# EUR⬡PE

Ensuring Unity and Respect as Outcomes for People of Europe

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| **Abstract** | This deliverable describes the research design, implementation protocols and overall evaluation plan |
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# Introduction

The objective of this deliverable is to describe the process of evaluation, including the research design, implementation protocols which results in the description of the overall evaluation plan. This description gives guidance to the implementation process, how to conduct the tests with schools and the students and provides guidance, for the evaluation partners, how to process the raw data. The results of this protocol provide input for the policy creation. The document has three main objectives. Topics to be described in the following paragraphs:

- The Research Design - Research approach and principles
- The Implementation Protocol
- The overall Evaluation Plan

# 1 The Research Design - Research approach and principles

## 1.1 Problem definition, contribution and relevance

The main objective of the Europe project is: "Preventing violent radicalization and promoting democratic values, fundamental rights, intercultural understanding and active citizenship". With specific goals [CITATION EUR \l 1043 ]:

- Fostering mutual understanding and respect among people with different ethnic or religious back- grounds, beliefs or convictions, including by addressing stereotypes and promoting intercultural dia- logue;
- Creating inclusive and democratic learning environments;
- Supporting teachers and educators in handling conflicts and dealing with diversity;

The main objective of the EUROPE project is to upscale, assess the relevance, effectiveness, impact and scalability, and disseminate in a broader European context, a novel approach — known as the Quiet Time program for schools - that has the potential to contribute to National and European strategies in answer to the Paris Declaration[ CITATION Org15 \l 1043 ], being a whole-school proven approach for promoting social inclusion, tolerance, non-discrimination, personal development and other factors that prevent violent extremism, and to lead to a mainstreaming roadmap for evidence based policy actions/guidance at European and National level, thus helping to foster the role of education in promoting equality, social cohesion, nurturing mutual respect and embedding fundamental values in society. More in particular, it seeks to establish the effectiveness of the program in different European contexts and identify potential enablers and barriers, liabilities and opportunities for its implementation on a wider scale.

## 1.2 Research objectives

The objective of the research is to validate the effects of implementing Quiet Time within the curriculum of educational institutions. Specifically, the research will provide understanding and validation to the following objectives:

1. To evaluate and provide recommendations for the effectiveness of the program to achieve the goals of the Europe project and, in line with the schools, the objectives of the Paris declaration. In this respect, themes such as tolerance for other cultures and religions, openness, personal development, self-image and level of anxiety are measured.
2. To evaluate and provide recommendations for the experience of principals, teachers and parents regarding the effect of the program and the effect on students. This includes, among others, school climate, behavior of the students and academic.
3. To evaluate and provide recommendations for experiences of educational institutions that about the implementation of the program. Evaluation of the implementation protocol, how to implement quiet time within the institutions, best practices and how to circumvent possible blockades.

Furthermore, the evaluation working group will develop a policy recommendation for the European Commission to describe the approach and benefits for wider application of Quiet Time within the context of European educational institutions. The policy will include a summary of the research results on social inclu- sion, experiences of principals, teachers and parents. The policy will describe the reasons for quiet time be- ing an effective mean to obtain the goals of the Paris declaration, recommendations for best practices for implementing Quiet Time and the financial business case to understand the financial benefits and costs for implementing Quiet Time on a European scale.

## 1.3 Research questions and model

### Research Questions

The basic research questions are: (a) does it work, (b) can it be scaled up, and (c) what are the policy considerations? These research questions can be answered using different branches of science such as medicine, neuroscience, criminology, etc. The most efficient way in the context of our project setup, is using psychological tests that can measure dimensions such as anxiety, tolerance, burn-out, strengths and difficulties, resilience, positive and negative affects, etc.

Specifically, following the objectives of the EUROPE project, the key research questions are:

1. Is there scientific evidence that:

a. attitudes and behaviour associated with violent extremism of youth in schools in Europe decreases using QT/TM?

b. QT/TM fosters inclusive education?

c. QT/TM supports teachers and educators?

2. If the practice is proven to be effective, how can it be scaled up?

3. What are the policy guidelines and recommendations that can be formulated for deployment and scaling up?

Previous research indicates that Transcendental Meditation reduces stress and anxiety and improves moral behaviour (D 1.1). Based on this research, it was assumed that TM would have been supporting students in increasing positive behaviour with regard to social exclusion and democratic values, and decreasing the probability for negative thinking or behaviour. The objective was to prevent extremist ideas from developing and to stimulate students to develop positive attitudes, ultimately preventing students going to terrorism in thoughts and actions. To achieve this goal, Quiet Time and Transcendental Meditation Program have been used as a behavioural intervention technique to validate earlier research and to align the program with the goals of the Paris Declaration.

The project is set up as a pilot project where a limited number of schools can volunteer to participate. The research is conducted by the evaluation partners Utrecht University of Applied Sciences HU (P2) and Universidade do Algarve UALG (P3), and with the support of Maharishi Foundation UK (P8). The research approach uses three instruments for measuring the effects of Transcendental Meditation within schools. These instruments are:

(1) Quantitative study: psychological tests (pre-tests and post-tests) for impact indicators such as anxiety and stress levels from one side and social inclusion, resilience and coping ability, outlook on life, satisfaction with school(students)/job(teachers), satisfaction with life and well-being from the other side. For students, an experimental study design (with a control group) was used.

(2) Qualitative study: semi-structured interviews: for impact indicators such as school climate, ability to deal with diverse learners and different cultures

(3) school statistics: for impact indicators that were related to academic performance, absenteeism and suspension of students.

The data collection took will take place in general at two moments, the first a pre-test and after 3-month a post-test. The collection of quantitative data will be carried out by questionnaires, which include a battery of instruments that evaluate the dimensions in the study. The questionnaires will be applied by the researchers and by the coordinator of the implementation of the TM technique in a school context, in a classroom setting or in a specific space (time) for the collection of data. Standard instructions for all participants, read aloud, will be used to ensure equal treatment. To ensure the confidentiality of the data, the matching of the questionnaires will be done using an alphanumeric code created by the participants themselves. Besides the psychological tests described, also demographic information for both, students and adults will be collected (for example: (1) Students – Age; Gender; School Year; Disciplines most enjoyed; Disciplines least enjoyed; (2) Adults – Age; Gender; Teaching Level; Discipline that teaches). For teachers, a quasi-experimental study design (i.e. without a control group) will be used, comparing pre-test data with data of the post-test after three months practice.

There is limited experience for applying the Quiet Time/Transcendental Meditation in Europe. While in the North and South Americas hundreds of schools have adopted this program, in Europe two schools are applying Transcendental Meditation within the education curriculum[1]. Therefore, one of the objectives of the Europe project is to understand and provide recommendations how Transcendental Meditation can be embedded in the education curriculum of European schools. Both European schools are involved in the projects, to provide advice and best practices for implementing the program.

Changes in the educational system should be evidenced-based and special care should be taken for the quality implementation of the program[ CITATION Off13 \l 1043 ]. Sub question 3 addresses the conse- quences for implementation of the Quiet Time Program with Transcendental Meditation for schools throughout Europe. Based on the lessons learned and the experiences of implementing the program in schools, recommendations for policies for implementing the program will be set-up. These recommenda- tions include: first, projected benefits of the quiet time program, when implemented on a European wide scale; second, best practices for implementing the program and recommendations for quality assurance measures to ensure that the program has positive effects. This includes possible blockades for applying the program and approaches to circumvent or neutralize these blockades; and, third, financial aspects of apply- ing the program, linked to a cost-benefit analysis using a business case approach.

## Theoretical model

Previous research indicates that Transcendental Meditation reduces stress and anxiety and improved moral behavior. See Deliverable D 1.1 Based on this research, it is assumed that Transcendental Meditation will support students in increasing positive behavior with regard to social exclusion and democratic values, and decreased the probability for negative thinking or behavior. The objective is to prevent extremist ideas from developing and to stimulate students to develop positive attitudes, ultimately preventing students going to terrorism in thought and actions.

To achieve this goal, Quiet Time and Transcendental Meditation Program are used as a behavioral interven- tion technique to validate earlier research and to align the program with the goals of the Paris Declaration.

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[1] The *Maharishi Free School*, West Lancashire, England and the *Maharishi Basisschool "De Fontein"*, Lelystad, The Netherlands

# 2   The Implementation Protocol

## 2.1 The main implementation phases of the project

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

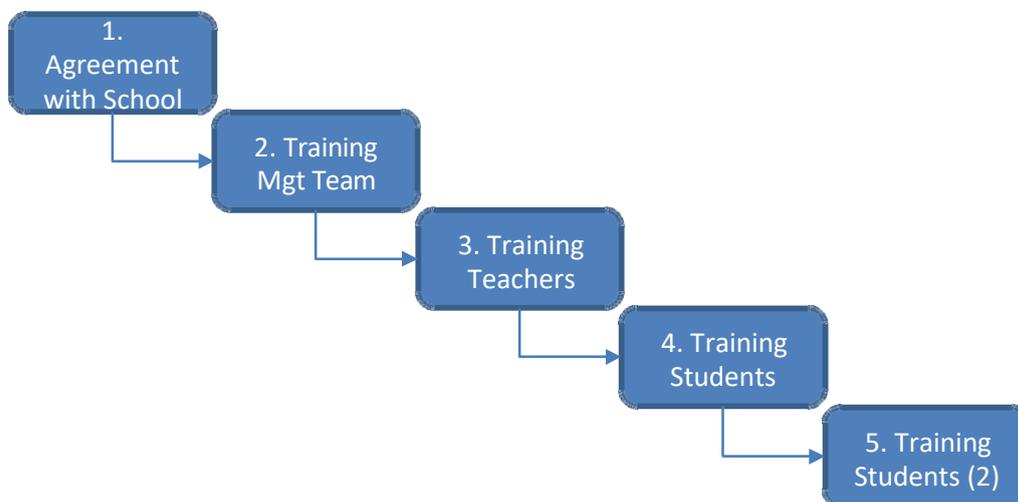The main implementation phases are as follows (see figure 2.1.1.for a schematic representation):



*Figure 2.1.1 Schematic representation of the main implementation phases*

## 2.2 The agreement

Prior to the agreement, information sessions are organised with the director of the school or the full management team. During this information session, QT/TMP is explained as well as the project and the research being done..

## 2.3 Training and practice of the Management Team

Prior to the instruction of the management team, it is pre-tested with standardized tests coming from the Evaluation WP. These tests are, if necessary, first translated. About 3 month after the training, the management team is post-tested and the data are provided to the Evaluation WP.
The major *outcome* of this phase is the Management Team being trained school being trained.

## 2.4 Training and practice of the Teachers

Prior to the training itself, the teachers participate in information sessions which are similar to the one for the management team. During this information session QT/TMP is explained as well as the project and the research being done. Further also what is expected from teachers is explained. The teachers receive a pre-test. Personal training in QT/TMP is not mandatory. About 3 months after the training, the teachers are post-tested and the data are provided to the Evaluation WP. The teachers receive together with the man- agement team a follow-up programme. In preparation of the practice of the students, the teachers are also trained in how to conduct QT/TMP in the classroom.

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

Prior to the training itself, a schedule is agreed with the school management team; a school Parent Commit- tee is established, and information meetings are held with the parents. Parents that wish can be trained. Students are pretested and a first intervention group as well as a control group are composed. Only the in- tervention group receives training in TM (the QT/TMP technique). After about 3 months the intervention group as well as the control group are post-tested. The intervention group receives a follow-up programme.

## 2.6 Training and practice of Students group 1 (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 students that even- tually wants to learn the 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 implementation is transferring results from the pre- and post-tests to the Evaluation WP and also or- ganizes (e.g. translations) in a later stage the possible surveys and interviews, the Evaluation WP wishes to conduct.

# 3   The Overall Evaluation Plan

## Overview

The objective of the Europe project is to validate previous research on Quiet Time and Transcendental Med- itation, and to understand how the Quiet Time Program can be implemented at the European-wide scale. To achieve this objective, the project is set up as a pilot project where a limited number of schools can volun- teer to participate. Participating schools will be supported to implement the program by experienced schoolteachers and teachers in the Transcendental Meditation program. At this point in time (December 2017), several schools in Portugal and Sweden have volunteered to participate in the program.

The research will be conducted by the evaluation partners of the Europe project, Partner 2, Utrecht University of Applied Sciences, Dr. Raymond Slot, Dr. Saskia Wijsbroek, Dr. Alberto Bramanti (Università Bocconi, Milan, Italy) and Partner 3, Universidade do Algarve, Dr. Sérgio Vieira and Dr. Joana Vieira dos Santos. Furthermore, from Partner 8 (Maharishi Foundation UK) Dr. Frans van Assche and Dr. Ashley Deans have also contributed to the research.

## Research Set-up

The research approach uses three instruments for measuring the effects of Transcendental Meditation within schools. These instruments are: (1) psychological tests, (2) semi-structured interviews and (3) analyz- ing school statistics. Areas that will be analyzed are, among others, absenteeism, disciplinary measures and academic performance.

## Psychological tests

Psychological tests are used in the context of a pretest and a posttest to measure several aspects of social inclusion.

## Semi-structured interviews

Some of the impact indicators have been defined, that are not all measurable by psychological testing. Examples of these indicators are: school climate, ability to deal with diverse learners and different cultures. To measure these type of impact indicators, several semi-structured interviews will be conducted, with parents, teachers and school management.

## School statistics

Impact indicators, that are related to academic performance, absenteeism and suspension of students are derived from school statistics.

# 4  References

[1]  EUROPE Consortium, „Detailed Description Of The Project," 2016.

[2] Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, „Declaration on the 13 november terrorist attacks in paris," Permanent Council OSCE, Paris, France, 2015.

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