

# EUROPE

Ensuring Unity and Respect as Outcomes for People of Europe



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

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<b>Project Title</b>	<b>EUROPE - ENSURING UNITY AND RESPECT AS OUTCOMES FOR THE PEOPLE OF EUROPE</b>
<b>Acronym</b>	EUROPE
<b>Project agreement number</b>	AGREEMENT N°580416-EPP-1-2016-1-IT-EPPKA3-IPI-SOC-IN
<b>Status version</b>	Final
<b>Document number</b>	<b>Europe_D 7.1_Support_for_policy_reform_31.12.2018</b>
<b>Distribution level</b>	Open License  This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License <sup>1</sup>
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<b>Date</b>	31/12/2018
<b>Abstract</b>	This manual of best practices for policy makers provides a step by step roadmap of best practices for implementation and evaluation of the Quiet Time with Transcendental Meditation programme
<b>Keywords</b>	Policy guidelines, manual, best practices policy recommendations, Quiet Time Transcendental Meditation



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## 1 Background

In 2016 the Commission funded a number of projects in the area of “Social inclusion through education, training and youth”. The EUROPE project, of which results are reported in this document, is one of them, subscribing to the general objective of preventing radicalization, and the specific objectives of (a) fostering mutual understanding and respect among people with different ethnic or religious backgrounds, beliefs or convictions, (b) creating inclusive learning environments, and (c) supporting teachers and educators in handling conflicts and dealing with diversity.

Against this back drop, the EUROPE project implemented in several schools in Europe an innovative approach, known as Quiet Time based on Transcendental Meditation (QT/TM), that aims at promoting the psychophysiological well-being of all students, strengthening at the same time the teachers to deal with diversity and combat racism, extremism, and violence.

## 2 Implementing Quiet Time based on Transcendental Meditation



### What is the Quiet Time/ Transcendental Meditation Programme?

The Quiet Time/Transcendental Meditation Programme (QT/TM) adds a few minutes at the beginning and also at the end of the school day the practice of a simple scientifically documented psycho-physiological technique.

This technology, the Transcendental Meditation (TM) technique, is a non-sectarian, natural and effortless technique learned by millions of people of all religions, cultures, and educational levels. No changes to the curriculum content are required. Students who volunteer and whose parents approve, practice the TM technique during the Quiet Time period while other students engage in a parallel non-academic activity, such as quiet reading or rest.



The Quiet Time/Transcendental Meditation (QT/TM) programme addresses the root cause of violence and violent extremism by directly promoting the psychophysiological well-being of all students, while at the same time strengthening the teachers in their challenge of dealing with diversity and combat racism, extremism, and violence, contributing in this way to more effective learning in the classroom and promoting resistance to environmental stress of all types.



This is particularly relevant for promoting an inclusive learning environment to overcome the well-being challenges mentioned in chapter one. In fact, research shows that education systems are found to be more successful when they seek to ensure the social and emotional well-being of all children and young people, irrespective of their background, by strengthening their resilience and providing any support necessary (Hamilton 2013)

Some of the main characteristics of QT/TM are:

- It is easy to learn.
- It is easy and enjoyable to practice.
- It is religion and philosophy neutral.
- It can be easily implemented at all levels of education, from early child education to upper secondary education allowing a trans-sectorial intervention.
- It has a lasting effect.
- It involves different stakeholders: students, parents, teachers, and school management.
- Its upscaling is made possible by the availability of qualified instructors in the participating countries and across Europe.

These characteristics facilitate the inclusion of QT/TM into policy as a new programme or its integration as a support to already existing national programmes, giving it the potential to create a substantial impact on reducing violent radicalization and promoting tolerance and mutual understanding in European education.

### **The implementation audience and structure**

Being a whole-school approach promoting inclusive education, teachers, administrators and staff are offered the practice of the Transcendental Meditation Technique from the beginning of the implementation process, and parents are strongly engaged in the programme, being accurately informed about the good practice adopted. Parents are also offered the possibility to learn the TM Technique if they wish. Also, parent organisations are participating in the implementation of QT/TM. As such we distinguished the following target groups:

- Students: in particular disadvantaged students from the age of 10 to the end of secondary education, including students with lower learning outcomes and those with migrant and minority or disadvantaged social backgrounds.
- Teachers, a significant number of whom show a high level of stress, anxiety, depression, and burnout.
- School staff and school management.



- The wider school/educational community: in particular the parents and Teacher Training Centres dealing with Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

The Quiet Time /Transcendental Meditation programme is introduced in schools in a systematic well-designed way that includes schematically the main following steps

### Main implementation steps

The target groups primarily involved in the implementation are: the students, the teachers, school management, and the wider school community, in particular the parents.

The main implementation phases of the QT/TM programme are as follows (see figure 2.1 for a schematic representation):

#### *The formal agreement*

The implementation starts with an agreement with the school, but prior to the formal agreement, information sections are organised with the director of the school or the full management team. During this information section, the QT/TM programme is explained as well as the research being done. After the director receives personal training, a letter of intent is signed.

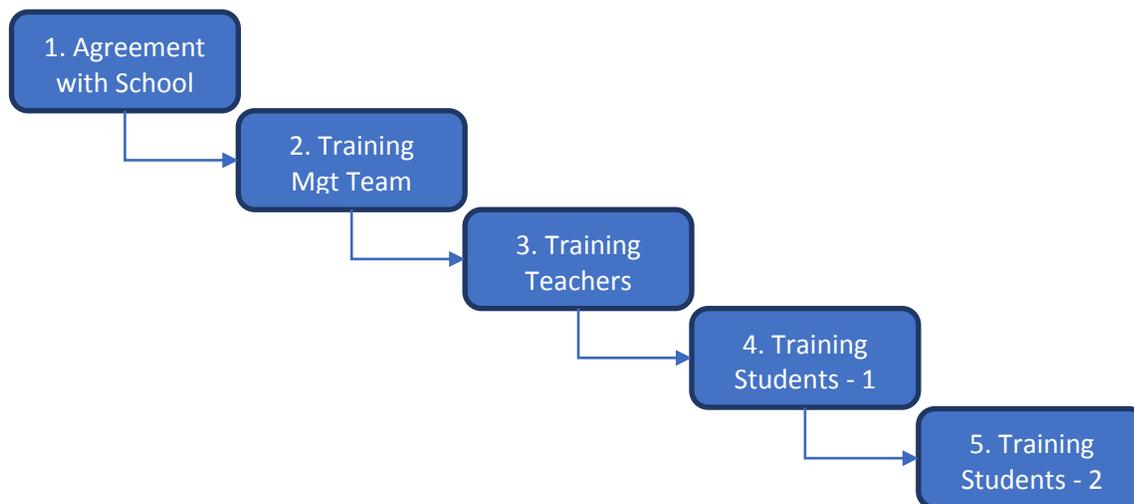


Figure 2.1 Schematic representation of the main implementation phases

#### **Training and practice of the Management Team**

The next group that receives training in QT/TM is the management team. Prior to the training,



the management team is pre-tested with standardized tests. Specific standardized tests are selected by the evaluation team taking also into consideration the availability of already existing validated translations in all the implementing countries languages. About three months after the training, the management team is post-tested and the data are then analysed (results in section 3).

### ***Training and practice of the Teachers***

A similar procedure is followed for the teachers. Personal training in QT/TM is not mandatory, therefore teachers participate to the training on a voluntary basis. In preparation to the practice of the students, the trained teachers in QT/TM are also instructed in how to monitor the practice of the QT/TM programme in the classroom. The teachers receive together with the management team a follow-up programme.

### ***Training and practice of Students group 1 (the intervention group)***

Prior to the training of students, a schedule is agreed with the school management team. Information meetings are held with the parents. Parents that wish can be trained. A first intervention group (in Figure 3.1 referred to as 'Students-1') as well as a control group or



delayed start group (in Figure 3.1 referred to as 'Students-2') are composed. Students of both groups are

pretested but at this stage only the intervention group receives training in QT/TM. After about three months the intervention group as well as the control group are post-tested. The intervention group receives a follow-up programme.

### ***Training and practice of Students group 2 (the delayed start group)***

The group that was serving as a control group in the previous phase can, together with students that wish to do so, now receive training as a delayed start group. This is done in order to allow every student that eventually wants to learn the TM technique, to do so. In order to give



feedback on their achievements, they are also post-tested (a second time) after three months if they wish. This delayed start group then joins the follow-up programme.

The data of the pre-and post-test of the intervention and the control group are analysed statistically (see results in section 3).

### 3 Research findings on Quiet Time based on Transcendental Meditation



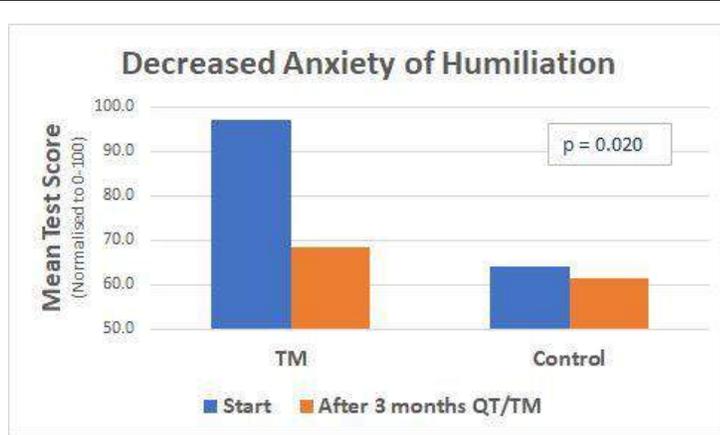
In this section we look at the results of the research done within the EUROPE project. The target groups for the TM technique are students, teachers, parents, and school management. However, the project sets out to evaluate the effects on the first two groups: students and teachers. In addition, the effect on the school as a whole is investigated.

The research approach uses three instruments for measuring the effects of the QT/TM programme in schools. These instruments are: (a) psychological tests for a quantitative study, (b) semi-structured interviews for a qualitative study and (c) analysing school statistics including such as absenteeism, disciplinary measures and academic performance.

#### The training of students

From all psychological measures considered in our study, encompassing stress, anxiety, resilience, satisfaction with life, and coping strategies, results seem to be focused on three dimensions. Students seem to be less anxious about being humiliated, using less anxious coping strategies and more resilient concerning their cooperation skills. Also, the qualitative assessment of the TM's impact corroborates the quantitative results: students refer to be calmer, less anxious and with more available personal resources to manage negative affects. They feel TM allows them to be more focus and relate it to an improvement of school achievement. These results seem to be validated by the previous described studies (eg. Nidich et al., 2009; Rosaen & Benn, 2006). In addition, our study accounted for frequency of meditation, which allowed us to perceive a tendency of increased benefits along the increase of meditation frequency.

The study analysed differences of psychological indicators between the control and experimental group, before and after the implementation of Transcendental Meditation. The experimental group presented a statistically significant difference. Here below some of the results from the psychological tests:



*Decreased fear of humiliation in students*

The TM group showed after three months significant decrease in anxiety of humiliation, while the Control Group showed no significant change. This measure reflects the extent to which persons may be anxious about being humiliated by others in social settings. This means that students that are part

of the QT/TM programme are feeling less anxious of humiliation in social settings, of which the school context (co-learners, teachers) are a major part.



*Increase in cooperation with other students and with teachers*

The TM Group showed a significant increase in flexibility in relationships and ability to work with others, ability to exchange information, ideas and to express feelings and needs. The Control Group did not show a significant change.

What we can say is that the EUROPE project study has shown that the QT/TM programme helps people to become more positive, happier and with a better outlook on life. In general well-being increases significantly. As elaborated in deliverable D.6.7<sup>2</sup> “Experiences with a Novel Approach to Preventing Violence and Implementing Inclusive Education” (chapter 1) these changes are indeed important factors (a) in preventing people to slide away to extremism and terrorism, and (b) in implementing an inclusive learning environment. Furthermore, these values help to develop and grow values opposite to radicalisation risk factors identified by Borum (2004) and Horgan (2008) such as alienation from society, victimization, the feeling of being unjustly treated, no moral standards or compassion with others, dissatisfaction with the society and the feeling that more violent action is needed to change things.

A more comprehensive analysis of the results for students in relation to the selected objectives is contained in D.5.5 and in D6.7 (chapter4)<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://europe-project.org/deliverables/>

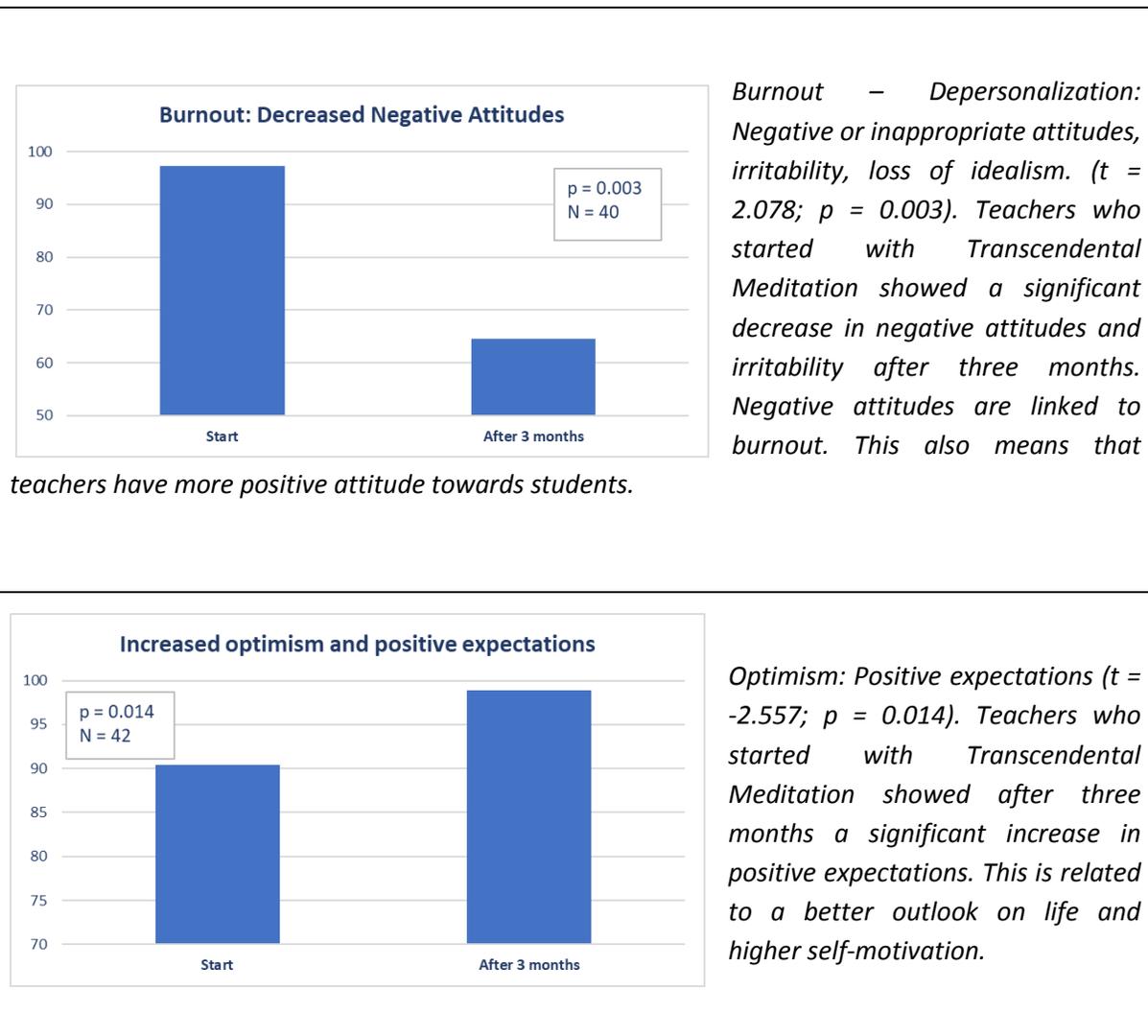


### The training of teachers and staff

In preventing violent radicalisation and promoting intercultural understanding and active, it is crucial to support teachers and educators in handling conflicts and dealing with diversity.

If we look at the totality of the results of the quantitative and qualitative study for teachers conducted in the EUROPE project, QT/TM has shown to provide significant contribution on decreasing of stress, negative affects and burnout in school teachers, and simultaneously on increasing job satisfaction, optimism, positive affects and well-being.<sup>3</sup>

Here below some of the results from the teachers' psychological tests.



<sup>3</sup> See D5.5 and D6.7 (Chapter 4) <https://europe-project.org/deliverables/>



The current study supports the premise that TM is a technique to achieve well-being among students and teachers, which, according to literature, could be a pathway to positive school climate.

The totality of the results of the quantitative and qualitative study shows a marked improvement in several psychological characteristics, connected to more openness, better relations with peers, a more positive outlook on life, more happiness and a greater satisfaction with life. Important to note is that these results were obtained by two times 10-15 minutes meditation a day. No counselling sessions, no discussions or no punishments of negative behaviour were involved. These changes come spontaneously, just because of the QT/TM programme. This gives an indication that students, and teachers, change from within; they changed not because of external pressure or intellectual reasoning, but they changed because of internal changes in their psychological makeup. Also, the size of the change is remarkable compared to the short period of time between the pre-test and post-test, only three months.

Therefore, can we conclude that QT/TM prevents young people from becoming terrorist and/or facilitates inclusive education? What we can say is that this research has shown that the QT/TM programme helps people to become more positive, happier and with a better outlook on life. In general well-being increases significantly. As mentioned above, these changes are indeed important factors (a) in preventing people to slide away to extremism and terrorism, and (b) in implementing an inclusive learning environment. Are these changes lasting? Time will tell, but it is very promising that people can practice Transcendental Meditation on their own, without any help from outside. Previous research shows an accumulative positive effect of prolonged practice of Transcendental Meditation. A more large-scale research can provide more definitive answers. We evaluate this limited-size pilot as successful for moving youngsters towards a happier and fulfilling life, without the negative connotations of extremism and terrorism.

Last but not least, the study shows that the QT/TM programme is also beneficial to teachers. The results of our study show a significant decrease of stress, negative affects and burnout and, simultaneously a significant increase job satisfaction, optimism, positive affects and well-being. This observed significant results show the importance of the QT/TM programme for the protection of teachers in their challenging profession and environments.

## 4 Enablers and Barriers



The EUROPE project has been investigating the potential enablers and barriers to the implementation of the QT/TM and has developed and tested different approaches for overcoming



difficulties, adapting the implementation approach also to different European system of education and to different needs of schools. This has allowed to develop a series of lesson learned about the 'best practices' of implementation of the QT/TM programme in the different schools and different system of education, involving all the school actors and the community as a key element for a successful whole-school approach/implementation, considering the different levels of challenges they might face. These lessons learned are the primary input for the policy recommendations (see section 5).

The major challenges encountered in the implementation in the EUROPE project have been:

- the time it takes before the Quiet Time/TM programme can be rolled out,
- the Quiet Time/TM programme being an innovative approach
- To adapt the curriculum timewise/schedule such that 10 – 15 minutes at the beginning and at the end of the school day are available.
- new teachers coming and leaving, or students going to other schools. This barrier can be overcome if QT/TM is "institutionalized" in the school day. The mobility of teachers and students can also be an enabler as they might introduce QT/TM in the new school.

The enablers, as the barriers, can be quite different in different countries. The enablers encountered in the project were:

- The QT/TM programme showed to be very compatible with the TEIP<sup>4</sup> in Portugal.
- The adoption by Teacher Training Centres as an accredited course.
- The flexibility given to schools to adapt the curriculum. In some countries it is easier to adapt the curriculum than in others.
- The recognition by the MoE of the QT/TM programme as a good practice
- Providing a national and international forum for sharing the experiences such as the UNESCO conferences where QT/TM was presented.
- Actually, policy making in general will make a big difference.
- The amount of problems the school has. One school reported that after having experimented various strategies, the QT/TM programme was the last hope for solving the behaviour problems in the school. The project experienced this more than once.

<sup>4</sup> Programa Territórios Educativos de Intervenção Prioritária (TEIP). The main aim of the Portuguese TEIP Programme is to promote educational inclusion in schools located in disadvantaged areas which include children 'at risk' of social exclusion. It is implemented in 137 school clusters. Specific improvement plans are developed and promote an improvement cycle in each cluster of schools.



- The fact that QT/TM was already implemented in other schools in the country. Experience by others is a great enabler.
- The involvement of parents, which turned out to be difficult especially in difficult schools, or migrant schools, drop out schools. Parents don't participate too much to the life of the school. But if parents get involved, for example through parent organisations, it is definitely an enabler.

The QT/TM programme was successfully implemented in different schools in different countries. While research findings have been presented in section 3, the subjective feedback was overwhelmingly positive. During the implementations a number of barriers and enablers have been identified that together with the research findings form the basis for scaling up strategies and policy recommendations (see section 5).

### Evaluation challenges.

It is worthwhile also to mention the challenges in the evaluation. Although ample scientific evidence exists<sup>5</sup>, it is primarily coming from studies outside Europe while local policy makers naturally tend to get involved in scaling-up an innovative approach in a more committed way if local evidence is provided. Hence, while the EUROPE project is *not* a research project, the more scientific evidence it can provide, the easier the scaling-up will be.

The project, not being a research project, did not plan for a full-fledged Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT), being aware of the challenges it brings, especially when the intervention affects behaviours and attitudes in an educational setting. However, in the course of the evaluation we wish to understand better where the barriers for an RCT would be, in order to formulate recommendations for future research. The challenges currently identified are:

- The spill-over effect. It has been reported earlier that the QT/TM approach has a strong spill-over effect, and this is very desirable from an implementation point of view. Concretely it means that less people have to enrol for the QT/TM programme in order to obtain a significant effect. However, from a research point of view it is an undesirable characteristic that one needs to take into account. There is a trade-off when constructing the control group. If one takes the control group from the same class, there is a risk of bias because of the spill over effect (contamination). If one takes the control group from a different class, there is the risk that the context is not enough comparable. For example, it is known that the influence of a teacher can cause a bias.
- Organisational. While the theory of setting up an intervention and control group are easy, the organisation in the classroom is not straight forward, particularly in the more difficult schools we were targeting. The difficulty of collecting data in all moments, without experimental mortality was a challenge difficult to overcome; also, the length of the psychological instruments was a problem to young children that lost focus because of this.

<sup>5</sup> See deliverable D1.1 <https://europe-project.org/deliverables/>



It should be noted however, that this scientific evidence seems to be more important to policy makers at a higher level: regional, national, European then to teachers, school management, and parents. The latter are usually more than satisfied if they see and experience the improvements of the children in terms of tolerance, anxiety, academic performance, etc. Moreover, the evaluation task is not limited to finding out whether QT/TM programme works or not. Indeed, an outcome is also a report on policy guidelines and recommendations.

## Key messages

In this section we present a number of key messages

### *Bridging analysis, practice and policy*

How the QT/TM Programme has contributed to our specific project objectives<sup>6</sup> has been fully elaborated in deliverable D5.2<sup>7</sup>. In short, QT/TM supports our objective as it restores the well-being balance of students as well as teachers. Motivational factors for radicalisation such as disenfranchisement, discrimination, personal failure, and personal victimization are all challenges that may create a well-being imbalance if individuals don't have the psychological resources to deal with it. Research shows that enhancing positive factors, also known as a strength-based approach to radicalisation, is easier than mitigating negative conditions, also known as a deficit-based approach. Hence, a self-balancing approach such as QT/TM, restoring the well-being balance to the individual is more effective. At the same time, well-being is now recognized as an integral part of an inclusive society and of inclusive education and QT/TM has been shown to improve the well-being of teachers as well, reducing burnout and improving their ability to deal with diversity.

The importance of **policy makers** has been recognized from the set-up of the project and indeed we see what a difference the support of an MoE can make. For example, for Portugal we can mention (a) the invitation of the national and regional MoE to come and present at the national TEIP conference, (b) to support that teachers get credits for getting TM training in Teacher Training Centres, (c) to recognize the QT/TM programme as a good practice, (d) the law that, under certain conditions, provides to schools the flexibility to alter the curriculum, etc. Such support is truly invaluable.

### *Indications about the results related to the up-scaling of the good practices*

The QT/TM programme has the **potential to scale up by itself** because of this self-selling aspect as demonstrated, during the implementation of the project, in Sweden (cf. a principal offering to be ambassador for the project), in Belgium where a migrant organisation implemented QT/TM as a spin-off of the Dutch initiative, and very much so by Portugal with its involvement of Teacher Training Centre (cf. the very good evaluation by teachers) and the adoption of QT/TM programme as a best practice and an official quality measure of improvement for the TEIP program in the implementing school in Algarve

<sup>6</sup> The specific objectives of the EUROPE project can be summarized as: preventing violent radicalisation as well as creating an inclusive learning environment fostering mutual understanding and respect, while supporting teachers to face the challenges that come with it.

<sup>7</sup> <https://europe-project.org/deliverables/>



(PT). The self-selling aspect of QT/TM does not mean that the implementation is effortless, but that the approach potentially creates a *grass-root pull* avoiding (or at least mitigating) the uphill struggle of an innovative idea push.

### ***External factors of influence***

One particular factor that seems to play a role in the cognitive opening towards QT/TM is the degree to which a school is in trouble. For example, one school reported that after having experimented various strategies, the EUROPE project was the last hope for solving the behaviour problems in the school. The project experienced this more than once.

A second external factor that will influence the uptake and upscaling of QT/TM is the expectation that that mental well-being in schools and higher education will get more attention in the next decade as a result of the worrying trend recently reported in the US of increasing psychological problems of the internet generation (a.k.a. iGen). Psychological disorder is rising amongst youngsters. Measurements between 2012-2016 showed an increase from 2.7 to 6.1 (126% increase) for young men and from 5.8 to 14.5 (150% increase) for young women. Depression measured between 2011-2016 for 13-19 old youngsters is rising from 4.5 to 6.4 for boys and from 13 to 19 for girls. Self-injuring with college students shows an increase of 30% between 2011 and 2016. The suicide rates increased 46% between 2007 and 2015 amongst 15- to 19-year-olds.

A third important external factor to the success of the uptake of QT/TM is the policy making. Although the project can provide all necessary information and rationale, policy making is not under the control of the project, and there are many measures (such as flexibility of the curriculum, or more attention for student well-being) that will make a substantial difference in the uptake of QT/TM.

### ***Recognition of the project innovative approach***

Without any doubt, QT/TM is being recognized as an innovative, unconventional approach by all educational institutions and policy making bodies that have been contacted. Even too innovative for some. However, with the introduction in schools of more approaches that address well-being, such as yoga or breathing exercises, it is expected that it will become easier to accept and implement QT/TM.

### ***Re-direction of initial activities to better suit the target group's needs***

There are no indications that the practice itself would need to be adapted. The up-scaling in schools looks promising with expansion activities going on in eleven European countries.

However, how different actors are involved can often be improved and our project is no exception. For example, towards the end of the project, more flexibility has been built in in the implementation work package allowing the schools to implement more at their own pace. Dissemination and awareness raising channels change, as technology develops.

### ***Mainstreaming efforts made***



As with all innovative approaches, it might take a while before the QT/TM programme becomes mainstream. With its introduction in various European countries we are at the pioneering stage. Time will tell us to what extent the QT/TM programme will mainstream. However, what we can say is that there is a clear need for schools struggling with violence, social exclusion, and other disadvantages. More than once, we have encountered schools that reported they were desperate as nothing seemed to work, while after the introduction of the QT/TM programme they reported marked improvements (see for example the testimonies of the principals and teachers)<sup>8</sup>.

While it has been recognised that it will take time to mainstream, the project made efforts at different levels: school, local, regional, national, international (primarily European). In order to facilitate mainstreaming, the project followed two lines of actions. Firstly, providing policy recommendations at all levels (from school to European level) that elucidate what is required for successful deployment on a wider scale. These recommendations are presented in full in the next section of this document. However, the most important recommendation is to facilitate that the approach can be “institutionalized”. Whereas the research shows significant improvements in restoring the well-being balance, it also concludes based on measurements of frequency that “more significant results would emerge if students were meditating more regularly”, which corroborates the need for institutionalization such that students can indeed practise the QT/TM technique regularly.

Secondly, the project worked with different mainstreaming actors. For example:

- The project has also worked with parent organisations with positive outcomes. For example, the work done together with the parent association APEJAA (P10) in contacting other parent associations, another main target of the project, brought the interest of 2 other schools in starting the project as well as the Portuguese youth institute.
- In teacher training centres in Portugal the training courses in TM are offered to principals and administrators as professional training accredited to their careers, covering the costs of the training.
- The project has been raising awareness of teachers, principals, researchers and policy makers through different dissemination channels. Through national and international conferences and networking actions. For example, the project was happy to receive Dr. Paulo André from the MoE Portugal together with his counsellor Mrs. Ivete Azevedo. They also attended, project presentations at the University of Algarve and Mrs. Azevedo attended the final conference of the EUROPE project in Brussels.
- While the TM technique is easy to learn, in order to have a high-quality practice, a labour-intensive follow-up is required for at least six months. Within the project, this is all organised through the implementation partners in Portugal, Sweden, and The Netherlands (P10, P11, P12). However, when QT/TM gets more traction the availability of sufficient QT/TM experts might become a challenge. Therefore, as a mainstreaming effort, the project has obtained agreement

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCghWGy40rd9HFLCYxVZX3IQ>



from Training Centres that train QT/TM experts to offer a special training programme for school teachers, for example as summer school.

- In Europe, the schools that have already organised this prior to our project are the schools in Skelmersdale (UK) and Lelystad (NL). While these are both state subsidized schools, the training in QT/TM is not and comes from private funds. In the US this happens at a bigger scale, for example through the David Lynch Foundation (<https://www.davidlynchfoundation.org/>) and the Center for Wellness and Achievement in Education (CWAE - <http://www.cwae.org/index.php>). Besides these models which are private funding models, the project will investigate, as part of the follow-on FRIENDS<sup>9</sup> project, the possibility of public funding or through public-private partnerships.



*Dr. Paulo André of the national, head of the TEIP - MoE (PT) addressing the school principal and the EUROPE project team at the Alberto Iria school in Olhão (Portugal)*

## Conclusions

### Further expansion perspectives

The EUROPE project has steered the interest in the Quiet Time / Transcendental Meditation approach also in countries not involved in the project implementation. Interest has come from schools, policy

<sup>9</sup> the **FRIENDS project** (Fostering Resilience, Inclusive Education and Non Discrimination in Schools - Project N° 592247-EPP-1-2017-1-IT-EPPKA3-IP1-SOC-IN) that is upscaling the implementation of QT/TM in new countries such as Belgium, Italy and UK, extending the implementation to non-formal education and expanding the age target from 5 years old children to adult education.

makers and organizations working with disadvantaged from Spain, Germany, France, Latvia, Ireland, Island through dissemination channels and activities.

This expansion has been supported also by the work of TM organization in the different European countries (e.g. Spain) which are helping to further expand the project through their channels and through the support of the team of expert in implementation, evaluation and expansion, connected with the EUROPE project.

The experience has shown that once the project is started in a new country in one school, than the interest spread fast to other schools in the same area or region and even Nation, allowing the creation of a sense of community within the schools that are implementing the approach at European level and allowing the sharing of knowledge and experience on the QT/TM implementation.

It is clear from the experiences in the two years project that results may differ very much by country. Related to this, the project believes that the exploitation can be very much enhanced by working more intensively with policy makers in different countries as well as with the TM charity organizations in the different countries.

The QT/TM programme has shown to be well compatible with other existing programmes for improvement already active at National level, i.e TEIP in Portugal. This show how the QT/TM is a flexible programme adaptable to the different systems of education, and easily integrable in local and National policies for students' development and school improvement.

**Some elements of sustainability** arising already in the course of the implementation of the EUROPE project include: a) A new law issued by the Ministry of Education of Portugal, regarding Autonomy and Curricular Flexibility<sup>10</sup> allowing the schools in Portugal to manage the curriculum while also integrating practices that promote better learning and allowing schools to get approval for special projects including QT/TM; b) Training of school teachers in QT/TM programme by the Teacher Training Centers, as an accredited professional course in Portugal and as a suggestion for other countries; c) Organizing training for school teachers to become teachers of Transcendental Meditation for their schools that could be offered as an elective credit course in teacher training centres.

## 5 Policy Making



This section is devoted to policy making, formulating a number of recommendations. Given that the EUROPE project delivered well working pilots in different settings (countries, types of schools, etc.), the

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.dge.mec.pt/autonomia-e-flexibilidade-curricular>  
<https://www.oecd.org/education/2030/Curriculum-Flexibility-and-Autonomy-in-Portugal-an-OECD-Review.pdf>



basic focus of these recommendations is on how these pilots can be scaled-up. This entails a number of feasibility as well as operational considerations.

### **5.1 Feasibility and operational considerations**

Apart from the questions of whether the QT/TM programme works and is worth doing, a basic consideration is whether the resources are there to scale the programme up. The resources we should consider are people involved in the scaling-up process and the methodological approach.

**Does it work?** A first question when considering scaling up is whether the proposed best practice is effective; in our case: does it indeed reduce the risk factors for radicalisation, does it indeed foster an inclusive learning environment, and does it indeed help teachers dealing with diversity? From Deliverable D.6.7 (chapter 2), supplemented with our own quantitative and qualitative findings presented in the same deliverable (chapter 4), we can indeed conclude that this is the case<sup>11</sup>.

**Is it worth doing?** Obviously implementing and sustaining a novel approach such as QT/TM, comes with a cost. The question at hand is then whether there is a positive Return on Investment (RoI)? A full cost-benefit analysis is beyond the scope of the EUROPE project. However, figures about the cost of ‘doing nothing’ give a clear indication. For example, the Global Terrorism Index report (IEP, 2017) estimates that the economic impact of terrorism for the period 2014-2016 is between 80 and 100 billion USD per year. It should be noted that these amounts do not even include the indirect costs – estimated in the US to be 0.7 and 1.0 percent of the BNP, nor the cost of human suffering.

Moreover, there is general agreement on the fact that tackling drop-out of students and burn-out of teachers and other well-being factors has a positive RoI. Specific studies on the positive outcomes of QT/TM programme – carried out in collaboration with the University of Connecticut and the University of Pennsylvania, School of Health Economy – show that the benefits to society are quite impressive: approximately \$ 2.5 million for every 100 students participating in a school-wide QT/TM programme. Each additional graduating student<sup>12</sup> results in a net increase of about \$ 170,000 over her/his lifetime (David Lynch Foundation). It should be noted that this study takes into account more benefits than has been investigated in our research. However, in establishing the RoI of QT/TM one should take into account all costs, but also all benefits.

**Policy levels involved.** Dealing with educational policies always implies a multi-level governance structure. The single school represents the first level from which we pass to the district level, the regional one, the national level and finally the European one. The different levels have distinct grades of autonomy, sometimes a stronger coordination role, other times they are in charge of setting the rules. In discussing the ten policy recommendations, we will distinguish these different levels.

<sup>11</sup> <https://europe-project.org/deliverables/>

<sup>12</sup> Compared to dropouts, high school graduates earn higher wages, live longer, and are more likely to raise healthier, better-educated children. High school graduates are also less likely to commit crimes and rely on government assistance.



**Methodological approach.** The scaling-up process is rooted in two interlinked dimensions: deepening and widening. The *deepening* process revolves around improving the QT/TM practice and embedding it in a permanent way. All the schools involved in the pilot have expressed the need to incorporate the QT/TM programme permanently in the school's curriculum. Therefore, the "experiment" carried out must be transformed into a continued practice, and this is also the way to assure a true dimension of sustainability in the process. The *widening* process assumes a scalable dimension from the particular to the general. In our case it means taking measures to grow the number of people being part of the QT/TM programme. This includes more students, more teachers and staff, more schools, and more teacher training centres.

## 5.2 Recommendations

After having established that the QT/TM programme works and has a positive ROI, this subsection looks at specific recommendations (see figure 5.1) taking into account the policy making level and exploring the deepening and widening of the practice. At the very core of the recommendations is the well-being of students, teachers, and staff, that is improved thanks to the self-balancing technique of the QT/TM programme.



Figure 5.1: Overview of the key objectives and recommendations

**Recommendation 1: capitalize on a proven approach** - *for all policy making levels.* Given that our research confirms and supplements earlier research on different psychological indicators, with positive results for students, teachers, and staff, the practice of QT/TM is recommended for more widespread implementation as a self-balancing prevention strategy to violence and violent radicalization and at the same time as a strength-based approach to inclusive education addressing psychosocial, social and physical challenges to well-being. It is estimated that the implementation of QT/TM yields a Return on Investment of more than 100% (i.e. the benefit is estimated to be at least 2-3 times higher than the cost), taking into account all benefits such as reduced drop-out, health benefits etc. The RoI can be bigger when a region or country implements QT/TM on a bigger scale following economies of scale including more efficient training and follow-up. The feasibility of this first recommendation has been demonstrated by the various implementations in schools across Europe during the project.



**Recommendation 2: promote well-being as a key objective** - *for regions and countries and Commission.*

It is recommended to integrate well-being for pupils, teachers, and staff as a key objective in regional, national, and European programmes as a wider home for innovative programmes/successful practices promoting well-being such as the QT/TM programme. For example, while the Commission recognizes well-being as an education objective, higher priority is given to the challenge of economic growth and the shrinking workforce (European Commission, 2012). However, there is now wide agreement that well-being plays an essential role in addressing these socio-economic challenges not in the least by combatting social exclusion and early school leaving. In addition, almost always, achieving cognitive, interactive and physical skills requires a learning process which is grounded on basic well-being. Finally, in the light of the alarming recent deterioration of well-being of the young internet generation – in terms of inter alia depression and suicide -, it is even more important to consider well-being as a key objective in regional, national, and European programmes.

**Recommendation 3: make the practice a daily routine** - *for schools.* Sustained results only come with sustained practice. Sustained practice of QT/TM can only be successful through its institutionalization in the regular daily curriculum in the school that is implementing it. As an analogy we can compare a well-being technique such as QT/TM with fitness exercises: while the exercise is easy to learn, one only stays fit when doing the exercise regularly. Likewise, QT/TM is like fitness for the mind, bringing balance to mind, body, and behaviour. Therefore, it is recommended to include well-being programmes such as QT/TM (and by extension any well-being technique) as part of the daily schedule for pupils, e.g. by dedicating a specific time of the day, and by providing permanent support by dedicated teachers. This recommendation has been confirmed by our findings showing that students that were more regular in their practice have significantly better results in the psychological tests.

**Recommendation 4: provide curricular flexibility** - *for regions and countries.* In a number of countries, schools don't have the authority to embed well-being techniques such as QT/TM in the school curriculum activities and having QT/TM separate from the curriculum makes the programme less effective. It is recommended to regional and national MoEs to make a difference here. An example from the EUROPE project is where the schools in Portugal could make use of a new law, regarding Autonomy and Curricular Flexibility, providing schools with the necessary conditions to manage the curriculum while also integrating practices that promote better learning and allowing schools to get approval for special projects including QT/TM.

**Recommendation 5: use a good implementation framework** - *for all policy making levels.* It is recommended to use a good implementation framework when introducing QT/TM in the school or region or country wide. An excellent Implementation Framework has been used and tested in the EUROPE project at the level of the school. It could be extended with elements of other implementation frameworks such as the Quality Implementation Framework of Durlak and Duprez (2008). The latter framework in itself contains a number of more detailed recommendations, such as the use of professional QT/TM experts and the use of pilot studies in order to identify and be able to act on local barriers and enablers, etc.



**Recommendation 6: involve parents organisations** - *for the local level.* While the involvement of parents is essential in a whole-school approach such as the QT/TM, parents are often organised in parent organisations that can be very instrumental. It is therefore recommended to work with these parent organisations for the implementation of QT/TM in a school. For example, the EUROPE project worked with one parent association that, because of the success of the QT/TM programme, was subsequently instrumental in contacting other parent associations and youth institutions.

**Recommendation 7: involve Teacher Training Centres** - *for regions and countries or more specifically Teacher Training Centres.* It is recommended to integrate QT/TM in teacher training and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) as an instrument to support teachers in the challenge of coping with the increasing diversity of the learning environment. There are different reasons for teachers to participate in the QT/TM programme, including creating a more caring environment, improving students-teachers relationship and teachers' ability to cope with difficult situations, promoting tolerance, increasing teachers' overall well-being, etc, but certainly it would be odd if the students were practising a technique which the teachers had not experienced for themselves. That this recommendation is doable has been demonstrated in the EUROPE project where three teacher training centres in Portugal were offering QT/TM as a course for which teachers could get credits as CPD. The results were very positive raising interest of 90 other teacher training centres. Teacher Training Centres could eventually offer courses to become QT/TM experts.

**Recommendation 8: appoint QT/TM teachers** - *for regional and national educational authorities.* It is recommended to appoint QT/TM teachers in every school that implements QT/TM with the objective of making the practice of QT/TM part of the daily routine of the school. This role may be filled by a specific teacher of QT/TM, or also by regular teachers (maths, history, art, language) or pedagogical counsellors etc., who have taken the training to become QT/TM teachers, and who offer the program as part of their regular activity at the school. Ideally such "tenure" QT/TM teachers are part of a school's well-being objectives. Training to become a specialist teacher of QT/TM could be offered as an elective credit course in teacher training centres.

**Recommendation 9: provide instruments to improve implementation** - *for regional and national educational authorities.* It is recommended to provide or facilitate instruments to improve the implementation and the practice in schools of proven approaches such as QT/TM. This can be done through proper networking or ideally a self-sustained community of practice. In the EUROPE project we have seen that at the school level, principals appreciate the possibility of exchanging experiences, even cross-border, or cross-language. There is also a need for school teachers who are supervising the QT/TM practice to be able to exchange experiences with colleagues. Another example is the sharing of evaluations, such as the one by Ofsted, the independent school watch dog in the UK, where a QT/TM school was judged 'outstanding' for Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare. But equally at an interregional or international level, it is worthwhile to exchange practices, in this case primarily in policy making, such as the MoE in Portugal giving, under certain conditions, freedom to schools to integrate programs such as QT/TM in the curriculum, or the possibility to gain CPD credits for QT/TM in teacher training centres.



An important instrument for networking is the establishment of a (European) expert centre for the implementation of the QT/TM programme, as was done in Portugal for the EUROPE project. Such an expert centre can provide expertise on the implementation of QT/TM in schools and teacher Training Centres and can also provide assistance to policy makers as well.

**Recommendation 10: create demand & facilitate solid research** - *for the regional and national level and the Commission.* For scaling up the QT/TM approach, awareness-raising and take-up actions are one of the first things that come to mind and several instruments such as publications and educational conferences are well known. In addition, MoE and the Commission can take very practical measures for take-up. For example, the willingness of schools to experiment with the QT/TM programme can be stimulated by including in the calls for project proposals approaches that prevent violence and promote inclusive learning and well-being and that accept novel approaches such as QT/TM. A good example is the Erasmus+ programme of the European Commission, where the EUROPE project and the FRIENDS project were funded.

Another important element in creating demand is to provide solid evidence that a novel approach such as QT/TM works. However, doing solid research on novel approaches in education (e.g. with an RCT) is hard. In order to get research to another level in terms of quality and frequency, the Commission and MoE could consider differentiating funding schemes and provide extra funding for projects that commit to higher quality research. Our experience in the EUROPE project is that designing an RCT for students is very difficult, and biases are very difficult to avoid. Therefore, it is also recommended to do multiple trials in order to create a larger body of evidence, such that studies with the strongest evidence (i.e. least bias) can be selected, and the possible variance in results can be better understood.

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