

ERASMUS Key Action 3 Policy Experimentation, «Building School-Wide Inclusive, Positive and Equitable Learning Environments Through A Systems-Change Approach (SWPBS) »

Newsletter #1

October 2019

1. Setting up the ground for the SWPBS project in Cyprus

The May 29th, 2019 was an important day for the European SWPBS project in Cyprus. The Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (CPI; a key public authority partner) in cooperation with the Department of Primary Education (DPE) of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth (MECSY), published a circular inviting up to 40 elementary schools to express a preliminary interest to participate in the SWPBS project.

The circular was the outcome of two formal meetings held among CARDET, CPI and DPE in February 2019 and May 2019. During those meetings, public authority stakeholders collaborated with the research team to refine the school selection criteria, school responsibilities for project participation, and procedures schools ought to take to express interest. CPI has held an important and active role as a coordinator between the CARDET research team and the MECSY to finalize the aforementioned invitation regarding the school participation in the project.

Ministry's circular focused on asking school staff to express an initial interest by submitting their intention via the CPI's online seminars platform. Schools across the three main geographical regions of the island, Lefkosia, Larnaca and Famagusta were invited to participate for a two-year collaboration (school years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021). Electronic submission results showed that 42 elementary schools expressed a preliminary interest in participating in the project. Subsequently, the CARDET research team met on July 23rd, 2019 with the CPI team to define the next steps for contacting schools. The steps were:

1. The CPI would send out an email notification to all school principals at the end of August 2019 to verify again with them about the receipt of their electronic submission interest.
2. The CARDET research team would contact via phone each school principal to set up a meeting with school staff to present the project idea and provide opportunities for discussion and further clarifications.

2. First online training for the Tier 1 external coaches from Cyprus, Greece and Romania

Nine (9) external coaches from Cyprus, Greece and Romania began their first training in the implementation of primary prevention of the SWPBS system. The training was conducted through two bilateral two-hour teleconferences between Cyprus-Greece and Cyprus-Romania by Dr. Lefki Kourea (Project's Principal Investigator). During the online training, the external coaches had the opportunity to learn about their role and responsibilities as coaches to target schools. Additionally, a distinction was provided between the terms "trainer" and "coach", as in this project all nine coaches will primarily be supporting schools as they design and implement elements of primary prevention.

Additionally, the external coaches had the opportunity to visit the SWPBS E-learning platform, which will be the main tool of training, communication and support during the project. During the online training Dr. Kourea encouraged external coaches to exchange ideas, opinions and concerns using the platform forum. It is expected that through the platform, external coaches will have access to a rich material bank, which will support them along the way in implementing primary prevention in their local schools.