

# Leafap

Leading and Facilitating Professional Learning Communities  
in Schools towards an Inquiry-based and Reflective Practice  
KA220-SCH - Cooperation partnerships in school education

## Press Release

Department of Philosophy and Education, AUTH

### International project aiming to strengthen teacher cooperation in schools

Universities and training institutes from six European countries have joined forces in a project aimed at fostering teacher cooperation to enhance teachers' professionalization, thereby promoting learning for children. The project Erasmus+ titled "*Leading and Facilitating Professional Learning Communities in Schools towards an Inquiry-based and Reflective Practice*," is funded by the EU and presents an opportunity for practical application in school settings. The project will run from September 2023 – August 2026.

Intensive collaboration among teachers is internationally recognized as a key success factor for effective schools. As teachers invest significant time in collaborative efforts, there should be a tangible benefit for their ongoing learning. To achieve this, they must delve deeply into topics, critically examine their daily routines, and explore issues from various perspectives. This approach ensures that their actions align with current scientific knowledge in the field and contribute to the development of students. Such a quality of collaboration, called a Professional Learning Community (PLC) also enhances the professional satisfaction and instils confidence in the success of the daily efforts. Research suggests that moderation or leadership within the PLC by one of its members can be highly beneficial. Similarly, an external advisor can facilitate professional dialogue.

The central driving question of the newly launched international project is how leaders or facilitators can support a PLC and what skills are necessary for their development. Since autumn 2023, members from initial and in-service teacher training institutions in Spain, Greece, Norway, Cyprus, Austria, and Germany have collaborated under the EU's ERASMUS+ Cooperation Partnerships in School Education (KA220) program. They are experts in professional learning communities, professionalization, and school development.

This joint project aims to train individuals who assume a moderating or leading role within a PLC or serve as external consultants for this task. Target groups include teachers from all types of schools, student teachers during internships, school administrators, in-service trainers, school supervisors, teacher trainers, and personnel development experts.

Within the project's work packages, the scientific foundation and current support requirements for managing and supporting PLCs in schools will be explored. Additionally, a framework for management and support will be developed, emphasizing elaborate exchanges within the PLC characterized by inquiry and reflection. The competencies required for leaders and facilitators will be systematized in a competency model and translated for practical application. Moreover, a training program will be developed in multiple languages, enabling members of PLCs and facilitators to enhance their skills in supporting PLCs. The outcome includes a range of pedagogical and methodological activities, along with a modular self-paced training course.

The project is coordinated by Weingarten University of Education, Germany.

The partner institutions are:

- Pädagogische Hochschule Vorarlberg, A
- UNIVERSIDAD DE MALAGA, E
- EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY CYPRUS, CY
- ARISTOTELIO PANEPISTIMIO THESSALONIKIS, GR
- NORGES TEKNISK-NATURVITENSKAPELIGE UNIVERSITET NTNU, NO
- Centro de Profesorado Marbella – Coín, E
- Centro del Profesorado de Málaga, E.

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