



**RESILIENT
PRESCHOOLS**

FINAL CONFERENCE

CYPRUS

26/11/2022

Cine Studio, University of Nicosia, Cyprus

Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (CPI)

Institute of Development (IoD)



1. Introduction

This report aims to provide a summary of the key points during RESILIENT PRESCHOOLS MULTIPLIER EVENT conducted in Cyprus as part of the final conference of the project under the Cyprus Education Summit 2022. The Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (CPI) and the Institute of Development (IoD) in collaboration with the non-governmental organization CARDET organized the multiplier event of the Resilient Preschools project under the Cyprus Education Summit 2022 on 26 November, 9:00 - 14:30, at the University of Nicosia (Cine Studio). The Cyprus Education Summit takes place on an annual basis with the ultimate aim of exploring important aspects of education and also highlighting important actions and initiatives in the field. For the detailed conference program visit the conference website by clicking [here](#). This year, the Resilient Preschool project and its topic were chosen as the core area of focus of the event which was dedicated to this EU project.

The general focus of the event was "Teachers' Professional Learning: Challenges and Perspectives" by focusing especially on the teachers' well-being and mental health in their daily practice. The event, which was supported by the University of Nicosia and the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth in Cyprus, was attended by experts, researchers, and professionals in the field of education from Cyprus and abroad. In the context of the Cyprus Education Summit, existing needs and current trends for the promotion of teachers' Professional Learning were explored. Teachers' professional learning, as a continuous and ongoing process that gives them an active role, is fundamental both for their personal development and for the empowerment of students. At the same time, it is important to include the dimension of their mental empowerment and ensuring well-being within school units. These key messages, as well as the existing challenges and perspectives for the Professional Learning of teachers in the Cypriot education system, were brought into focus during the proceedings of the event.



More specifically, the multiplier event gave the opportunity to experts, researchers, practitioners, and professionals from the field of education and teacher professional learning to:

- promote the exchange of knowledge and views on teacher-professional learning
- exchange ideas and experiences between researchers and practitioners
- present existing policies and challenges for supporting teachers' professional learning at the national and European level



- emphasis will be placed on the importance of the promotion of Resilience and Well-being in the school environment, drawing on data and lessons learned from European projects
- Participants (a description of the target groups + numbers)
 - Profile: Experts in the field of education, teachers, principals (with various years of expertise), executives (educational work coordinators) in education, academic personnel (academic and research staff) and students, psychologists and general audience interested in teacher professional development, wellbeing and resilience.
 - 176 participants signed up and 103 people attend the event (80 eligible participants).
 - More than 80% of the participants were teachers from primary and secondary education and the rest were counselors, special teachers, students, principals, academics, researchers, trainers, psychologists, and other stakeholders).



- Scope and Duration (date, time, place, method etc.)
 - 26th November 2022 from 9:00 till 14:30
 - Cine Studio, University of Nicosia, Cyprus
- Processes involved (e.g. tools, equipment)
 - Registration ([online](#) and face to face)
 - Welcoming speeches
 - PowerPoint Presentations
 - Round-table discussions on various issues
 - Dissemination of projects' applications, website, e-learning platform
 - Evaluation & reflection
 - All participants received a certificate of their participation.



2. Key outcomes

- Program of the event

The multiplier event was conducted in person. Participants were welcomed by Dr. Charalambos Vrasidas, Executive Director of CARDET & Professor, University of Nicosia. Then, another welcoming speech took place by Dr. Elena Hadjikakou, Deputy Director, Cyprus Pedagogical Institute which is the coordinating organization of the Resilient Preschools project. In the first phase of the event, a presentation entitled “International research and practice on teachers' professional learning” by Dr.



Michalinos Zembylas, Professor at the Open University of Cyprus and a presentation discussing “Vision and actions of professional learning” by Dr. Pavlina Hadjitheodoulou - Loizidou, Head of Training Department at Cyprus Pedagogical Institute took place. The first phase was concluded with a round-table discussion on the topic “The Professional Learning of Teachers in Cyprus: Challenges and Perspectives” in which Dr. Elena Hadjikakou from the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, Dr. Michalinos Zembylas from the Open University of Cyprus and Pantelis Louka, president of the Branch Directors of the POED and head of primary school participated and Dr. Charalambos Vrasidas was coordinating the discussion.



The second phase of the event focused on “Well-being, mental resilience in the school community and teachers' professional learning”. A presentation discussing the “Professional learning and well-being of teachers and children” by Dr. Maria Tsitiridou-Evangelou, professor at the Department of Early Childhood Education and Care, School of Social Sciences of the International Hellenic University took place. Two additional presentations followed, one with the topic “Making sense of the European Programmes through the national curriculum and the needs of a school unit” by Dr. Maria Eracleous,

representative of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute and another with the topic “Resilient Preschools: Developing skills in children to promote their mental resilience and well-being” by Dr. Vicky Charalambous, Director of Institute of Development. Presentations about practical applications and teachers’ experiences as part of the Resilient Preschools project took also place by Maria Charalambous Pisas and Amalia Zenonos Karpathaki, two kindergarten teachers, and Georgia Solomou, a primary Education Teacher. At the end of the event, as an exit discussion, a round table discussion took place with the topic “Mental resilience and well-being in the school community” with Dr. Vicky Charalambous (Institute of Development), Dr. Maria Eracleous (Cyprus Pedagogical Institute), Dr. Maria Tsitiridou-Evangelou (International University of Greece) and Amalia Zenonos Karpathaki, kindergarten teacher, with the Dr. Panagiotis Kosmas coordinating the discussion. Coffee breaks and lunch break were offered during and at the end of the event.



● Achievements and Successes

Members of the consortium from IoD and CPI introduced their roles and the organizations they represent and shared information regarding the main aims, objectives, activities, and milestones of the RESILIENT PRESCHOOLS EU project. In addition, experts in the field of education presented and discussed issues concerning the teachers’ professional development and well-being by referring to research findings and guidelines from Cyprus and abroad. Specifically, Dr Michalinos Zebylas, Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Management and Academic Head of the Postgraduate Programme "Education Sciences" of the Open University of Cyprus (OUC), presented data extracted through



international research and practice on teachers' professional learning. In addition, Dr. Pavlina Hadjitheodoulou - Loizidou, Head of the Training Department of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, presented the activities of the Pedagogical Institute as the official body for teachers' professional learning in Cyprus. Dr. Maria Tsitiridou-Evangelou, a Professor at the International Hellenic University, participated in the event and discussed the issue of the well-being of teachers and children in education. Also, Dr. Maria Eracleous, representative of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, and Dr. Viki Charalambous, Director of the Institute of Development presented data from the European Resilience Preschool project in relation to teachers' professional learning and mental health. Finally, in the context of interactive discussions and interventions, teachers and representatives of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, members of educational organizations, teachers, researchers, and professionals in the field of education contributed to the round-table discussions, presenting their experiences, views, and perspectives. Three teachers from ECEC settings and primary schools in Cyprus presented their experience from the implementation of the Resilient Preschools in their classrooms.



As emphasized by the speakers at the conference, it is extremely important to devote more time, to structured programs that focus on existing needs, within the school for effective teacher training. The event also highlighted the importance and benefits of interaction between teachers and their active involvement in the dialogue to shape approaches and programs for their training and support. At the same time, it became clear that the mental resilience and well-being of teachers should be a key dimension of the School Improvement Plan and the educational system in general so that teachers are able to effectively manage the challenges of the profession and can respond more effectively to their role. This also requires multidimensional actions and systemic approaches involving teachers, parents, and children. Indeed, a central objective should also be to expand the role of schools, which should not only function as places that only provide knowledge but as institutions that nurture and strengthen the character of children, promoting the well-being of themselves and their teachers.

The event also provided practical tools and training materials that teachers can implement themselves to enhance both their own well-being and the mental resilience and well-being of their students from programs such as Resilient Preschools, ProW, SWPBS, and the School of Happiness. Participants expressed their interest in supporting further communication about this project.



• Successes

- Participants showed a great interest on the presentations of the event as well as for the topic of the project.
- Over 100 participants attended the project's multiplier event in Cyprus.
- The project and the intellectual outputs were disseminated to a large audience.
- Participants were encouraged to visit the e-learning space and to use the provided for their personal and professional development.
- Participants reported that they were informed about innovative approaches and found theoretical and practical resources to incorporate into their preschool activities with children.



- Educators mentioned that they became more aware of the importance of promoting psychological resilience at preschools.
- Identified Challenges
 - Some participants cancelled their participation due to health reasons or many educational events organized in November by different educational or research organizations in Cyprus

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

Participants from Cyprus were interested in the project's topic and positively responded to participate in the multiplier event. All participants reported that they were informed about innovative approaches and found a pool of resources with practices and strategies to implement in practice. The project's outputs were disseminated to a large audience. Preschool educators become more aware of the importance of cultivating psychological resilience and the benefits of applying Positive Psychology strategies in their classrooms. They, also, reported that they will incorporate the project's material into their classroom activities and practices.