

EUROPE

Ensuring Unity and Respect as Outcomes for People of Europe



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Key messages

In this document we present a number of key messages

Bridging analysis, practice and policy

How the QT/TM Programme has contributed to our specific project objectives¹ has been fully elaborated in deliverable D5.2². 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 (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.

¹ 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.

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

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 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)³.

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 representatives from the Ministry of Education and Science, Directorate General of Education (DGE) of Portugal that attended project presentations at the University of Algarve and 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 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

³ <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCghWGy40rd9HFLCYxVZX3IQ>

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 FRIENDS⁴ 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 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

⁴ 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.

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 Flexibility⁵ 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 <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>

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