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FRIENDS

Fostering Resilience-Inclusive Education and Non-Discrimination in Schools

A NOVEL APPROACH TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Preface

In this report we present the results of the FRIENDS project, a concerted effort in response to the European Commission's call for projects with the objective of disseminating and scaling up good practices on inclusive learning initiated in particular at local level. The FRIENDS project focussed on promoting inclusive education and training and fostering the education of disadvantaged learners, including through supporting teachers, and educators and leaders of educational institutions in dealing with diversity in the learning environment.

Compared to more intellectual approaches, the FRIENDS project relied on the Quiet Time based on Transcendental Meditation (QT/TM) programme for schools. This adds a few minutes after the beginning and before the end of the school day for the practice of a simple scientifically documented psycho-physiological technique - the Transcendental Meditation technique. This program directly promotes the psycho-physiological well-being of students, a required ingredient of effective inclusive education.

Teachers, management staff, principals, educators and parents may benefit from reading what this QT/TM programme is and how it brings positive changes to the lives of students and other learners, teachers, staff, and the whole school atmosphere. Researchers may be interested to read about the scientific underpinning of how a simple approach to restoring well-being balance, can make a difference in implementing inclusive education. Policy makers at all levels, from the local level up to the European level, may benefit from reading about the scientific results of this project, as well as how this novel approach can be scaled up with the help of practical guidelines for implementors and policy makers.

The report is organised as follows. The report starts with an analysis of different aspects of inclusive education - with well-being as an essential ingredient - and the resulting challenges for teachers, while establishing a line of reasoning from this analysis to specific research questions. Second, we present the experiences of the implementation in schools: the steps, the experiences, the enablers and barriers. Third, the results of our own scientific study, using quantitative and qualitative methods, is presented. The report ends with practical guidelines for policy makers of how the QT/TM approach can be implemented, disseminated, and scaled up.

This report could not have been written without the contributions of so many people. Our special thanks go to the coordinators of the project: Fabrizio Boldrini and Maria Rita Bracchini, to our project managers Virginia Marconi and Nicoleta Susanu, and to all the staff of the Hallgarten-Franchetti Foundation. We are in debt to all the schoolteachers, principals, and management staff of the participating schools for the very practical collaboration and support in the implementation; to Manuel Correia Caetano Nora for his incredible work with Teacher Training Centres and policy makers; to Nádia Ferreira of the Ministry of Education (PT) for providing the favourable conditions; and to all QT/TM instructors facing the challenges of implementing a novel approach. Our final thanks go to the more than fifty people that worked on the project and especially Mirta Castellaro and Stefano Mancin for coordinating so many tasks.

Frans Van Assche, Editor
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Foreword

The world of knowledge takes a crazy turn
When teachers themselves are taught to learn.
BERTOLT BRECHT, *Life of Galileo*

Children are an "aware" kind of human being. They are vividly self-conscious of what their world is and have a real and sophisticated vision of its interconnections. They live the world that surrounds them, in the same mood an adult watches a film. During a movie, we don't make plans, don't ask ourselves about the real consistency of the situations (if Spider-man jumps up over a building we do not ask if it can be a real possibility of a man doing that), don't evaluate, don't spend time to analyse.

The world is an exotic place for all the children, like the adults when they visit far away countries. The senses are alert, everything sounds new and interesting. It is a feeling that, even though partially, allows us to recall the day of early childhood when we were curious and eager to know.[1]

Alison Gopnik, a psychologist, who spent a lot of time studying the development of the child's mind and explaining with experimental procedures the meaning and the relevance of the first years of human childhood, presents us with an analogy that is quite interesting for those who are going to read this document about experiences of Quiet Time based on Transcendental Meditation (QT/TM) in a good number of European schools.

In the experience of meditation, Gopnik writes, the mind goes over things, reaching a new and unexpected depth, in order to be able to look at the interior and exterior world with another eye. As the objects that surround you lose their factual essence, you experience that all seems to be lighted up, giving a new vision of what is useful, what is not useful for your

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[1] Gopnik Alison The Scientist in the Crib: What Early Learning Tells Us About the Mind (with Andrew N. Meltzoff and Patricia K. Kuhl) (hardcover: William Morrow, 1999.

conscious state[2]. For this author meditation and travel seem to produce what the philosophers define as "same phenomenology"

What in this particular experience happens to the adult mind is what the author calls a "lantern consciousness". Expressed in term that "you can visit Beijing without leaving your room"[3]. A lantern consciousness is something very far from what psychologists call "flow". In the flow our mind is focused in a certain activity or object and we lose ourselves in that context. The lantern consciousness dimension is something that is very close to what a child can feel, when he/she starts discovering the external world. Everything needs to be seen in a new perspective and the mind is eager to learn[4].

The experience of learning is multidimensional. And takes place in unexpected situations and forms. The report that you are going to read, which is the result of the FRIENDS project, proposes this idea. I invite all the readers to consider what is proposed and outlined in the project and consequentially, in this document.

The idea that is underscored, but is very evident in all the essays, is the need to favour a proper and active "state of mind". This concept invites us to recall what Maria Montessori, the Italian pedagogue, well-known for her method still very popular in many countries, defines as "the prepared learning environment".

A prepared environment is an essential element of an authentic Montessori classroom. It is considered a key-factor that allows the child the freedom to choose their activity based on their interests and readiness. Montessori stresses a lot the opportunity that has to be given to promote sensorial experience and an equilibrate motorial development[5].

It could appear in contradiction with the Transcendental Meditation experience. As you discover in this report, Transcendental Meditation –TM is a technique that is described as a process of "turning the attention 180° away from the outer world of sensory experience towards the subtler inner levels of the mind"[6]. In TM, people are quiet and restful, but this activity

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[2] Cfr Gopnik Alison, The Philosophical Baby: What Children's Minds Tell Us About Truth, Love, and the Meaning of Life (hardcover: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009, ISBN 978-0312429843) quoted by Raniero Regni, Montessori e le neuroscienze, Fefè editore, 2019 p.39 the English translation is mine.

[3] Ibidem p.129 I'm writing this text when in China is exploding something that probably will be defined as "pandemia". With my present feeling, visiting places without moving, assumes a real new and unexpected meaning.

[4] Ibidem p.130.

[5] Montessori, M. (1992). The secret of childhood. 17th ed. New York: Ballantine Books.

[6] Zamarra, J.W., Schneider, R.H., Besseghini, I., Robinson, D.K., & Salerno, J.W. (1996). Usefulness of the transcendental meditation program in the treatment of patients with coronary artery disease. *American Journal of Cardiology*, 77.

can be considered an approach to assume new ways for exploring the personal inner environment so to allow the experimentation of new forms of harmony.

According to Montessori, the prepared environment is crucial for helping to develop the independence and the desire to learn. She writes "A child learns to adjust himself and make acquisition in his sensitive period."[7]

In this report, the environment is described as "prepared" in a new and unprecedented way. The proposed learning space is composed by the inner space of each child and considers the opportunity to include a concept that is really connected to the Montessori schools' daily experiences. The concept of living in place where "it is possible to be happy"[8]. The goal of the introduction of the practice of meditation, in particular what is defined as Transcendental Meditation, is increasing the well-being of students and teachers.

It is a practical idea, that can have an influence also on the future definition of the educative space, in term of physical realization of new schools, where a space is dedicated also for QT/TM and de-stressing activities.

The meaning of policies that are addressed to introduce the individual well-being have to consider a new and large family of concepts that fall under the so-called "non-cognitive skills".[9]

Even though this is not the best place for a deep discussion about what we label with this term, and considering that this category of concepts deserves a critical perspective, we can affirm that some limitations and ambiguities inherent to this "negative" classification (non-cognitive skills), is an educational issue introducing a set of "newly discovered abilities" that the students will use for their social and personal life, strictly related to the well-being and a positive "spiritual" dimension of the individuals.

Following what Montessori affirms, it can be considered that there are no skills (or abilities) that do not have a cognitive basis, intended as information to be processed.

However, experiences modify the human brain, as a sculpture that has to be re-shaped every time, we meet other conceptual or physical challenges or events[10] .

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[7] Montessori M., the absorbent Mind, Henry Holt & Co; Reprint 2005.

[8] Boldrini F., Bracchini MR "my beautiful school" a place where it is possible to be happy, *Montesca Papers*, 2011.

[9] Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The "what" and "why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11(4), 227–268.

[10] Robertson I., Mind Sculpture: Your Brain's Untapped Potential, paperback, 2000.

It is difficult to think of cognitive processes completely abstracted from "emotional" or "psycho-social" basis. The emotional aspect largely influences a whole series of eminently cognitive processes, such as the attention and focus that are frequently at the mercy of a more or less marked anxiety-provoking propensity of the subject. We are aware that in the school environment, the children are exposed to a range of stressful situations that determines a negative impact on their psycho-social status, especially when they come from a difficult and problematic personal and social background. This can provoke an effective reduction in their ability to focus, learn and retain information. A positive social connectedness is an essential protective factor together with a positive and effective "sense of belonging"[11].

This report provides an interesting contribution on the potentiality of the application of meditative practices and techniques in a learning environment that can have positive effects on what has been defined as the Bronfenbrenner's ecological model[12].

This model applied to schools indicates that the learning environment is an interconnected system, inside which what happens in part of it has an impact on what happens in another.

The introduction of meditation and other practices that are not directly perceived as aimed at producing cognitive abilities, facilitate the creation of these interconnections, because just as free conversations involving students and families in free spaces within school buildings, they favour a more critical perception of individuals' inner lives and lead them to get to know each other better.

Transcendental Meditation is addressed also to teachers and school staff, because the well-being of teachers is really relevant as burnout, very common especially in socially critical conditions and urban districts, can affect the promotion of a positive school culture. The FRIENDS project partnership is aware that in promoting well-being and social educative equity, the strategy addressed to propose Transcendental Meditation is a contribution that has to be reinforced with many other models and tools. However, it is a way to determine positive reactions and to create a better and closer school community.

A project is a journey. When you leave, you buy your ticket and you start figuring out what you are expected to see and who you will meet. Then

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[11] Werner, E. E. (2013). What can we learn about resilience from large scale longitudinal studies? In S. Goldstein & R. Brooks (Eds.), *Handbook of Resilience in Children* 2nd Edition (pp. 87-102). Dordrecht, Nether- lands: Springer.

[12] Bronfenbrenner, U. (2005). The developing ecology of human development: Paradigm lost or paradigm regained. In U. Bronfenbrenner (Ed.), *Making human beings human: Bioecological perspectives on human development* (pp. 94-105). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

the ship starts moving and the mental world you have mapped out, acquires new meanings and traits. The FRIENDS project has been a very interesting journey for me. I had the opportunity to stay in touch with wonderful people. All the partners gave their contribution with passion and professionalism. It is not common to work with a group of people so fond of the work they are doing and so motivated to realize benefits for all the school community.

I must confess that without my staff at the Montesca Foundation, I would have been in great trouble. For this reason, I wish to express my delight to work with all of them.

Finally, let me express my gratitude to Frans Van Assche for his friendly support and competent work.

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A NOVEL APPROACH TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

THE FRIENDS PROJECT

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1 Inclusive Education through a Novel Approach fostering Well-being

Over the past decades, many researchers and policy makers have highlighted the two-fold relationship between inclusive education and well-being. Firstly, one of the goals of inclusive education is to create well-being for students, teachers, and staff and thereby provide the basis for social inclusion and general well-being in society. The latter is, for example, illustrated by General comment Nr. 4 on Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2016, page 20). In particular, this General comment claims that inclusive education is to be understood as a human right, a principle that values all learners' *well-being*, a means for realising other human rights and a process for eliminating barriers. Secondly, well-being of students, teachers and staff is instrumental to inclusive education and a properly functioning inclusive learning environment.

In this chapter we explore this background further, leading to concrete research questions concerning the novel approach implemented in the FRIENDS project, known as Quiet Time based on Transcendental Meditation (QT/TM). Chapter 2 elaborates on the implementation of QT/TM in several schools in four European countries: Portugal, Italy, Belgium, and the United Kingdom. Chapter 3 presents the results of our own research using psychological measures as well as qualitative research instruments. Chapter 4 concludes with a discussion on how to scale up this best practice and presents an implementation framework for policy makers.

1.1 Inclusive education

The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (EASNIE - 2018) has defined inclusive education as:

> *"the provision of high-quality education in schools that value the rights, equality, access and participation of all learners."*

This definition builds on the above-mentioned comment Nr. 4 (CRPD, 2016, page 20). In this definition of inclusive education, 'all learners' means the full spectrum from highly talented youth to pupils with fewer opportunities. What **fewer opportunities** means in this context is nicely elaborated by the Directorate General for Education and Culture (DGEAC) of the Commission. DGEAC (2014, page 7) describes a number of situations preventing young people from taking part in employment, *formal and non-formal education*, trans-national mobility, democratic process and society at large, as follows:

- *Disability (i.e. participants with special needs): young people with mental (intellectual, cognitive, learning), physical, sensory or other disabilities etc.*
- *Health problems: young people with chronic health problems, severe illnesses or psychiatric conditions etc.*
- *Educational difficulties: young people with learning difficulties, early school leavers, lower qualified persons, young people with poor school performance etc.*
- *Cultural differences: immigrants, refugees or descendants from immigrant or refugee families, young people belonging to a national or ethnic minority, young people with linguistic adaptation and cultural inclusion difficulties etc.*
- *Economic obstacles: young people with a low standard of living, low income, dependence on social welfare system, young people in long-term unemployment or poverty, young people who are homeless, in debt or with financial problems etc.*
- *Social obstacles: young people facing discrimination because of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, etc., young people with limited social skills or anti-social or high-risk behaviours, young people in a precarious situation, (ex-)offenders, (ex-)drug or alcohol abusers, young and/or single parents, orphans etc.*
- *Geographical obstacles: young people from remote or rural areas, young people living on small islands or in peripheral regions, young people from urban problem zones, young people from less serviced areas (limited public transport, poor facilities) etc.*

Today, an inclusive learning environment seeks to include the full spectrum of pupils, from highly talented youth to those with fewer opportunities, in a single learning environment in order to provide equal opportunities and to foster social inclusion in the school, the community, and adult life. Researchers point to the need for inclusive education as a means of preventing school failure (early school leaving, low levels academic achievement, and poor transition to adulthood) and as a means of achieving a higher degree of well-being for all.

1.2 Students' well-being: a required ingredient of an inclusive learning environment.

Whereas many conceptions about well-being in general exist, our work pertains to an education context and therefore, the definition for students' well-being adopted in this document, refers to *the psychological, social and physical functioning and capabilities that students need in order to live a happy and fulfilling life* (See also OECD, 2017, page 78). This definition recognizes the right of children to have proper education, acquiring the skills

to improve their well-being during their school days as well as in the future. Indeed, different authors state that students' well-being is a goal in itself. Heyder et al. (2020) and the European Commission (2012) refer to it as one of the *educational* goals. The OECD calls on policy makers and educators to pay attention to students' well-being *now*, while they are students (OECD, 2017, page 8). Huebner et al. (2004) call on teachers and educators to take preventative measures in order to enhance the well-being of students, rather than having to remedy problems after they arise. Eurochild (2014, page 6) advocates for children's rights and well-being to be at the heart of policy-making.

However, more importantly for realising inclusive education successfully, is that well-being is *a required ingredient* for inclusive education. While lack of well-being and involvement can lead to educational difficulties even for highly talented children (Van Sanden & Joly, 2003), well-being of children is more at risk for children with fewer opportunities, leading to a vicious circle as highlighted by Lawson (2002, page viii, own underlining).

> *When well-being is low, vicious cycles develop, and they are self-reinforcing. Indices of vicious cycles include ineffective schools, unhealthy children and youth, unsafe neighborhoods, toxic social and physical environments, destabilized family systems, high level of unemployment, and clusters of co-occurring social problems such as substance abuse, domestic violence, delinquency, and child abuse and neglect.*

This can be understood when we have a closer look at the general definition of well-being as developed by Dodge et al. (2012) that sees well-being as a balance between physical, psychological, and social *challenges* on the one hand and physical, psychological, and social *resources* to meet those challenges on the other hand (see figure 1.1).

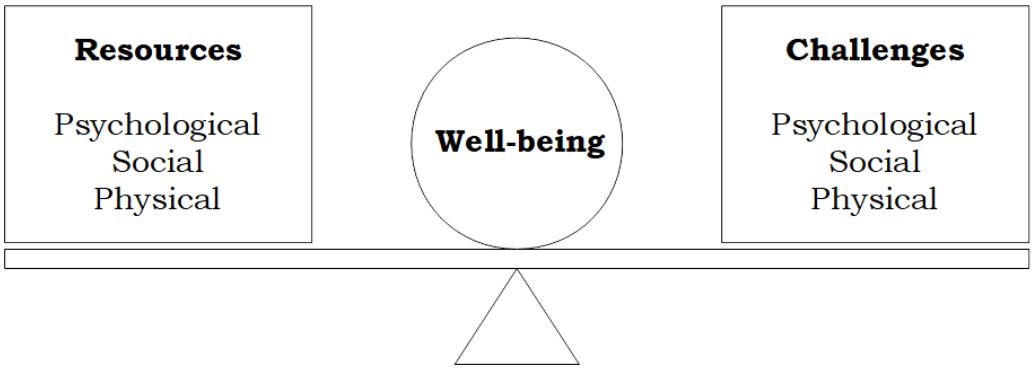


Figure 1.1. Defining well-being as a balance.

From this definition follows also that effective learning involves balancing educational challenges with educational resources. Taking Bloom's (and followers) taxonomy (Kratwohl, 2002) as an example, the challenges and resources of figure 1.1 translate to cognitive, affective, and psycho-motoric

challenges with cognitive, affective, and psycho-motoric *resources and skills* acquired during education. Over the course of the education trajectory, challenges and skills increase.

However, given that learners have limited resources, learning will suffer when learners are faced with too many additional challenges, which must be addressed in inclusive education, such as disability, health problems, educational difficulties, cultural differences, economic obstacles, social obstacles, and/or geographical obstacles (see the overview of fewer opportunities earlier in this chapter). The effects of the loss of well-being are, for example, illustrated by the OECD report (2017) on "Student's Well-Being".

- This OECD report states that students' motivation to achieve and personal ambition is related to their socio-economic status, while students who are among the most motivated score 38 points higher in science (the equivalent of more than one year of schooling) than students who are among the least motivated.
- Students across OECD countries who reported that they feel like an outsider at school score 22 points lower in science, on average, than those who did not report so.
- Across OECD countries, low performers were more likely to report exposure to physical, verbal and relational bullying.
- Anxiety about schoolwork, homework and tests is negatively related to performance in science, mathematics and reading.

As a general conclusion we can say that whereas (lack of) well-being has very significant effects on regular education, *students' well-being is essential for inclusive education to succeed* and measures to restore a well-being balance are required. See also Van Sanden and Joly (2003) outlining the good conditions for inclusive education.

1.3 Realising students' well-being through Quiet Time based on Transcendental Meditation (QT/TM)

Following the above model, realising students' well-being (i.e. restoring the well-being balance) is achieved by influencing environmental factors on the one hand and making the students more resilient to well-being imbalances on the other hand. The approach which has been chosen by the FRIENDS project, i.e. QT/TM, works on these environmental factors, but, as a self-balancing technique, also influences the well-being of the students directly.

Firstly, QT/TM decreases social and mental challenges such as bullying, violence, ADHD, etc. For example, QT/TM was found to produce a significant improvement in the QT/TM group compared to controls in social-emotional competencies after four months ($p < .001$) (Valosek et al., 2019),

thereby decreasing well-being challenges that hamper inclusive education. ADHD students showed greater cognitive flexibility (improved letter fluency ($p=.017$) and reduced EEG patterns characterizing ADHD (reduced theta/beta ratio ($p=.05$)) and significant improvements in ability to focus, organizational abilities, ability to work independently, happiness and quality of sleep on the Likert Scale of parents' observations (all p values $<.005$) (Travis, Grosswald & Stixrud, 2011).

Secondly, QT/TM provides improved well-being resources, for example for students by making the teachers more effective as found in a study by Elder et al. (2014) which shows that QT/TM was effective in reducing psychological distress in teachers and support staff working in a therapeutic school for students with behavioural problems.

Thirdly, perhaps even more important is the effectiveness of QT/TM as a self-balancing technique for the students themselves. A statistical meta-analysis of 146 independent study results found that the Transcendental Meditation technique is significantly more effective in reducing trait anxiety than procedures of concentration or contemplation, or other techniques ($p<.005$, effect size 0.7) (Eppley, Abrams & Shear, 1989). Significant improvement in anxiety ($p=.001$) has also been reported in young adults by Nidich et al. (2009), along with decreases in psychological distress ($p = 0.001$), depression ($p = 0.013$), anger/hostility ($p = 0.029$) and increased coping ability ($p = 0.002$). Elder et al. (2011) have reported decreased psychological distress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms (all $p<.05$) in minority students in the USA.

1.4 Well-being for teachers and staff – a whole-school approach

Creating an inclusive learning environment, dealing with diversity, and preventing violence and bullying, poses challenges to teachers as well, who risk burn-out and other problems. Hence, well-being for teachers and staff (e.g. decreased emotional exhaustion, depression, psychological distress, anxiety, etc) is essential for a good functioning inclusive learning environment, but at the same time well-being is of great value for the teachers and staff themselves. Therefore, the well-being of teachers and staff is part of the FRIENDS project objectives. Teachers and staff and even parents can participate in the QT/TM programme because QT/TM has no age restriction and can be used as a self-balancing technique for all ages. Such a whole-school approach has been shown to be beneficial, not only by changing the whole school climate but also by facilitating the institutionalisation of the QT/TM programme.

1.5 Experiences, findings, and outlook

The general goal of the FRIENDS project was:

- to adapt, replicate on a wider scale, and transfer the chosen good practice on inclusive learning (i.e. QT/TM) to various European countries, targeting secondary schools and adult education, as well as non-formal educational institutions with minority students, or those with disadvantaged or migrant backgrounds, and
- to demonstrate on a wider European scale that the QT/TM, implemented in a school/educational environment, is a most effective whole-school approach to promote inclusive education. This is accomplished by training and supporting teachers, educators and leaders to deal with diversity, and foster the education of disadvantaged learners through promoting social inclusion, tolerance, resilience, improved academic achievement, non-discrimination and respect for diversity. Taken together this programme provides the basis for developing inter-cultural understanding and dialogue, combating discrimination on all grounds, and preventing bullying and violence.

In this context, the basic research questions are: (a) does QT/TM 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. However, the most efficient way in the educational context of our project, is using psychological tests that can measure dimensions centred around well-being as a common denominator for implementing inclusive education for students. For teachers and staff, dimensions related to the challenges that come with providing inclusive education have been chosen.

The next chapters elaborate on this by (a) providing an insight in and reporting on the practical implementation in schools, (b) reporting on the results of our own research, and (c) investigating the potential of scaling up the QT/TM practice with an implementation framework for policy makers.

2 Experiences with the Implementation of QT/TM in Schools and Teacher Training Centres

The QT/TM programme consists of adding 10-15 minutes at the beginning and at the end of the school or working day when participants have the opportunity to practice the Transcendental Meditation (TM) technique. Extensive research studies report an overall positive impact on decreasing stress and anxiety; increasing creativity and intelligence; improving academic performance; increasing tolerance and resilience; lowering levels of anger and hostility; and decreasing the incidence of violence across a broad spectrum of society.

The uniqueness of this approach is that it promotes inclusive education by directly addressing the psycho-physiological well-being of the student that contributes to more effective learning in the classroom and resilience to environmental stress of all types (see chapters 1 and 3). The rest of this chapter presents; an introduction to the implementation framework; the implementation results of the FRIENDS project; keys to success and scaling-up activities.

2.1 The implementation framework

The framework for implementation in a school is more extensively described elsewhere (Castellaro et al. 2019) but essentially comprises four steps, that in the FRIENDS project have been interwoven with the research reported in chapter 3.

First, an agreement with the school is made, but prior to the formal agreement, information sessions are organised with the director of the school and/or the full management team. During this information session, the QT/TM programme is explained as well as any proposed research. After the director receives personal training, a letter of intent is signed. The management team also receives training in QT/TM.

Second, the QT/TM programme is presented to the teachers, followed by the training of the teachers who wish to participate. After some time, the teachers are also trained in how to monitor the practice of the QT/TM programme in the classroom in preparation to the practice of the students. The teachers receive together with the management team a follow-up programme.

Third, QT/TM is presented to parents and students followed by the training of those students who would like to learn and for whom parental permission has been obtained. Prior to the instruction, a schedule is agreed with the school management team and information meetings are held with the parents. Parents who wish to learn can also receive training.

Fourth, students start practicing TM in their classes during the 10-15 minutes of Quiet Time that is held at the beginning and at the end of the school day. Students also receive a follow-up programme.

The research was done on a subset of students, teachers, and staff that received training. Those who participated in the research were pre-tested and after about three months, post-tested with standardized tests.

For a subset of students, a control group was also used following an experimental design protocol. Both groups, the intervention group and the control group were pre-tested using the same test. Then, only the experimental group received the QT/TM training. After about three months both groups, the experimental group and the control group, were tested again and the results were researched by the evaluation team.

After about three months the intervention group as well as the control group were post-tested. The data of the pre- and post-test of the intervention and the control group were analysed statistically (see chapter 3 for the results). The control group could then start the QT/TM training, while the intervention group received a follow-up programme.

2.2 The implementation in European schools

The QT/TM programme was implemented in four countries in Europe: Portugal, Italy, the UK, and Belgium with a total of about 1,800 students and learners, 900 schoolteachers and staff and 200 parents trained in the QT/TM programme. The majority of the 1,800 students and learners were children of primary schools. Other 'students/learners' included students of secondary schools, art schools, migrants with the 'House of Colours' organization in Belgium, and long-sentence prisoners.

A total of more than 40 clusters of schools and individual schools have been actively involved in the project and in the various steps of training. Most of schools in the project had a high percentage of disadvantaged students: socially disadvantaged, or belonging to ethnic minorities or having migrant backgrounds, or, in certain cases, students that for some reason had been put out of mainstream education. As part of the scaling-up activity other organisations joined in, including the National Music Conservatory and a University in Portugal, organizations promoting sports for inclusion in the UK, an organization offering shelter to migrants in Belgium, and a long-sentence prison in Italy. The latter in co-operation with a sister project financed by a private bank in Italy.

The project involved primarily young children, aged 5 to 11. This is an interesting cohort because research on well-being and techniques such as QT/TM for young children is not as widespread for young children as for adolescents. Because of this, special attention was given to ethical aspects. Parental permission was required before the children's' experiences and impressions about QT/TM were obtained.

In **Belgium**, the implementation involved eight schools from Flanders, Brussels, and Wallonia. Various stages of implementation were achieved, ranging from the participation of just the principal and teachers, to a whole-school approach in two schools. In these two schools the principal, teachers, and almost all the young children learned QT/TM, with the support and permission of their parents. Many parents also received training. The type of school varied from municipality, to provincial schools, to private schools, an orphanage boarding school, and a CEFA school (school for dual learning). The implementation also included one private organization supporting schools with difficult children working in the Molenbeek area, and an organization that has been offering shelter to migrants for more than 15 years.

In **Italy**, the implementation involved secondary schools with a large percentage of migrant and ethnic minorities in Brescia and its surrounding towns, as well as in the city of Milan. Primary schools also participated in the area of Bolzano (a bilingual region in Northern Italy) and Rovereto. The research was conducted, with a control group in the primary school, involving 5 classes: 3 immediately trained in the QT/TM programme, and 2 as part of the control group. The positive results of the research, reported in chapter 3, confirm the informally expressed experiences of the children. This research on the effects of QT/TM in primary schools is the first of its kind in Europe, and one of only a handful in the world. In addition, the implementation broadened to a prison for long sentences, in synergy with a private grant inspired by the FRIENDS project. Guards and inmates were trained in QT/TM and the research was conducted utilizing the same tests developed in the FRIENDS project, with good results provided in section 3.2.

In the **United Kingdom** an interesting aspect of the implementation has been the involvement of more than seven Alternative Provision Schools (APS) situated in Lancashire, Stoke on Trent, Liverpool and Essex—the North West and South East regions of England. These APS are hosting students that for a variety of reasons have been excluded from mainstream education. Their main goal is to prepare the students to be able to come back to mainstream education as soon as possible. These schools have a greater percentage of teachers per student than regular schools therefore particular attention has been given on strengthening and supporting the teachers and staff working in a very demanding teaching environment. Teachers reported an increase in creativity, less stress, and greater problem-solving capability. The chief executive reported less incidence of illness and that "*the calm atmosphere created by the large number of staff meditating has made a big difference*". For the students, a different approach was used, in close collaboration with the school leadership and staff, to deal with the special challenges that an APS school presents due to the more transient student population, making it necessary to have a rolling programme for teaching QT/TM.

In **Portugal** alone, more than 1250 students received QT/TM training, in addition to about 500 Teachers and 90 parents. About 21 clusters of schools and schools were involved, as well as a University and a Music National Conservatory. The project expanded from the Southern region of Algarve, involving schools in Olhao, Faro, Loulé, Quarteira, Albufeira, Almancil etc; to the Northern area of Aveiro and Porto; to the central area of the capital Lisbon; Amadora; and to the Island of Madeira.

The Dr. Alberto Iria School, pioneering the FRIENDS project and belonging to a special National programme of the Portuguese MoE for schools in disadvantaged territories – TEIP (Territorio Educativo de Intervencao Prioritaria) achieved in 2019 the best results among TEIP schools in Olhão in national exams of Portuguese and Mathematics and one of the highest rate of the Region of Algarve among all schools.

In recognition of implementing QT/TM, the FRIENDS school, Escola Alberto Iria, received the *Child Friendly School seal award*—an initiative of the National Confederation of Parents' Associations, the LeYa publishing house, and the psychologist Eduardo Sá. This award has the high sponsorship of His Excellency the President of the Republic. This seal was awarded to 17 schools out of 3000 participating schools for "extraordinary ideas, for a happier development of the child in the school environment".

2.3 Keys to a successful country-wide implementation – a systemic change

When studying the factors for successful mainstreaming of an innovative approach such as QT/TM, it is interesting to study the case of Portugal. and learn from their experience while having a closer look at some of the enablers and how to capitalize on them, as well as some of the barriers and how to overcome them.

- The project partners in Portugal represented four major stakeholders: a parent organisation, a teacher training centre, the QT/TM charity, and a university. These organisations had a close collaboration among themselves and were working with other stakeholders across the country.
- The **Teacher Training Centre** (TTC) of Loulé - Escola Secundária de Loulé / Centro de Formação Do Litoral à Serra, which is an official partner in the project, organized professional training in QT/TM for teachers and staff that was accredited to their career, and financially covered by the funds of the FRIENDS project. This initiative was followed by other TTCs drawing other public supporting funds for the implementation of QT/TM.
- The involvement of **parent associations** was essential. APEJAA, a parent association in Aveiro (North of Portugal), played a major role in involving additional schools, parents, and parent associations in the project (Barrocas, Homen Christo, etc.). It played also a great role in involving the

TTC of Aveiro in the training of teachers and parents, and in expanding the implementation of the FRIENDS project in the whole area of Aveiro and beyond (Olhao, Quarteira, etc.)

- The involvement of local stakeholders was strongly fostered through **local learning communities.** In the Algarve (PT) region, a first face-to-face regional meeting was organized by the TTC of Loulé, together with the QT/TM charity in Portugal, and the University of Algarve. More than thirty interested teachers gathered in order to acquire more knowledge and exchange experiences.
- The involvement of **local policy makers** in the project included Municipalities such as Barrocas, Albufeira, Quarteira, Funchal in Madeira, Loulè, Villa do Bispo etc. and in particular the Parish Councils, that have been, in many cases, instrumental to the implementation of the project in schools in areas under their supervision. Members of the Municipalities Parish Council, as well as representatives of the Algarve regional Directorate General (DGEst) of the MoE, have also directly participated in the training of the QT/TM programme and expressed great appreciation for the course.
- The FRIENDS project in Portugal had a close interaction with the **Ministry of Education** (DGE) - at both the national and regional levels. They gave support to the implementation of the EUROPE and FRIENDS projects from the first implementing schools belonging to a special National programme of the Portuguese MoE for schools in disadvantaged territories – TEIP (Territorio Educativo de Intervencao Prioritaria). For example, QT/TM is now recognized as a best practice within this TEIP programme.
- Important awareness-raising activities took place as part of national **UNESCO** activities. The pioneering school of the FRIENDS project in Algarve is member of the UNESCO Network of Associated Schools (ASPnet). In the context of the FRIENDS project and the EUROPE project, QT/TM has been presented in Portugal at the following:
    - 3rd Regional Meeting the UNESCO ASPnet in Faro,
    - 17th National Meeting of the UNESCO ASPnet in Porto
    - 4th regional meeting - International Day of Tolerance, of the UNESCO ASPnet in Loulé
    - International Day of Human Rights, December 10th 2019, Porto
    - Regional meeting of ASPnet in Lisbon
    - 18th National Meeting of the UNESCO ASPnet, in Almada
    - Regional meeting of the UNESCO ASPnet in Funchal (Madeira Island)
- The project, supported by the networking policies (see chapter 4) of the Ministry of Education-DGE, shared the experiences of the implementation of QT/TM with **governmental programmes** such as the TEIP, which involves more than 130 schools at National level, or with networks like UNESCO Schools.

- The Portuguese '**Flexibility law'**, providing autonomy of the school for part of the curriculum, was instrumental to overcome the 'curriculum barrier'; i.e. how to fit QT/TM into the curriculum.
- As evaluation leading partner of the project, the University of Algarve (UALG), with the collaboration of the other project partners, took the necessary steps to ensure that **research will be continued, in Portugal and beyond**: i.e. testing students, teachers and staff, based on the experiences and the protocols developed in the FRIENDS project.
- The successes of the training in Teacher Training Centres during the project form the basis for **realising the sustainability** of QT/TM training in different TTCs in the future. In fact, after the end of the project, courses of training for this first step of implementation, including schoolteachers and staff, will be covered by many TTCs that have already applied for supporting funds.

2.4 Collaborations emerging from the project and scaling up the QT/TM practice.

Several collaborations and new initiatives scaling up the activities emerged from the FRIENDS project.

- The 'House of Colours' in Turnhout - **Belgium**, is an associated partner that has been offering shelter to migrants for more the 15 years. It operates in support of, and in coordination with, the local public authorities. House of Colours joined the project and expanded their participation to involve new youngsters in Brussels who were trained in QT/TM, and is networking with different schools implementing QT/TM in Portugal.
- The FRIENDS project partners also collaborated with the House of Colours in the context of their "Together We Stand" project, which is co-funded by the **EU solidarity corps.** The goal was to re-connect with the migrants that over time had been in contact with House of Colours to offer them training in QT/TM through FRIENDS. Collaboration will further continue within the context of the "Tools for Living" project that is organizing a conference addressing approaches to trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which include QT/TM.
- Networks between project partners, schools and associated partners have been established generating new ideas for collaboration in the expansion of the project; for example, expanding the project approach in **Kenya**, with the training in the small village of one of the House of Colours participants.
- One of our UK partners shared the results of the FRIENDS project as a contribution to the preparation of new national guidelines on Social and Emotional Well-Being in Primary and Secondary Schools by the

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) in the UK.

- In Italy, as in all other implementing countries, interest came up from **many more schools** than could be funded with the resources of the FRIENDS project alone. This also has been an impulse in Italy and all implementation countries to search for more institutional support, to act in synergy with other projects.
- An event entitled: "Bye stress, bye bullying - **Here comes Quiet Time/TM in the classroom**" was organised in partnership with one of the implementing schools in Brescia (Italy), the Dominato Leonense Foundation, and the Municipality of Leno. The FRIENDS project was presented in its entirety, to the community of Leno, its institutions, parents, and teachers, as well as to neighbouring municipalities.
- The dissemination of QT/TM in schools in the **Friuli Venezia Giulia region** in Italy has been facilitated by the municipality of Città di Sacile, even drawing attention of the Città Sane (Healthy Cities) network of the World Health Organization, publishing an article about QT/TM.
- In collaboration with the FRIENDS project, Carcere Senza Stress, a program based on Quiet Time with Transcendental Meditation, was implemented for guards and inmates in a **prison for long sentences** in the North of Italy within the project "S-cateniamo la mente!" funded by the call Libero Reload 2018 promoted by the Association A Buon Diritto Onlus. The project has been financed by the bank foundation "Fondazione San Paolo". The research protocol and the tests of the FRIENDS project have been utilised and the research will be fed into the FRIENDS data base (see chapter 3). Following this implementation, two conferences have been organized to present the project: the first one within the implementing prison, with the participation of the director, about 50 inmates, guards and a representative of the province - prison sector; and the second conference was organised at the prison for short sentences, in the same area, with the participation of the director and inmates, guards and school teachers of the area. Both conferences were followed by a press release resulting in many articles in the press. This gave rise to the second project, started with private funds, for inmates of the prison for short sentences and to a growing interest in new regions, promoted by the great support of the director.
- The project expanded in **Spain**, in the area of Valladolid, where a school started with the first steps of implementation of the QT/TM programme with the training of teachers and staff. At the time of writing, training for students is planned to start soon. For its research the project has adopted the FRIENDS research protocol. The results will be feeding the FRIENDS Data Base.
- News of the project has spread as far as **Iceland**. The head of the Arts Department in a school near Reykjavik, has followed the progress of

the FRIENDS project and started implementing it into his own school by teaching 50 staff (half the total number at the school) including four board members, and 65 students. There are, at this time of writing, plans for teaching more students next term.

The principal of the implementing school reported in a TV interview that costs for sickness among teachers and staff in the school (which *had been increasing steadily* year by year for several years) had suddenly dropped from being around 45 million kronas (2017) to 15 million in the year in which most of the teachers have been trained in QT/TM (2018). He said he couldn't explain this sudden drop except for QT/TM!

- Inspired by the FRIENDS project, an International Conference on Education was organized in Cluj, **Romania**, entitled**:** Education Without Stress. The conference was attended by 200 experts in the field of education, including school professionals, educators, policy makers, school principals, public and private sector, teachers, students and parents. One of the central topics of the conference was experience and research of the FRIENDS project presented by principals, teachers, parents and researchers from our project. After the conference three schools started with the initial steps of the implementation of QT/TM.
- There has been a rising interest from schools in **Germany** to participate in the FRIENDS project and implement the QT/TM Program. Training and instruction of teachers and students in a school has already started, and a second school, with a very high percentage of ethnic minority students, is now planning the implementation. The research protocol and the tests (with official translation in German) of the FRIENDS project have been used for the research.
- The take-up of the FRIENDS project started in **Latvia** through the activities of an active mother, working in video production and a coordinator of learning communities for Latvia. After negotiations and meetings with representatives of the Education, Youth, and Sports Department of *Riga City Council*, they approved the implementation of the QT/TM program. The next steps were to meet with schoolteachers and parents, and to proceed with implementation of the QT/TM Programme as elaborated in the FRIENDS project.
- The project organised **common QT/TM practice sessions** in different schools across Europe, with the schools being connected over video link. These sessions were great fun and schools reported to wanting to continue this after the end of the project.
- Partners in the FRIENDS project contributed to conferences and networking activities (also on other sectors such as health and business) in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kenya, Latvia, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, and the UK.

- The project has stressed the importance of working together as local learning communities and has been strengthening the partnership, at a local national and European level, as a basic step to ensure the continuation of the FRIENDS project beyond its official length and paving the way in the direction of an alliance of schools for inclusion and well-being.

2.5 Conclusions

The FRIENDS project trained more than three times the number of students, teachers and staff than envisaged at the outset of the project. While the project resources were stretched to its limits, the demand for implementation in schools and other areas was even bigger. This however, has also been an impulse for all implementation partners to search for institutional support, to act in synergy with other projects, to obtaining new governmental and private funds, in order to fulfil as much as possible the growing number of implementation requests also expanding in new sectors, as has been the case for the expansion in prisons in Italy, through a private foundation grant, and in the field of youth and migrants in Belgium.

The implementation of QT/TM in the FRIENDS project:

- has shown to be well received by all stakeholders, including teachers and staff, students, parents, and policy makers.
- has provided a wealth of experiences confirming the benefits as well as the effectiveness of the implementation method and its critical success factors.
- has shown its great potential for being adaptable to different systems of education (e.g. children of a young age as well as adolescents) and non-formal learning settings, such as prisons, migrants, and sports.
- has demonstrated the potential of scaling up the approach into other geographical areas.
- has revealed the self-selling quality of QT/TM, if a critical mass is achieved and the boundary conditions such as curriculum flexibility are met.

The implementation of QT/TM in the FRIENDS project, as well as earlier research, provides evidence not only of improvements in well-being, a required ingredient of an inclusive learning environment, but also shows the positive impact on the very goals of inclusive education, including higher academic achievement, lower early school leaving, and improved well-being and social inclusion in adult life, showing the potential to contribute to National Policies and to the European/International Agenda for the promotion of inclusion through Education.

3 Research Quiet Time with Transcendental Meditation (QT/TM)

This chapter presents the research done on the effectiveness of quiet Time with Transcendental Meditation in fostering a more supportive, inclusive, and harmonious social environment, where students can function more effectively both in and out of school, the essence of inclusive education. As part of this approach, QT/TM provides teachers with the psycho-physiological support they need for dealing with increased diversity of learners.

The research approach used two instruments for measuring the effects of QT/TM within schools: (1) a quantitative study using psychological tests, (2) a qualitative study using semi-structured interviews.

For the quantitative, as well as the qualitative study, different psychological dimensions related to well-being aspects of inclusive education have been selected. The rationale behind the selection of these dimensions is that a number of barriers identified in the context of inclusive education, e.g. disability, health problems, educational difficulties, cultural differences, economic obstacles, social obstacles, and/or geographical obstacles (see the overview of fewer opportunities in chapter 1) are exactly the same as well-being factors that have a deep impact on education (OECD, 2017). This relationship can be understood when seeing *well-being as a balance point between an individual's resource pool and the challenges faced in life* – see Dodge et al. 2012. These authors recognize that everyone has a set-point for well-being. Every time the system is disrupted by what they named challenges (all psychological, social and physical elements which affect homeostatic state), we tend to seek equilibrium. In the context of inclusive education, there may be too many challenges related to the earlier-mentioned fewer opportunities, as well too few challenges for highly talented students and then an imbalance appears hampering successful learning. For coping with those challenges, individuals use their psychological, social and physical resources that help them to regain their well-being.

Therefore, we can conclude well-being to be an essential ingredient of inclusive education (see also chapter 1) and that the effects measured in our studies relate directly to the effectiveness of inclusive education.

3.1 Quantitative study

The effects of QT/TM were researched for the primary actors of inclusive education: students, teachers and staff. For students, different tests were used for the age group 5-11 than for the age group 12-18.

Children 5-11

To evaluate well-being at these young ages, 5 to 11 years old, the research group had to rely on hetero-response questionnaires (see table 3.1), to be answered by children's parents or legal tutors.

Within this age range, an experimental study with a cross-over design was conducted on a sample of Italian students, the experimental group being three classes and the control group two other classes. After about three months results were compared, before and after learning QT/TM, with a control group. In addition, a larger quasi-experimental study on a sample of Portuguese, Belgian, Italian, and English children, aged 8-11, was conducted.

Student Protocol for age 5 to 11
Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), Goodman, et al. (1998).
DESSA MINI: Devereux Student Strengths Assessment-Min. Naglieri, LeBuffe, & Shapiro, (2011/2014).

Table 3.1. Psychological tests used for children aged 5 to 11 years.

The statistically significant results of the tests are summarized in table 3.2. Children, age 5-11, showed a significant decrease of difficulties after practicing QT/TM for about three months, when compared with the control group (see first six rows).

Dimension	**Control group**	**Age**	**Effect**
Children emotional problems	x	5-11	↓
Children relation problems	x	5-11	↓
Children conduct problems	x	5-11	↓
Children hyperactivity	x	5-11	↓
Children Difficulties	x	5-11	↓
Children behavioural control problems	x	5-11	↓
Children disruptive behaviour	-	8-11	↓
Children prosocial behaviour	-	8-11	↑

Table 3.2. Summary - in terms of increase or decrease of psychological dimensions - of statistically significant results for children 5-11 years of age.

The larger group of children aged 8-11 showed significant improvements in behaviour (see last two rows) improving their relation to others, and a decrease in disruptive behaviour, more specifically in the external

signs of these behaviours. Further details can be found elsewhere[1], but as an illustration figures 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 depict details of the decrease in children relation problems, the decrease of behavioural control problems, and the decrease of disruptive behaviour. In all the tests with a cross-over design, the three classes of the QT/TM group showed an improvement while the two classes of the control group showed deterioration. This could happen because of the evolution in the school year, the occurrence of stressful events (such as exams) etc especially in schools where the challenges are bigger (as was the case in this Italian school) than in regular schools.

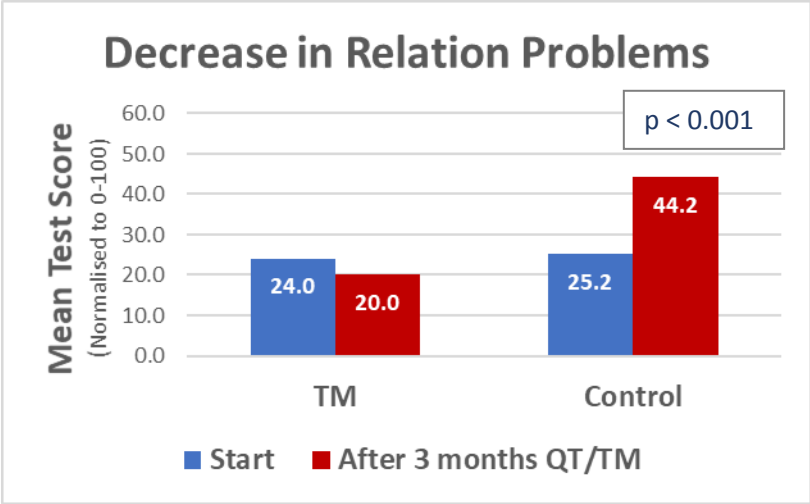


Figure 3.1. Children aged 5 to 11 years practising QT/TM show a significant decrease in relation problems, whereas the control group shows a substantial increase.

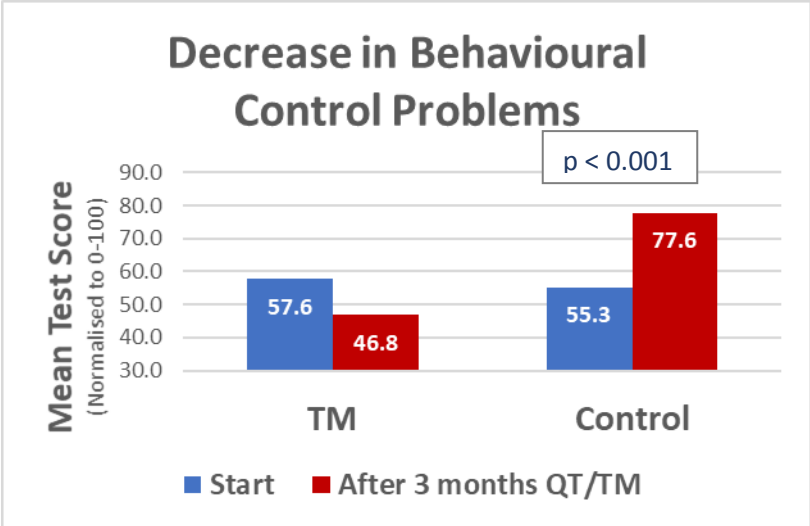


Figure 3.2. The sample of children (5-11) practising QT/TM shows a significant decrease in behavioural control problems, whereas the control group shows a substantial increase.

[1] See various deliverables from the project at https://friends-project.eu/

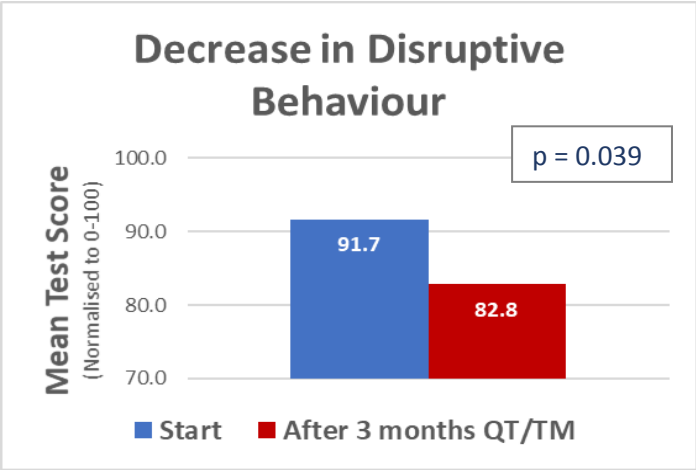


Figure 3.3. External symptoms, as disruptive or aggressive behaviour, show a significant decrease after practicing QT/TM for about three months ($F_1 = 4.349, p = .039$).

Children from 12 to 18

From several types of meditation, Transcendental Meditation has proven to be most efficient. Specifically, previous studies demonstrated adolescents practicing QT/TM reduced incidence of school absenteeism, rule infractions and suspensions, in contrast to control groups (Barnes, Treiber, & Johnson, 2004). Relatedly, in Rosaen and Benn's (2006) qualitative study, students reported that meditation had helped them to be more socially skilled and to calm their antisocial tendencies.

For older students, a self-reported questionnaire assesses the following dimensions: resilience, anxiety, satisfaction with life and school, affections, strengths and difficulties, subjective vitality, and intrinsic motivation (see table 3.3).

Title	Reference
Healthy Kids Survey Resilience Assessment Module.	Constantine and Bernard (2001)
Multidimensional Anxiety Scale for Children (MASC).	March, Parker, Sullivan, Stalling, and Conners (1997).
Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS).	Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985).
Satisfaction with School	Giacomoni, and Hutz (2008).
Positive and Negative Affect for Children (PANAS-C).	Laurent, Catanzaro, Joiner, Rudolph, Potter, Lambert, Osborne, and Gathright(1999).
Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ).	Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), Goodman, et al. (1998).
Subjective Vitality Scale	Ryan, & Frederick (1997).
Intrinsic Motivation Scale	https://selfdeterminationtheory.org/intrinsic-motivation-inventory/

Table 3.3. Older Students' Protocol (12 to 18 years old)

Older students are able to answer themselves several measures concerning their psychological well-being, resilience and other dimensions that imply ability to manage negative stimuli.

In our study we used a relatively small sample of children aged from 12-18, since the FRIENDS project implementation focussed mostly on primary schools with children age 5 – 11 considering the small body of research today available on this age group. For results on a bigger sample for the age group 12-18 we refer to the results of the EUROPE project (see Slot et al. - 2019). In our research, anxiety for the group of adolescents aged 12-18 was measured by using the Multidimensional Anxiety Scale for Children (MASC). The results are given in table 3.4.

Dimension	**Effect**
Resilience	↑
Fear of being left alone	↓
Fear of being humiliated	↓
Anxiety for performing in public (e.g. responding to demands in the classroom)	↓
Feelings of tension and impulsivity	↓

Table 3.4. Summary of statistically significant results of the psychological tests for children 12-18 years of age. Anxiety for performing in public in the school context is for example: exams, answering to questions, etc.

Despite using a smaller sample, the results of the quasi-experimental study reveal that these adolescents show significant improvements, after learning and practicing QT/TM. Selected illustrations are given in figures 3.4, 3.5, and 3. 6.

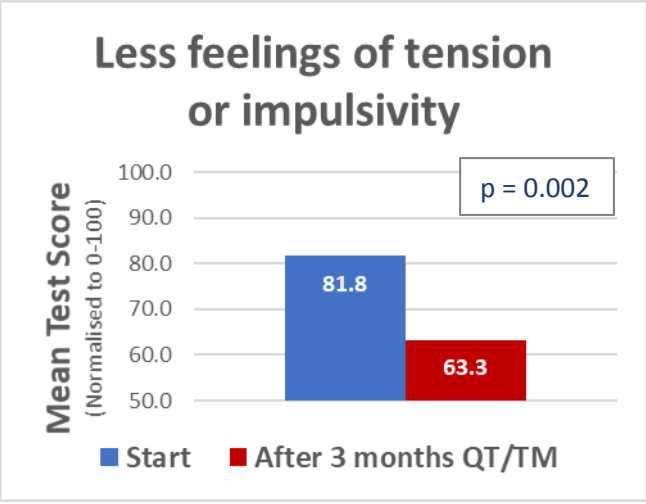
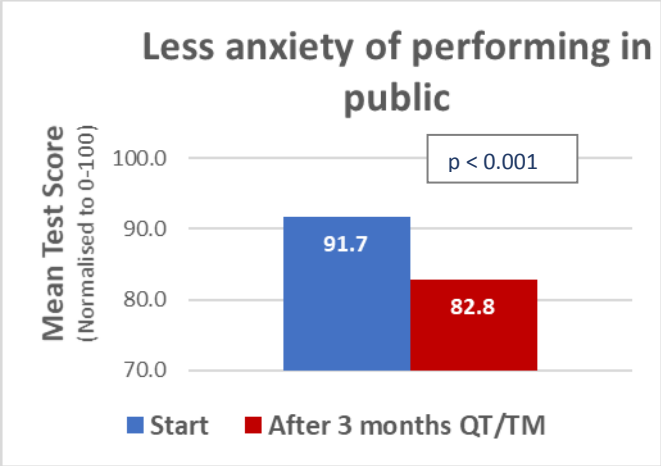


Figure 3.4. Participating children seem to present less feel less tense or less on edge ($F_{(1)} = 10.84, p = .002$).

Figure 3.5. Participating children also seem to present less fear of performing in public, and responding to demands in public settings, such as a classroom ($F_{(1)} = 14.55, p < .001$).



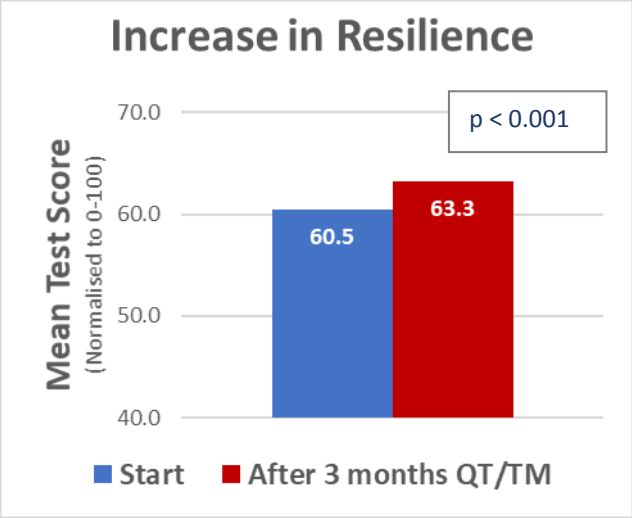


Figure 3.6. Participating children showed an increase in resilience after 3 months of QT/TM $(F_{(1)} = 16.95, p < .001)$. This increase in resilience indicates for example that children more often enjoy working together with other students, more often stand up for themselves, have better trust in their ability to solve difficult problems, and finally, more often find someone to talk to when they need help.

The qualitative study shows that students recognize QT/TM as a resource to deal with adversity, stress and anxiety, along improvement of their grades to a greater focus on tasks.

Teachers/ Staff

In this project, several measures regarding well-being of teachers and school staff (see table 3.5), were assessed to better understand the impact of QT/TM as a resource to improve well-being, and by doing better equip teachers and staff for dealing with the diversity that comes with inclusive education. In light of the known health condition of teachers, described as one of the professions with higher levels of stress and burnout, resulting in many adverse outcomes for teachers, students and the education system (Herman, Reinke, & Eddy, 2020), our study focused on observing stress, anxiety and burnout. Positive outcomes, such as vitality and subjective well-being were also addressed.

Title	References
Generic Job Satisfaction Scale	MacDonald & MacIntyre, 1997.
Maslach Burnout Inventory	Maslach & Jackson, 1981.
Subjective Vitality Scale	Ryan & Frederick, 1997.
Intrinsic Motivation Scale, part of the Self Determination Theory (SDT)	Overviews of the theory are found in Ryan & Deci, 2000, and in Deci & Ryan, 1985 and 2000.
Perceived Stress Scale	Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1983.
Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS)	Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988.
Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)	Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985.
State-Trait Anxiety Inventory - STAI	Spielberger, Gorsuch, Lushene, Vagg, & Jacobs, 1983.
The Ryff scale of Psychological Well-being (PWB; Ryff, 1989)	Springer, & Hauser, 2006; Ryff, & Keyes, 1995; and Ryff, 1989.

Table 3.5. Measures regarding well-being of teachers and school staff, used in the research

Stress is an individual's emotional state caused by exposure to adverse experiences (Roberti, Harrington, & Storch, 2006). In addition to suffering personal stress, teachers are experiencing emotional exhaustion in their work when the demands of the job exceed their resources, which contributes to health impairment process (Lazarus, 2006; Schaufeli, 2017). Teachers' personal stress and job-related emotional exhaustion limit their abilities to provide consistent emotional support and positive behaviour management that children need for their positive social-emotional development (Hamre, 2014).

Our results (see table 3.6 for a summary in terms of increase/decrease of psychological dimensions) show an effect of the QT/TM practice on Burnout, Stress, Anxiety, Vitality and Subjective Well-being of teachers and staff. Teachers and staff practicing QT/TM show less depersonalization, which can be described as having less hardening when dealing with others and facilitating social behaviour. They also seem to feel more personal realization in their life. Both of these measures are included in a broader psychological dimension, known as Burnout. They also present lower levels of stress and anxiety, as well as increase in subjective vitally. Concerning subjective well-being, they present a better emotional balance and an increase in their well-being.

The results of our study (see figure 3.7 for details of selected dimensions) show significant contribution of QT/TM on decreasing stress, negative affects, and burnout, as well as simultaneously increasing job satisfaction, optimism, positive affects, and well-being. These observed results support the implementation of QT/TM as a protection measure for teachers vis-à-vis their challenging profession and environments, especially in the context of an inclusive education environment.

Dimension	Effect
Connection with others	↑
General job satisfaction	↑
Balance between positive and negative affects	↑
Positive evaluation of one's life	↑
Intrinsic motivation.	↑
Emotional exhaustion	↓
Emotional hardening.	↓
Perceived stress	↓
Trait Anxiety	↓

Table 3.6. Summary of statistically significant results of the psychological tests for teachers and staff.

In an interview-based analysis, teachers refer to how they feel more at ease with others (students and colleagues), more cooperative, calmer and relaxed, comprehending better their place in the world. They also attribute improvement in students' resources, such as autonomy and focus, to QT/TM practice.

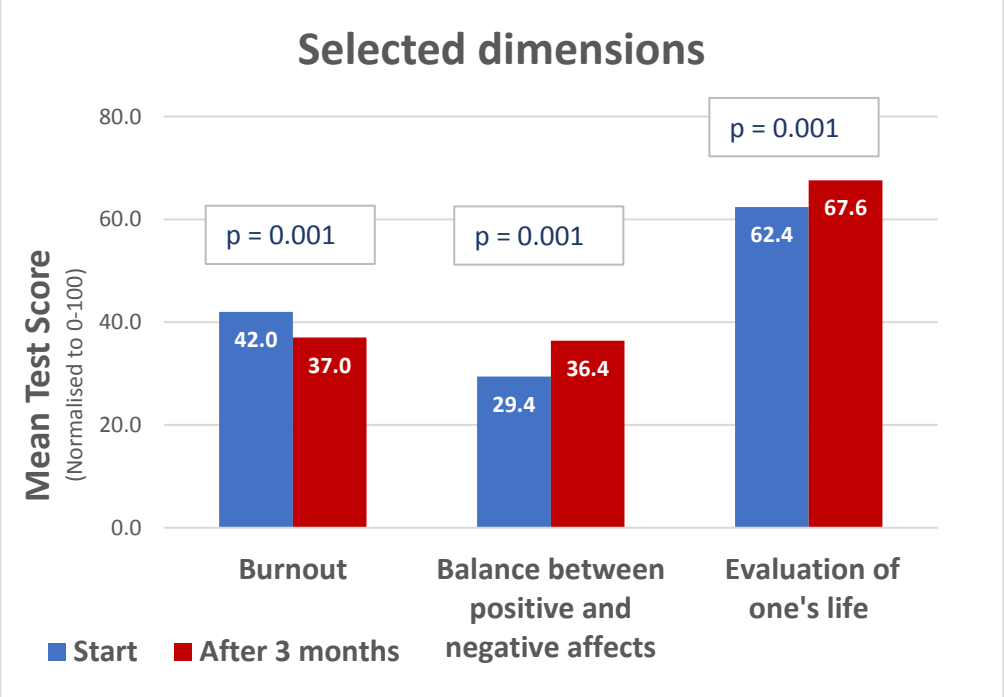


Figure 3.7. After three months of QT/TM teachers and staff showed a significant decrease in emotional exhaustion (burnout) and an increase in the

balance of affects (less negative affects and more positive ones) as well as an increase in the evaluation of one's life.

Our findings in this investigation have been corroborated by previous research on the Transcendental Meditation technique, which has shown significant results on teachers' stress, depression and burnout (Elder et al., 2014). Elder and colleagues (2014) also observed significant reductions in the QT/TM group compared with controls for all of the main outcome variables: perceived stress, depressive symptoms, and teacher burnout. It is also important to highlight that these results are also in line with the previous observed results in the EUROPE Project including different European countries.

3.2 Scaling up beyond schools – QT/TM in prisons

The scaling up of QT/TM was directed to the school and non-formal education sector. In this context the project also included an interesting area of expansion very much related to social inclusion: the rehabilitation of prisoners for which also scientific data were collected.

To test the versatility of QT/TM as an inclusive policy, the same quantitative methodology was applied to a prison environment, both to inmates and officers. The context of a prison is very stressful, with high rates of mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety for both (see for example Goldberg, et al., 1996; Koenig, et al., 1995; Skarupski, et al., 2018). The results (see table 3.7) were very similar to those found with teachers and staff. A detailed graphic for depression is given in fig. 3.8.

Dimension	**Effect**
Balance of affects (less negative affects and more positive ones)	↑
Life satisfaction	↑
Perceived stress	↓
Anxiety	↓
Depression	↓

Table 3.7. Results for inmates and officers after practicing QT/TM for three months in a prison environment in Italy.

These results corroborate previous studies, which describe QT/TM as a resource to reduce trauma and perceived stress in inmates (Nidich, et al., 2016).

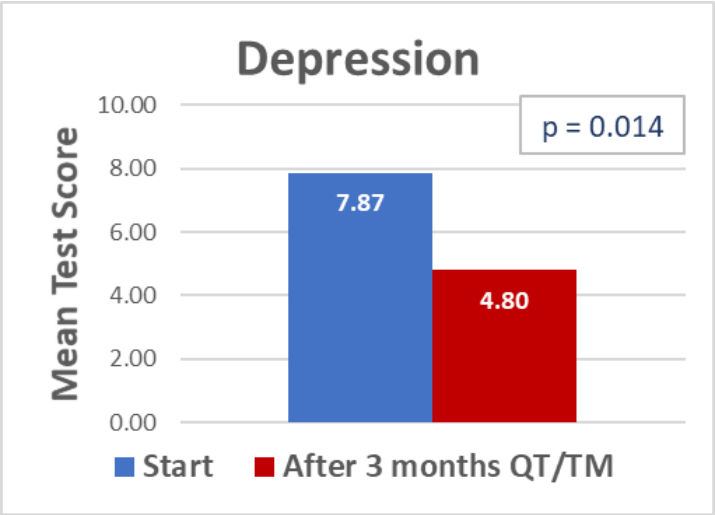


Figure 3.8. Inmates and officers showed a significant decrease is depression symptoms after three months of QT/TM.

3.3 Discussion and conclusions

Inclusive education cannot be seen only as a paradigm to interpret education. As an educational policy, it must guarantee that the school is an environment that does not discriminate against students who are not included in dominant cultures. Nowadays, in the light of a bigger diversity in several social categories, such is nationality, ethnicity, gender, new form of families, along the individuals' specific disabilities, schools face a problem. Schools need to ensure the use of measures that give students the resources to, at least, be able to cope with or face the adversity that rises from this categorization, ensuring them all the opportunities to fully develop as a person.

Taking measures to ensure inclusive education, seems to be socially and financially challenging. An important success factor for inclusive education is the well-being of the main actors: students, teachers and staff. Promoting their well-being entails providing them with resources to deal with the challenges that the school as a multicultural, constantly changing and self-constructive environment, presents to them.

An effective approach to these challenges may be the QT/TM programme. QT/TM is culturally and religiously neutral, does not demand specific cognitive or physical resources, or learning/writing ability, thus making it simple to apply, even for young children. With exception of severe cognitive disabilities, it can be taught irrespective of age, literacy or physical constraints.

Our research supports earlier findings of QT/TM to be a useful resource for

- reducing anxiety, stress, depression and burnout;

- increasing resilience, vitality, personal realization and subjective well-being, while, in the field of behaviour and interpersonal relationship, that is also particularly relevant for the objectives of our call and the relationship between well-being and inclusion;
- promoting less hardening when dealing with others and facilitating social behaviour (for teachers), and less disruptive behaviour, decrease in children relation and behavioural control problems (for children);
- engaging in a more calm and relaxed position in the world, with a better emotional balance.

Therefore, the impact on individual well-being, as documented earlier in this discussion, is relevant. As a simple and easy resource to improve well-being, QT/TM can contribute to a more inclusive school and society.

Despite the empirical evidence for the above, a few aspects need further consideration.

The FRIENDS project's main focus was on scaling up, more in particular to demonstrate the relevance, prospective actions and potential impact of QT/TM by building on previous analysis and evaluation work. Therefore, the research goals of the project were limited. For this reason and considering the challenging nature of socio-psychological research (especially RCT) in schools from a scientific, organisational, and funding perspective, the FRIENDS project evaluation plan was based on a more light-weight *quasi-experimental* design study, while the *experimental* design study was limited to children aged 5 – 11, a cohort for which research on QT/TM is scarce and is non-existing in Europe.

Although the quasi-experimental design study concurs in its findings with the experimental design study done in our project and in other research, the former has less internal validity and therefore can only be considered as *supporting* the evidence of the experimental study established in this project and in other existing research.

Another consideration is the long-term stability and further evolution of dimensions measured since these cannot be determined in a short study where modifications occur in state (more than trait) measures. As future research, it would be interesting to evaluate (e.g. through follow-up measurement beyond the post-test assessment date), how QT/TM practice evolves participants over time and how it can imply changes in more dispositional, trait like characteristics.

4 A policy making framework and its application to grass-roots implementation

In this chapter, we address policy making as an enabling instrument in the shift from an experimental project to a permanent programme promoting inclusive education by improving the well-being of student, teachers, staff, and parents. In order to realise such a shift successfully, an implementation framework is most useful.

4.1 The implementation framework and its application to policy making

What implementation framework to use and how to use it, depends very much on the context. In our case where we are dealing with a novel approach, it goes without saying that a framework which uses an incremental approach based on sharing experiences, is better suited than a roadmap with prescribed steps. The basis of our framework for policy making is the quality implementation framework (QIF) developed by Meyers, Durlak, and Abraham (2012) (see figure 4.1 of our rendering of the QIF).

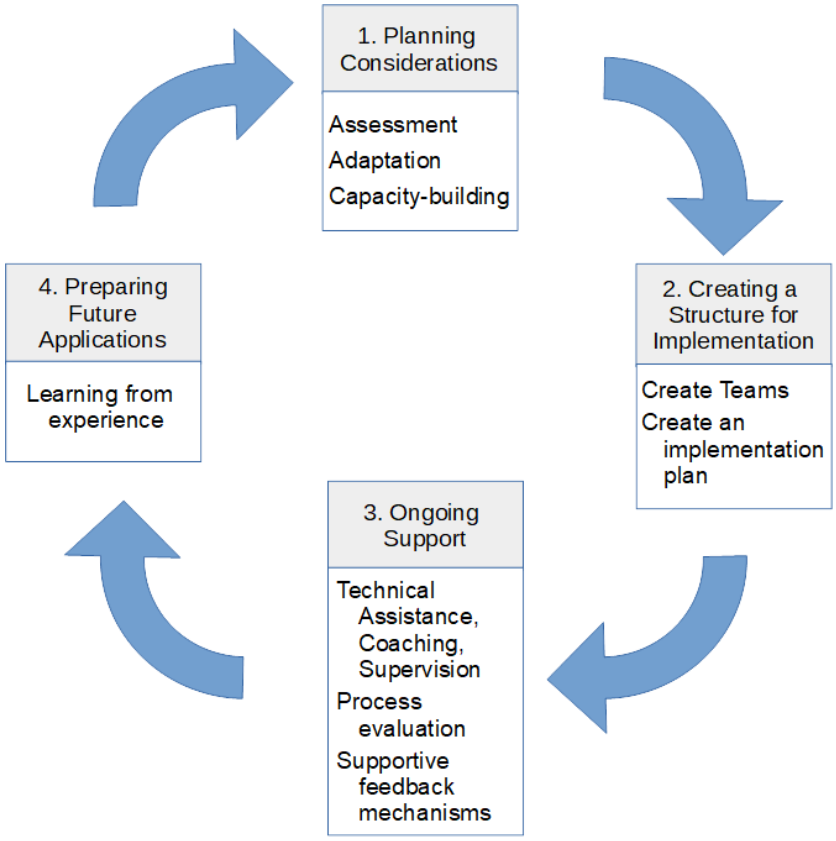


Figure 4.1. The quality implementation framework of Meyers et al. (2012), the basis of the QT/TM policy implementation framework.

Given the novelty of QT/TM in Europe, our version of QIF is adapted for our purposes with an emphasis on iterations and coordinated experience sharing, that will be explained further in this document.

Deepening and widening

A first consideration is the goal of the policy making which can be defined as scaling up the experimental QT/TM implementations to a permanent programme. The essence of this scaling up is deepening and widening as described in Bramanti and Van Assche (2019). For the deepening process we are looking for three fundamental changes:

- to make QT/TM part of the curriculum;
- to dedicate a specific time for it (i.e. the first and last fifteen minutes of the school day);
- to provide permanent support by dedicated teachers and/or counsellors.

The widening process is concerned with going from a number of particular instances to a general application. This may be:

- involving more students in a class, involve more classes, involve more teachers, staff, and parents related to a school;
- diffusion to more schools in a region or country;
- diffusion to teacher training centres;
- diffusion to different countries in Europe;
- diffusion into other sectors (related to education and/or youth).

Different actors

A second consideration is the variety of the policymakers i.e. the actors in the policy making process. They range from the local level (even at the school level we have policies) up to the European level. But broadly speaking we can distinguish between local (schools and municipalities) actors, district and regional level actors, and national and international actors.

At the school level, the principal plays the most relevant role, she is the "game leader". A fully convinced principal is a key asset to positively start the adventure of the new programme. The principal will typically be in dialogue with his management staff, teachers, and parents.

Moving up the schools' governance hierarchy, we can meet district or regional level coordinators or civil servants in charge of the management of the whole educational system in their area. According to the different national organizational schemes they may or may not have a different degree of autonomy in deciding some core points to allow/help the start of new QT/TM programmes in schools. In some cases, they act as a bridge between the local level and the central one.

The national actors are typically regulators and facilitators giving direction and support. A good example is the flexibility law in Portugal (law 5908/2017) allowing schools to have flexibility in the curriculum under certain conditions. This addresses one of the deepening barriers for upscaling the QT/TM practice.

On the international level, an influential actor is of course the European Commission which may at the European level carry out complementary tasks to the national ones. Typically, the role of the European Commission is to be a facilitator as a disseminator of new ideas and good practices. EU policy is designed to support national education systems and address common challenges.

The policy making framework will be filled in differently at the local level than at the non-local level. At the local level, policy making will be directed towards the practical implementation of QT/TM, more focussed on deepening, while at the non-local level policies will be more stimulating and facilitating the QT/TM practice, more focussed on widening.

A network of networks

A third consideration is how the different actors and levels of actors work together to provide effective policies in an efficient way. Given that the QT/TM is novel in European education, there is a need for sharing experiences of deepening and widening the practice, while following the QIF as depicted in figure 4.1.

At the local level, we may have a network of schools or clusters of schools of different types - kindergarten, primary school, secondary schools, vocational schools – that involves various stakeholders – principal, staff, teachers, students, parents, the community, and other. Typically, a principal or chair of a cluster will be or assign the co-ordinator of such a network.

Such elementary networks can form a higher-level network at a regional level and/or national level, involving additional partners such as universities, teacher training centres, etc. It is essential that, also at this level, a coordinator is available to ensure that experiences, tools, material, and methods are shared.

Finally, national networks can form an international network, sometimes as a result of European Commission funded projects.

This model of networks of networks is familiar to the field of education, especially for innovative themes. A known example is the theme of ICT in education, where the pioneering started some 25 years ago. Very soon schools and school clusters had their ICT-coordinators, who were supported at the regional/national level. In 1997 then the European Schoolnet was founded, a network of 34 Ministries of Education.

An alternative to a network of Ministries of Education is a more grass-rooted network, i.e. an international network of schools or school networks. An initiative particularly relevant for this projects and worthwhile mentioning in this context is the **Alliance of schools for inclusion** initiative of the Commission, to promote good practice in the area of inclusive learning, e.g. integration of migrant pupils and imparting common values (European Commission – 2016).

One point of discussion is the scope of such network of networks, which can be limited to a specific approach such as QT/TM or a more general theme such as well-being or inclusive education. Both approaches (general/specific) have their value, advantages and disadvantages. Obviously, participants in the FRIENDS and EUROPE project are keen on having a network on QT/TM with the following characteristics:

- *Mission*: support teachers, educators to promote the education of disadvantaged students through social inclusion, improving school results, fighting discrimination at all levels and preventing bullying and violence in schools.
- *Stakeholders*: the 40 schools and school clusters involved in the project.
- *Structure*: the proposed structure is a working group with one/two representative(s) from each of the countries involved in the EUROPE and FRIENDS project extended to other countries that show interest in participation. Each school would have as representative, one member of the management (preferably the principal), and one or two teachers as focal point(s) with the commitment to (a) continue the activities of the FRIENDS project, (b) represent the school (educational community - students, teachers and parents), and (c) be the liaison with the national representative to whom one submits an activity plan and annual report.
- *Activities*: the activities are structured as follows:
    - Sharing experiences within the QT/TM local learning community involving different stakeholders;
    - Organization of a national meeting in each semester involving all schools where different stakeholders are represented;
    - Organization of an annual international meeting with the participation of the countries involved.

An innovation diffusion model and the implication for policy making

A fourth consideration is how innovation is diffused and the implications for policy making. An understanding of innovation diffusion can be gained from the work of Mahajan and Peterson (1985) which models how any social innovation (here the QT/TM programme) spreads along the lines of least resistance. The observed regularity in the diffusion process shows

that initially only a few members of the social system adopt the innovation in each period (in our case the academic year). In subsequent periods, however, an increasing number of adoptions per period occurs as the diffusion exert its attraction. Finally, the trajectory of the diffusion curve slows and begins to level off, ultimately reaching an upper ceiling approximating the involvement of all the potential adopters. As such, the model exhibits an S-shaped curve (sigmoid) but depends on only three different main elements.

i) The number of potential adopters (the universe of schools in the reference territory);

ii) the number of those who have already adopted (the schools that have introduced the QT/TM programme); and

iii) an "imitation index" that depends on various things, among which, very important are the information and contact channels between potential adopters.

Such a simple innovation diffusion model has practical implications in the sense that policy makers can improve their success by:

i) establishing the targets (how many innovators I want to have? how many schools could adopt the QT/TM programme? and how many resources I should make available accordingly?); and

ii) influencing the imitation index (how can I accelerate the imitation effect? what are the obstacles I should remove? what are the enabling conditions I could provide to get the intervention more effective?).

4.2 Application of the policy making framework to the grass-roots implementation

In this section we present the policy making tasks for the local level following the framework as presented in figure 4.1.

Assessment. This task is about assessing the perceived needs and benefits for the school as seen by key leaders and frontline staff of the school. Typically, this would include the principal, key persons in school management and teaching as well as parents. There is no single pattern. Our experience in the FRIENDS and EUROPE projects shows that usually the driving force is the principal, or a very motivated teacher, in other cases the parent organisation. In a rare occasion, it would be one or more students. The benefits of QT/TM for the stakeholders is well documented in various scientific studies.

However, what makes the difference is that which *resonates* with the decision makers and the drivers of the innovation. As such the evidence that QT/TM is beneficial sought at the school level can be quite different than at

the higher policy making levels. For example, the evidence that resonates with parents is seeing the changed behaviour and better results of their children, rather than a scientific study about trait anxiety showing a significant (p=0.011 improvement).

QT/TM is a novel approach and the improvements for students only show after starting the practice. Hence, when introducing QT/TM newly in a school the decision to start with QT/TM is often based on the existing experience of the principal, staff, teacher, parents, or through positive reports from other schools. Obviously, the opinion of higher-level policy makers, when convinced about the benefits of QT/TM based for example on existing scientific research, will positively influence the perceived benefits at the school level.

Within this assessment task we also need to look if and how QT/TM should be adapted to the school environment and whether all resources, primarily people and the finances, are in place. The goal is to enhance the fit and relevance for the school. Implementors of QT/TM should address the following questions:

- In what ways will the innovation address important perceived needs of the schools? In this context the remit of education, as part of society, should be taken into account. For example, societal goals for education include low early school leaving, excellent academic achievements, and preparation for adult life.
- What evidence can be given that QT/TM fulfils these needs. Perceived evidence will be different dependent on the school. For example, a migrant welcoming school in Sweden, TEIP schools in Portugal, or alternative provision schools in England, will have a deeper appreciation of some well-being effects of QT/TM then a regular school, while a regular school might have a deeper appreciation of academic achievements and reduction in drop-out.
- How well does QT/TM implementation fit the school; i.e. how much adaptation is required if any? To what extend can QT/TM be adapted and still have a successful implementation. I.e. what are the critical features, the essential elements, what can be adapted? Here one would be guided by the QT/TM teaching charities.
- To what extent do principal, teachers and staff understand what the QT/TM entails? Does the principal, teachers and staff have a realistic view of what QT/TM may accomplish, and are there sufficient teachers ready and able to sponsor, support, and use QT/TM with quality? It should be clear to them what QT/TM is, what the benefits are, how it is instructed and how it is practised.
- What is the ambition level of the implementation in the school? QT/TM can be implemented in various degrees, the ideal being a whole school approach. But sometimes it makes sense to start slowly.

If the process is not comfortable it may backfire. Obviously, the ambition level can change over time.

Adaptation. In collaboration with the QT/TM teaching charity a school would customize the implementation. For example, whereas QT/TM is ideally implemented as a whole school approach, one might wish to take it step by step, following the assessment. While initial adaptation sets the stage for the initial implementation, adaptation may also occur during the implementation process, responding to challenges and opportunities. Likewise, when a new cycle of implementation commences, adaptations may occur on the basis of lessons learned in the previous cycle(s).

Capacity building strategies. While the introduction of QT/TM can be initiated by a variety of stakeholders, the implementation needs the support from the critical ones. Therefore, the capacity building task involves:

- assuring that key opinion leaders and decision-makers are engaged in the implementation process and are convinced that QT/TM will benefit the school;
- aligning the QT/TM with the school's broader mission and values. for example, inclusive education;
- identifying policies that create incentives for QT/TM and/or reduce barriers to QT/TM in the classroom; for example the school may have a policy that after every holiday period a refresher session with the students is organised such that the QT/TM practice is enlivened again;
- identifying champions for QT/TM who will advocate for its use and who will support others in applying QT/TM properly;
- identifying the QT/TM trainers and verify that there is sufficient capacity to provide the initial training and then the follow-up.

It is therefore no wonder that, experience shows that it is next to impossible to have a successful whole school implementation without the support of the principal and the teachers. During the project capacity building will continue. For example, after teachers and counsellors receive the QT/TM training, they are trained in supporting roles such as leading meditation sessions in the school and classroom.

Creating implementation teams and an implementation plan. While it is relatively clear what needs to be done for implementing QT/TM in schools, it is important to determine who is doing what and when. A certain sequence of activities emerged from experience, but now tasks and responsibilities should be defined. The most important is to assign a QT/TM coordinator in the school, who will coordinate the ensuing tasks underneath.

Assistance, coaching, supervision. This task is concerned with supporting actors of the implementation, addressing inevitable practical problems once the QT/TM implementation commences. What should be clearly

identified is how and from whom the principal, management staff, teachers, students, parents get assistance, guidance, and follow-up. This concerns two kinds of support: assistance, coaching, supervision of the QT/TM practice which is given by the QT/TM teacher who is active in the school and second the assistance, coaching, supervision of a number of supporting actors for the QT/TM implementation. For example, a principal may be confronted with some questions from parents. For the latter, the first line of support is obviously the QT/TM coordinator in the school who will address issues and risks. The next levels of support are the QT/TM instructor in the school, the QT/TM charity organisation, and finally a national or international expert centre. The assistance, coaching and supervision may result in changes in the approach, additional training, and material or tools that can be used.

Evaluation of on-going implementations. Typically, this task involves looking at the results as well as the implementation process. Within the FRIENDS project different ways of assessing the results have been used including informal testimonies (written and video), qualitative research using structured interviews, quantitative research using psychological tests, and school statistics. The protocols and assessment methods are available for the future. Ideally assessment indicators and methods are shared across implementations, but they may vary according to circumstances. For example, not all schools across Europe may have the same school statistics. Second, the evaluation of the implementation process, will typically be coordinated by the QT/TM coordinator who is at the heart of a local learning community. The evaluation of the implementation process involves identifying strengths and weaknesses (or it could be a full SWOT[2] analysis). In addition to data that can be collected about the results, data can be collected about the implementation process, for example, the number of trainings, regularity of the practice, etc.

Creating feedback mechanisms. Apart from collecting implementation process data in the evaluation proper feedback mechanisms must be created. Such a feedback system needs to be rapid, accurate, and specific enough so that successes in implementation can be recognized and changes to improve implementation can be made quickly. Practically, it is the task of the QT/TM coordinator to communicate and discuss key findings with stakeholders, implementation staff and front-line practitioners. Certain key findings will need to be addressed and action taken in a spirit of quality improvement.

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[2] Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Learning from experience. Experiences gained from the implementation of the QT/TM programme will certainly be of interest to other schools. Lessons learned may include information about ineffective and effective strategies, successes and failures of task, reflections on reasons why, enablers and barriers, useful materials and tools, etc. Researchers and QT/TM implementors elsewhere can learn from these experiences, while within the same school setting every year there are new students and lessons learned can be carried over into the new academic year. The instrument par excellence for sharing these experiences with others is the network of networks.

4.3 Policy implications for the district/regional level

Concerning the district/regional level, the major point is the attention paid to those enabling conditions allowing the continuation of the QT/TM programmes started in a multiplicity of schools together with many schools that have already shown interest in beginning with QT/TM.

The main operative points that the district/regional level could and probably should address are the following five:

- identifying an organiser/coordinator of the regional network (or district network for all the small countries that have not a regional level);
- promoting the QT/TM training for schoolteachers and staff;
- supporting networking activities of the "local learning community";
- activating territorial fundraising to accompanying the "phasing-in" passage towards the complete taking over of the programme by the MoE (see section 4.4);
- promoting monitoring and evaluation assessments.

Towards a coordinator of the district/regional network

Building on the good practices of the FRIENDS project, we can identify a collaborative coordinating work of two different enabling actors: *i)* "Teaching Training Centres" (TTCs) or equivalent institutions; *ii)* the local committees of TM teaching charities (TMTCs).

This coordinating structure operating at the regional level – irrespective of who does the job – acts as a front-end contact with all the schools expressing an interest to start a new project on inclusive education through a well-being programme such as the QT/TM developed within the FRIENDS project. At the same time, this regional coordinator acts as a dissemination point to propagate information and to provide support to principals and teachers willing to share their positive experience in implementing this kind of programmes.

The delivering of TM schoolteacher training

Motivated and prepared teachers represent the "trump card" for the success of the well-being-oriented programmes in schools. First of all, because they are the front-end contact with the students, they accompany their students along the learning process, they are the first targets of frustration and stress at school and the first witnesses of children's progress.

The FRIENDS' experience, shows that the fact that teachers are meditating as well has a positive effect on the effectiveness of the programme on their students, students are more motivated and involved.

The idea to have a dedicated TM schoolteacher – she may be another teacher within the school or an external TM teacher – remains fundamental. The two options (internal *vs* external) should be better considered complementary more than alternative. In fact, the trained class teacher may conduct (i.e. start/stop) the meditation time of her students also without being a certified TM teacher. In contrast, an accredited TM teacher needs to follow the training phase of the students and the review time dedicated, personally, to each of them along the year (usually every month).

A TM schoolteacher may follow up 200 students in the steady state. Each school may, therefore, have one (or more, one for every 200 meditating students) TM teacher, while the class teachers can be accompanying and monitoring the twice-a-day meditating time of her class.

The **TM Teaching Charity** is definitely in charge of delivering the training of TM schoolteachers, and the course may be directly organised in the school participating in the programme or, according to some permanent training programme for teachers, by the TTCs as in the Portuguese experience, or by different institutions in other countries.

Some further coordination effort should be appropriate at the regional level as we know that teachers' mobility is a permanent feature, getting them to change their professional location several times in their career. The school would need to assure continuity, once that the programme has been started. Therefore, it is essential to pay specific attention to the availability and mobility of QT/TM schoolteachers in the different schools in order to guarantee the best coverage of the needs.

Supporting local learning communities

A third major role for the coordinator deals with the capacity building effort and the moderating role towards school stakeholders. Regional coordinators act as facilitators for principals, teachers, and parents to establish contacts, meet together, exchange experiences, disseminate good practices, help in solving challenges related to the implementation of the well-being programmes and, ultimately, to establish permanent networks of the different actors involved.

One possible further goal once a minimum threshold of visibility is reached, is to help the involvement of the local community and the policy-makers on that territorial level. **"Local alliances" for inclusive education**, delivering well-being programmes, naturally have been the beneficial outcome of this coordinating role as witnessed by the FRIENDS project.

We need to spend here a few words on the concept of "learning communities", a concept which has experienced fast-growing attention both in literature and in-field analysis (Kilpatrick, Barre and Jones, 2003; Watkins, 2005; Mindich and Lieberman, 2012). **Learning communities** provide a space and a structure for people to align around a shared goal. Effective communities are both aspirational and practical. They connect people, organisations, and systems that are eager to learn and work across boundaries, all the while holding members accountable to a common agenda, metrics, and outcomes. These communities enable participants to share results and learn from each other, thereby improving their ability to achieve rapid yet significant progress[3].

This is precisely the holistic approach of QT/TM at the school level. In the implementation phase, we stressed many times, the centrality of putting together the principal, the teachers, often also the staff, and the parents of the children participating in the project. When this effort was successful (indeed, it was most of the time) we witnessed the birth of a real learning community; a community perceived as such even outside. Quite often, the municipal administration, or local politicians, or other institutions have appreciated the project firstly recognising a living community at work.

Fundraising campaigns to support the "phasing in"

The fundraising activity could be critical in this "phasing in" turning point from the end of the FRIENDS project to the full involvement of MoE (see section 4.4). We, therefore, suggest three different options that regional coordinators could pursue.

The **first** line of financing looks at community foundations and territorial financial institutions. Quite frequently, local institutions have as a statutory scope to support social enhancing programmes like educational attainments, and social inclusion and well-being on a territorial basis. These institutions need to receive the right and comprehensive information of the QT/TM programme and its efficacy to deliberate evidence-based policies. Moreover, in the experiences gathered implementing the FRIENDS

[3] The benefits deriving from a well-functioning **learning community** are manifold. Learning community connects people, it sets goals and measures collective progress, it enables shared learning, it accelerates progress toward impact at scale, and sometimes it supports distributed leadership.

programme, several municipalities have also contributed to the realisation of the QT/TM programme.

Disseminating information and establishing a network of the different municipal administrations can facilitate the multiplication of pro-active attention towards the implementation of the programme.

The **second** line of financing is directly related to the private market. Many companies are increasingly committed to their corporate social responsibility (CSR) policy. It is a rising trend that companies are searching for real impacting projects. And supporting the quality of education in their territory, helping local schools to become more inclusive, contributing to higher well-being of students and teachers, are all very clear-cut objectives, highly rewarding, quickly communicable, with a very interesting cost/benefit ratio. Transparent and result-oriented information towards regional entrepreneurs could easily become a powerful marketing lever for QT/TM, and regional coordinators should adequately use it.

The **third** line of financing is the most structured field of action. It regards the next open calls within the European Structural Funds (mainly ESF) whose management passes through the regional programming (NUTS 2 level). Therefore awareness-raising activities should include regional policymakers and officials so that they can give due considerations to QT/TM as an answer to inclusive education and well-being in schools. As the ESF covers all the European countries, it is certainly a particularly interesting area of action. One of the tasks of a regional coordinator is then to lobby to help regions around Europe to put in their "regional operative plans" the workable options to open calls addressing inclusive education and well-being for schools' students and teachers.

Besides, several different European funds can host measures supporting a programme like QT/TM, including Erasmus plus, and programmes addressing the health sector, fostering an inclusive society, contrasting children's inequality, to name a few.

Promoting monitoring and evaluation assessments

There is a last (but not least) function to be addressed at the regional level. We are speaking of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the implementation of the different programmes in the regional schools. We need a scientific advisory alongside the schools, we can gain some economies of scale in carrying out different evaluation campaign in several schools, and we need to have a focussed idea on the social and economic background in which the school operates.

Besides, when we raise the number of participants (students, teachers, parents) we are assuring more robust results and transparent evaluation and, therefore, we give an essential contribution in raising the return on investment of the intervention. At the regional level, technical competences

from the universities are easily found, and under the supervision of the co-ordinator, these competencies could offer useful contributions.

Besides, the scientific committee of the FRIENDS project and the evaluation team have gathered an extensive experience on this theme and could be easily involved in this kind of M&E mission.

The benefits of this accompanying M&E activity are at least threefold.

1. It allows schools to have a measured impact of the programme implemented.
2. In repeated evaluations, it delivers a track record of improvements and progresses enabling the fine-tuning on the programme and allowing schools to use their performance indicators as "speaking numbers" in competing with other schools for students, the best teachers, and funds. Ultimately, they can be used as a communicational lever making the school more attractive in front of its different stakeholders.
3. It raises the visibility of the programme and the school in the eyes of the local community. It helps in putting a spotlight on well-being and inclusive education goals and how to reach them, making clear that good results in local schools are at hand. For those districts that can count several schools on the front line of well-being programmes, this positive scale effects may become a powerful lever for the whole territorial community. It will raise inclusiveness and attractiveness towards families with children, with a positive rejuvenating impact on the socio-demographic structure of the area.

4.4 Policy implications for the national/European level

When dealing with the national level, the involvement of MoE is the very starting point to build a comprehensive answer to the scaling-up process. The main points that the national/European level could and probably should address are the following five:

- involving MoE as a pro-active leadership of the process and setting the rules to reach the best enabling conditions;
- financing the scale-up phase and move on a permanent budget line in the steady-state;
- creating, enforcing and managing a network of networks up to a possible "Alliance of schools for inclusion";
- collecting data, confronting experiences, benchmarking good practices supporting monitoring and evaluating campaigns;
- providing a toolkit to the local and regional level.

We will go over these five tasks to offer workable answers to the engagement of the national level and the further involvement of the European network of the countries experience.

Towards a possible role for European Ministries of Education

The primary function of higher-level policymakers is giving direction and taking supporting measures. Their role exerts the maximum potential impact on two dimensions: *i)* providing "enabling conditions" (or eliminating some significant barriers hindering the possibility to implement new programmes); *ii)* offering coordination through an effective "network of networks".

Major cultural dimensions should guide this pro-active role, resulting in effectiveness of the high-level intervention: *i)* helping to introduce innovation in schools; *ii)* embracing a typical positive policy cycle made of planning–implementation–assessment; *iii)* establishing funds for an appropriate development; *iv)* sharing experiences, learning from them, and recognising possible shortcomings; and *v)* putting the "right incentives" into the system.

Definitively, this is a more general and complex task. While the district/regional layer plays a role in accompanying implementation at the schools' level, and offering operative support for principals, and local communities, this national/European layer exerts a meta-coordination role and act as a systemic enabling actor.

One of the most essential roles of national actors is certainly "setting the rules." We address here two main issues. The first has to deal with **flexibility** while the second is linked to **TM schoolteachers training**. These are two essential points as they represent, from two different points of view, as many preconditions to assure a proper implementation of the QT/TM programme. While the former is an enabling condition allowing the right implementation process, the latter is the removal of a potential constraint as the number of certified TM schoolteachers must grow in sync with the scaling-up.

The experiences gathered in the field, stress the importance to preserve two meditation slots at the beginning and the end of the school day. Literature (Waters *et al.*, 2015) reports meaningful results that interventions delivered by teachers show substantially more consistent effects than other instructors and this is true both for the positive effects on well-being and social competence. The most effective programmes are long-term, twice a day, implemented by schoolteachers, but this means a rescheduling of the class timetable to make room for half an hour to forty minutes of QT/TM (see for details chapter 2).

This is precisely the "quest for flexibility", a strong request coming from all the schools that have started to implement the QT/TM programme.

Looking around the different experiences within the FRIENDS project, we refer to the Portuguese case as the most effective in assuring the needed flexibility, implementing this flexibility in the law 5908/2017 *"Project for*

autonomy and curriculum flexibility" (PACF). According to this law, Portuguese schools, can, on a voluntary basis, manage the curriculum integrating practices that promote better learning.

The PACF aims to define the guiding principles and rules for the design, implementation and evaluation of the curriculum for primary and secondary education in Portugal.

What is interesting for the present discussion is a double judgement. Firstly, the voluntary nature of the curriculum flexibility, which helped schools to implement this innovation incrementally; it also allowed to accomplish for specific aims that fit the particular student population and the wider community. Secondly, schools choosing this option directly sized their experimentation fitting in the QT/TM programme.

While the Portuguese experience deals with an in-depth reform of the curriculum, in other countries, the first step will maybe allow a flexible timetable to accommodate two slots of quiet time and TM.

Coming now to the second point – the TM schoolteacher training – the keyword is "continuing professional development" (CPD). In every European country, there exists some programme for life-long learning. We are not asking for MoE directly providing the training to become a QT/TM teacher; this role is left to TM national charities. What is strongly needed is an accreditation procedure that recognises the QT/TM training course for schoolteachers within the portfolio approved by MoE and accredited for CPD. Also, in Germany, the FRIENDS project has been recently presented to a group of teachers and local authorities as a part of a programme of CPD organised by the local TTC.

Financing "well-being programmes"

The theme of financing programmes and techniques which have proved to be successful in raising well-being within the schools – both in scholars and teachers – is central in diffusing good practices within the national educational systems of different EU countries.

In developing a financial scheme to scale-up the project, we will answer three basic questions: **why** would we pay for?, **who** should pay for?, and **how** can we size financial support?.

The core concept to understand the **"why" question** rests on the idea of "expenditure as an investment". It means considering educational well-being a strong priority in the social and inclusive agenda and bearing in mind that any financial commitment in this field is an investment rather than a cost. A second major point is related to the costs of "doing nothing". Doing nothing in the face of a self-evident need is easily framed as evidence of government negligence, irresponsibility or ineptitude (Watt, 2018; McConnell and Hart, 2019). So, the second answer to the "why question" is

that the costs of "doing nothing" are an order of magnitude higher than the costs of a proper intervention on educational well-being.

To correctly address the **"who" question** we have to keep in mind that from an economic point of view, inclusive education and well-being should be considered as "public goods". To name a recent example, the UK's all-party parliamentary group on well-being economics recently drafted a report including "Tackling children's wellbeing in schools" (see APPG report, 2019) expounding on how well-being should be taken into account in the forthcoming government spending.

Having in mind the "publicness" of the inclusive education for enhancing well-being, we can raise the point: how to diffuse and disseminate QT/TM programme in several schools enlarging the scale-up phase? Among the many different inputs required, we also need the money, and the financial support could probably take a twofold channel.

The **first budget line** is from the MoE. It covers the cost – up and running – of QT/TM school teaching plus some general system expenses (such as monitoring and evaluating campaigns, QT/TM schoolteacher training within permanent vocational training paths, management of a national web-platform and production of specific contents, participation to European networks).

The **second budget line** could be dedicated to "open calls" directed to schools for starting the pilot phase of the programme. This approach preserves the fundamental feature of the voluntary participation of schools, as their initial engagement has to be decided, convinced, and motivated. Central public funding could be complemented by territorial participation (in the form of private sponsors, banking and communitarian foundations) to raise the visibility of the programme and to involve parents helping in coordinating and animating their communities of practice (see discussion in section 4.3).

The third, and last question posed, is the **"how" question** addressing the dimensioning of public funds for this essential objective. Here for brevity, we report only the final results of a more detailed simulation whose results are available in the FRIENDS project.

We estimate a yearly cost per student of €250 to assure a long-lasting twice-a-day meditation exercise. To size the overall budget, we need to set the numerical goals to be reached. The simulation – carried out on the Italian and the Portuguese cases – looks at a "standard school" just under 250 students and 26 teachers per school.

If we set to reach – within a 5 to 10 years national implementing plan – the 1% of the schools (a realistic but still ambitious goal), that means 64,000 students and 6,400 teachers in the Italian case and 14,000 students and 1,400 teachers in the Portuguese one. The final cost will be close to € 16

million or 0.035% of the total budget of the Italian school and € 3.5 million or 0.053% in Portugal.

Who could argue that spending 3.5 cents (ITA) or 5.3 cents (PT) for every €100 of school costs is not a good deal to ensure a high level of students' and teachers' well-being?

Creating and enhancing the network of networks

The idea of a network of networks as well the Commission's idea of an "Alliance of schools for inclusion" has been introduced in section 4.1. However, it needs to be created, maintained, and enhanced. Most certainly the highest level (national and European) can play an instrumental role in doing so. For example, the fact that the Commission merely launches the idea of "Alliance of schools for inclusion" has already an effect. Simply providing logistics and the means to fill in the role of coordinator cost not so much but have a significant impact. We can imagine a two steps approach.

In the steady state, this network of networks may be essential for the good operation of an **Alliance of schools for inclusion** as already mentioned in the Communication on "*Improving and modernising education"* adopted on 7 December 2016 by the European Commission[4].

In addition, we can imagine a **second-level** organisation where the regional level is the coordinators that will take part – in the presence of a minimum number of schools – or coordinators delegated by several aggregated regions, to ensure the achievement of adequate minimum scale thresholds.

The purpose of this network coordination will be self-determined by its board (expression of the various regional aggregations that make it up) but will devote specific attention to two lines of action. A **first** is lobbying with European institutions and nation-states to make increasingly effective the policies for inclusive education, and for strengthening well-being in schools. The **second** line of action is to collect information and experiences, systematise them and reflect on them, to generate positive feedbacks that will increase the effectiveness of the programmes over time. A further task for the Alliance is promoting and coordinating at the international level the evaluative research on the programme (see next section).

In the short term, in the adjustment phase, the future Alliance could be anticipated by operational coordination between the different national

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[4] The Guidelines for Applicants of the Key Action 3 *"Support for policy reform. Social inclusion through education, training and youth"*. in the Call for proposals EACEA/07/2017, have stressed this reference. Throughout the Document, it is possible to interpret this referred "Alliance" like an evolution and re-framing of the "local learning communities" diffusely named in the Guideline.

coordinators, with the possible involvement of those regions with a higher number of schools involved in the implementation of the programme.

The tasks will be almost the same, with a further predominant goal: the creation of the mentioned European Alliance.

Promoting monitoring & evaluating campaigns

Developing monitoring and evaluation assessments is a task for the regional coordination level and has been already presented in a section 4.3.

All the regional evaluations will flow into a single database which could be managed by the international coordination (Alliance). In a phase of consolidation of the practice and accumulation of reputation and trust of the QT/TM technique, the maintenance of such a database – based on the scientific approach developed with extensive use of counterfactual samples (see chapter 3) – remains all the most important.

This level of coordination will offer inputs for evidence-based policies and could help in motivating the investment required by a permanent programme.

Repeated evaluations over time will also offer a clear word on the cost effectiveness of the QT/TM programme.

A supporting toolkit

All the actions described in this chapter require and generate material, tools, and know-how. We can capitalize on this by making this all accessible as resources for others to use. Examples are:

- for the *initial assessment* task in schools, one could foresee testimonies, experiences, and research results as supporting material;
- for the *creating implementation teams* task, one could think of what training material and/or guidelines school teachers would need to become effective moderators of the QT/TM in the classroom;
- for the *monitoring ongoing implementation* task, one could think of the research results of the FRIENDS and EUROPE projects coming from the quantitative research, the qualitative research (see section 3.6). Besides this , the project made also a wealth of material available that can be reused in other QT/TM implementations and even in other well-being and inclusive education studies: the psychological test, translated in the local language, the interview questions, the protocols how to do the research. In the toolkit could also be shared indicators for inclusive education, the coordinates of researchers that are willing to do or contribute to the study, etc.;
- for the *creating feedback mechanisms and learning from experiences* task a web platform where all materials and guidelines can be found and where the exchange of experiences is facilitated could be useful.

The platform used in the FRIENDS project is a natural candidate to be maintained and enhanced. While countries may adhere to have a national platform in the national language(s), a version at the European level could keep together all the relevant information and open exchange of experience around Europe. Such a web platform would at the same time be beneficial to the numerous learning communities which have accompanied the implementation of QT/TM programme;

- for researchers, a database with research data would be most useful, such that they can use these data for further analysis and also to post new research data;
- in general, overall coordinates of people from which one could get support (e.g. the expert centre) and what human support/expertise one could get, could also be part of the toolkit.

4.5 Closing comments

Looking at the vibrant and even unexpected explosion of contacts in so many different countries, largely testified within the FRIENDS project (see chapter 2), we can draw two main conclusions.

Before coming to these conclusions, it is, however, useful to recall how, behind the widening trend of the QT/TM programme in different schools, a clear process of "innovation diffusion" emerges.

With a diffusion model of innovation in mind (see section 4.1), we can now turn back to the two fundamental implications.

The **first** is that QT/TM is a genuinely stimulating and easily understandable programme, at any latitude, under very different circumstances, in a variety of social contexts. Therefore, it has a wide-open field to exploit, and it bears all the characteristics to become a genuinely European programme. In the language of the diffusion model, this means that:

i) innovation is simple, it responds to practical needs (the well-being of children) being therefore easily communicable, and

ii) it uses universal communication codes that implies it can easily cross apparently deep and potentially problematic differences: languages, cultures, socio-economic contexts, etc.

The **second** conclusion largely derives from the first. The primary role of QT/TM charities will be first and foremost to respond in an appropriate way to the emerging questions and needs from territories; those territories that become aware of the QT/TM technique, providing training for the TM school teachers, assuring correctness in the implementation protocol and offering support to preserve the right meditation effort by students.

In other words, they are all means to raise the "imitation index" of the diffusion model (see section 4.1) from which the speed and completeness of the diffusion process derive.

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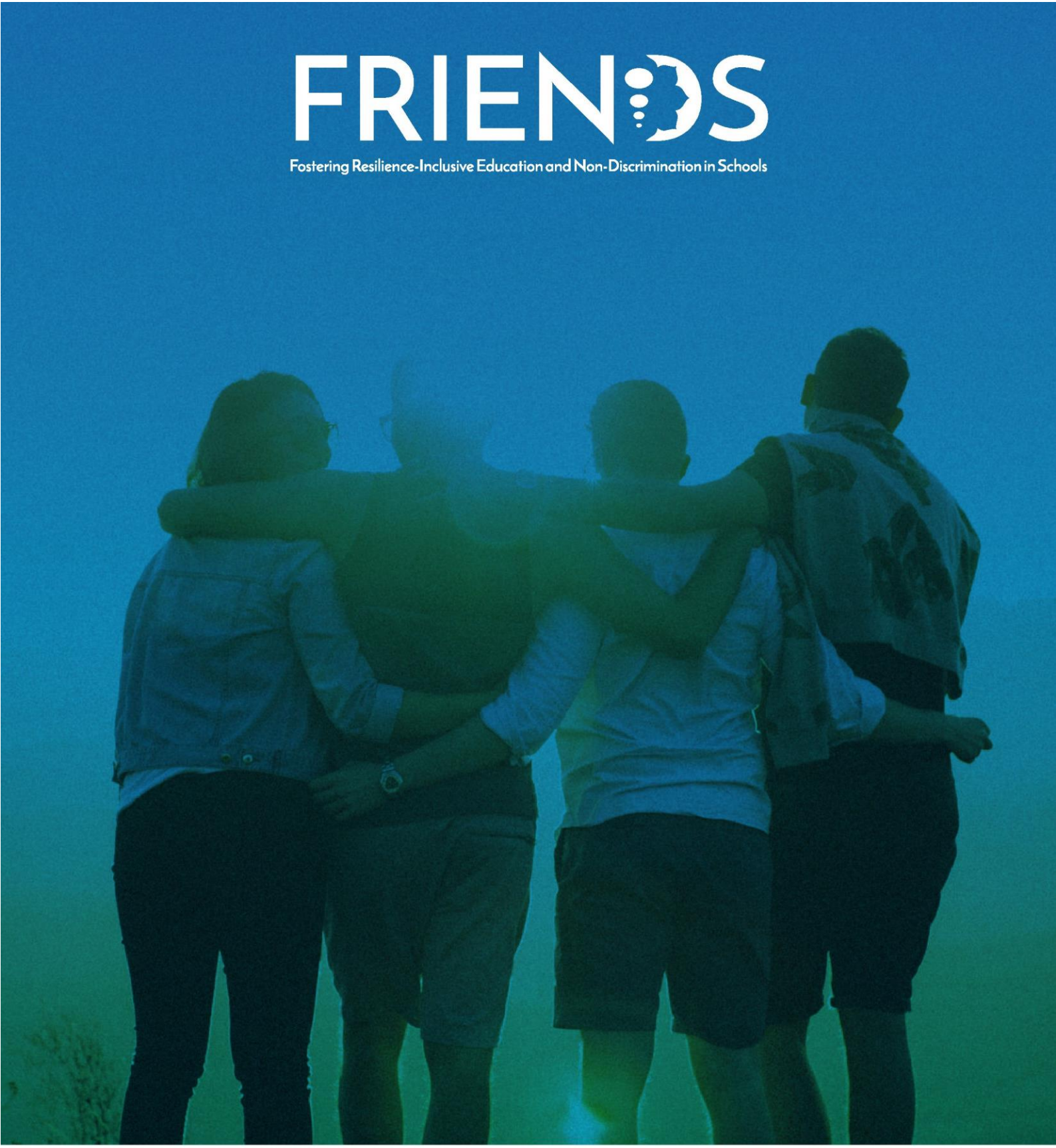

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