinator of the KeyCoNet project.

European Schoolnet is a network of 30 Ministries of Education from across the European member states, leading educational innovation at European level. As a major international think tank, European Schoolnet operates key European services in education on behalf of the European Commission, member Ministries of Education and industry partners.

European Schoolnet’s activities are divided among three areas of work:

- Policy, research and innovation: information sharing and evidence building.
- Schools services: enhancing cooperation between schools across Europe.
- Advocacy: how ICT and digital media contribute to transforming teaching and learning processes.

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