

Implementation Report Lifelong Readers LiRe



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Executive Summary:

The following report documents the implementation and the findings of Lifelong Readers case studies conducted by European partners during the school year 2012-2013. Based on the *Lifelong Readers Framework (LiRe)*, European partners along with schools from their countries collaborated to develop and implement a whole-school reading promotion programme. The general aim was to improve children's reading habits and attitudes, through the development of a reading culture and the formation of reading communities.

The programme was initiated through school staff training, which introduced teachers to the *LiRe* approach and effective reading promotion activities. The workshops also focused on identifying needs, setting objectives and designing a whole school reading promotion plan. Staff training consisted of three training workshops with the aim of fostering a respect for reading promotion and to familiarise teachers with the Lifelong Readers Framework. The end product of the training workshops was a whole school reading promotion plan to be implemented at school level.

A comparison between pre- and post- Reading Habits Evaluations, as well as data from observations, interviews and a focus group discussion, point to overall improvement in students' reading habits and attitudes towards reading and books. Teachers also completed Reading Promotion Evaluation questionnaires at the beginning and end of the programme, evaluating their school's reading promotion practices. On the whole teachers recognized an improvement in the reading culture of the school, student's attitudes towards reading and in the promotion of whole school events.

Through qualitative research methods and collaboration between European partners a comprehensive list of recommendations for both practitioners and policy-makers are outlined in this report. These recommendations are practical in nature and designed to aid schools in implementing the Lifelong Readers Framework.

Introduction:

The guiding principle for this project is the assertion that "a lifelong learner is first and foremost a lifelong reader". It is well established that the early childhood years serve as an important foundation for subsequent literacy development. The degree to which children acquire literacy skills is known to be a strong predictor of future academic success and has long-term social and economic implications for families and societies. In a statement issued by the International Reading Association and the National Association for the Education of Young Children, they stress "one of the best predictors of whether a child will function competently in school and go on to contribute actively in our increasingly literate society is the level to which the child progresses in reading and writing" (IRA/NAEYC, 1998, p. 30).

The following report documents the implementation and the findings of Lifelong Readers case studies conducted by European partners during the school year 2012-2013. This report details the context of implementation, training modules, reading promotion plans, data collection activities and data analysis throughout the implementation phase of the Lifelong Readers Framework. Before presenting the findings, recommendations and conclusions from European partners.

Context of Implementation:

The Lifelong Readers Framework was implemented across a range of school types, sizes and socio-economic contexts. School size ranged from 120 pupils to 500 pupils. They included public and denominational school settings. In one case the Framework was implemented in a single sex junior school. The inconsistency of school resources across European states is noteworthy. The context of implementation across the European partners is documented as follows.

Ireland:

St. Patrick's BNS (Boy's National School) is a Catholic primary school, under the patronage of Cardinal Sean Brady of the diocese of Armagh in Ireland. St. Patrick's is a junior boy's primary school, catering for boys from Junior Infants to Second class (5-8 years old). The school opened in September 1954. Originally the school catered for all classes from Junior Infants to Sixth Class. The school became a Junior School in 1974, when it amalgamated with the Junior School (known locally as "The Sisters") run by the Daughters of Charity. Today St. Patrick's BNS has 341 pupils, 23 teachers and 5 Special Needs Assistances.

St. Patrick's BNS is a part of the "Delivering Equality Opportunities in Schools" (DEIS) programme. DEIS the Action Plan for Educational Inclusion, was launched in May 2005 and remains the Department of Education and Skills policy instrument to address educational disadvantage. The action plan focuses on addressing and prioritising the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities, from pre-school through second-level education (3 to 18 years). DEIS provides for a standardised system for identifying levels of disadvantage and an integrated School Support Programme (SSP). 860 schools are included in the programme. These comprise 665 primary schools (341 urban/town schools and 324 rural primary schools) and 195 second level schools. As part of the DEIS initiative schools have access to literacy/numeracy support such as Reading Recovery, Maths Recovery, First Steps, Ready Steady Go Maths.

With access to such supports St. Patrick's BNS have been pro-active in regards to their reading promotion prior to the implementation of Lifelong Readers. There is a designated reading support team in the school who implement the Reading Recovery Programme. Each class has a well-resourced classroom library. There is a history of introducing reading promotion activities in the past however there is little evidence of sustained change within the school community in regards to the promotion of reading.

Poland:

Primary School No 4 in Ursus District is 50 year old school, built in the early 1960's. It has been always the first and the most open in making different projects and additional activities. Now the community of students consists of about 500 girls and boys in the ages from 7-13 years. About 60% of the students are from the families, who have moved to the district of Warsaw from the villages or small cities. The parents generally do not work in our district – they commute to work to the centre of Warsaw, leaving in the early morning and coming back late. The rest 40% of the students are from the families of previous workers of a big tractor factory in Ursus, which was closed down in the 1990's. Nowadays there are two school buildings: for older and younger students connected by the sport hall. Altogether there are 23 classrooms. The board of the school employs 36 teachers and 2 school librarians. So far all the reading promotion activities had been organised by the school librarians and had been held in the room of the school library. So the activities have been organised individually for the groups of students from the same class.

Greece:

The school that facilitated the project was the "Intercultural school of Alsoupolis" which is located in a suburb of Athens, Nea Ionia. The school consists only of foreign and repatriated pupils, and as a result the percentage of Greek pupils is very low. The number of pupils is 180 and consists of 30 nationalities, mainly from the African continent. The majority of children live in the city centre of Athens, almost half an hour distance from the school, which means that they transport by school

bus.

Due to the intercultural nature of the school, the curriculum is slightly differentiated in comparison to the other public schools, in a way that the modules are adapted in the learning level of the pupils and they are based on the integration of different cultures. Through the activities of the school programme, pupils learn their own cultures, approach without stereotypes the cultural differences and develop critical thinking and their ability to collaborate effectively with peers who are different. Unfortunately, even though the school is included in the Educational Priority Zones, several times has been raised an issue of its abolishment.

The facilities of the school consist of a two-floor building with a small yard. Unfortunately any spare rooms are not available, which resulted in the lack of a special room to be used as a library. That fact was a great obstacle for the creation library. Each classroom though, had its own collection of books to form a small library, since both teachers and pupils, offered their own books willingly to the class library.

The last two years there has been an important activation for the establishment of a small library which was located in one of the classrooms. The school participated in the programme "Philanagnosia" (<http://www.philanagnosia.gr/>) organized by the National Centre of Greece (EKEVI) and that resulted to a general motivation for reading promotion. The pupils since then have been put into a specific programme of borrowing books from the library regularly.

United Kingdom:

The school is a small, one form entry Church of England (voluntary aided) primary school located in a fairly urban setting, close to a major city. There are approximately 210 pupils ranging from 4 years to 11 years drawn from the local community. There is a lower than average take up of free school meals and a lower than average proportion of children with special educational needs. The majority of children have English as a first language and are mostly from a white British background. Prior to implementation of the reading programme, the school were categorised as 'good' by OFSTED and were subsequently awarded a 'good' judgement with 'outstanding' for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education (SMSC).

The school employs a number of reading schemes to assist pupils in developing their reading ability and these are banded according to reading levels. All children from when they start school at the age of four have access to these books and they are sent home to parents and carers so that parents are able to read with their children. Parents and carers are encouraged to read with their children on a daily basis and record this in a reading record. In addition, pupils are able to borrow books from the school library to share with their parents or carers at home. Prior to implementation of the reading programme, the school library was in the process of being moved and revamped and so was closed to children for a short period of time. The children receive daily phonics lessons which are tailored to their level of ability in keeping with government policy on teaching early reading.

Austria:

The Implementation took place in two schools in Vienna. One private school (Austrian-Bulgarian Free Time School, named further School No. 1) and one school of the city of Vienna (Ganztagsschule Anton-Gassler-Gasse, named further School No. 2). It was planned to implement the project in primary schools, but LiRe offers also activities suitable for the secondary school. For this reason the students participating in the implementation were between 6 and 12 years.

School No. 1 has primary, secondary and high school levels. It is attended by some 230 pupils, who come from all parts of Vienna to study Bulgarian, the language of their parents. Most of the children are born in Austria and for them Bulgarian is a second language.

School No.2 is a secondary school. It is situated in the 22 Vienna district and is attended by children from the district. About 400 pupils attend the school every year, the majority of them with another mother tongue, different from German. For this school the focus is on German language acquisition. The fact that the children are the whole day at school gives opportunity for many additional

activities of which reading promotion is on the first place. By the way, one of the reading promotion activities applied in this school is so successful, that it is repeated every year, and was also introduced in the LiRe catalogue with suggestions for reading promotion activities.

While in the School No. 1 the parents pay for the education, the School No. 2 is a public school. Due to the above mentioned specificity of both schools, promoting reading is central to them, and they work actively in this field. The teachers are happy when they are offered additional reading promotion material.

Both schools have already been very active in reading promotion. They have participated in other European reading promotion projects, such as BARFIE, EDM Reporter, EPBC II, EUMOF, ABC - The Art of the Book, etc. School No. 1 is also participating in projects organised by the Bulgarian educational authorities for the Bulgarian Schools abroad. The school No. 2 is one of the most active schools in organizing the District's Reading Week. Additionally the regional library in Ruse (Bulgaria) applied some library activities and the Sofia City Library (Bulgaria) was interested to implement librarian activities at the beginning of the school year 2013-2014. Both libraries are among the biggest libraries in Bulgaria with active and well developed children's departments.

Cyprus:

The participating school was 3rd Makedonitissas Elementary School, which is a public school (ran by the Cyprus Ministry of Education) located near CARDET and the University of Nicosia. During the past few years, both CARDET and the University have worked with the school on other projects or educational areas.

The Makedonitissa area is a relatively new and wealthy suburb of Nicosia (biggest city and capital of Cyprus, located at the centre of the island) that developed dramatically between 1990 and 2010. Many new families invested in the highly priced plots and houses in the newly developed area, making this one of the fastest growing suburbs of Nicosia—hosting a constantly increasing number of school-aged children. About 95% of the students at 3rd Makedonitissas are Greek-Cypriot, while the remaining 5% includes students coming mainly from Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Russia and the Philipines; some are permanent and some temporary residents. Most families living here would be considered "middle to upper class"; it is indicative that the school's Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) has recently bought quite expensive equipment for the school, such as interactive whiteboards and sports gear. In spite of the relatively high socioeconomic level of the families, an initial reading habits evaluation indicated that children could be grouped into three equally numbered groups: low, medium, and high level of reading attitudes and habits. Figure 1 depicts this split into three distinct thirds (red, orange, and green), in relation to the number of books children read during the previous summer vacations.

Figure 1

4th, 5th, and 6th Graders:
"Last summer I read..."



This situation needed to be improved, but was better than the overall image of students in Cypriot schools, as two thirds of them (60%) never read for leisure (Papavasiliou et al, 2005).

3rd Makedonitissas is the newest school in the area (obviously 1st and 2nd Makedonitissas schools are older) and received its first students in 2009. That first year, the school admitted 2 classes of 1st graders and also welcomed transfers in grades 2 – 6 from the other, older and overpopulated, schools in the Makedonitissa area. This meant that special efforts were needed in order for students and staff to begin to form a unified and organized school community, with its own culture and traditions.

Even though the school was involved in European projects and other initiatives from the start (related to environmental education, healthy living, etc.) it had not implemented any whole-school reading promotion programmes prior to its involvement in LiRe. Reading for pleasure is not something that schools in Cyprus pay much attention to. Two teachers had been implementing activities to enhance their students' reading attitudes, during the previous year. One or two relevant school-wide events (such as author visits or book exhibitions) were organized per year; usually around the 30th of January, which is a Greek holiday devoted to "the letters" (meaning books, reading, writing, and education).

Between 2009 and 2013, the student population increased from about 200 to more than 300 students. With the exception of the first year, 3 classes of 1st graders are admitted each September, as the school's state-of-the-art facilities make it quite popular among parents. The irony here is that, as the student population grows, the facilities seem to shrink; this happens because rooms that were initially designed to facilitate specific subjects, such as Technology, Science, or Art are gradually being converted into regular classrooms, in order to accommodate the growing number of students. While the school was built to accommodate 2 classes per grade (1st-6th) it is getting to the point that it will host 3 classes of students in all grade levels. The school has asked for new classrooms to be built, but while the plans are there, construction has not started yet due to the economic crisis.

Description of Training Modules:

Variations in the training modules conducted by partners are also seen. It is important that the Lifelong Readers Framework meets the needs of the school in respect to the training modules, rather than the programme being "enforced" on the school. This led to a more fluid and flexible framework that will benefit schools in the context in which they are working.

Ireland:

The initial meeting with St. Patrick's BNS principal, Rose Sullivan, took place on Thursday 20th September. The lifelongreaders programme was outlined to Mrs. Sullivan and seeing the benefits of the programme agreed to set up a group meeting comprising of 5 members which included the reading recovery team, principal and deputy principal. The meeting took place in St. Patrick's BNS on Thursday 27th September. During the meeting the programme was outlined, actions required to pilot the programme were explained and a time frame for teacher training modules agreed upon. It was agreed to conduct the training modules following completion the pupil reading habits evaluation in the first week of December. Due to local constraints within the school, the pupil reading habits evaluation were not conducted until December 14th. It was agreed to revise our time frame and arrange the training workshops to begin on Wednesday 9th January in St. Patrick's BNS.

Fourteen teachers attended the first training workshop. The results of the reading habits survey were outlined and discussed. Teachers expressed their surprise with many of the findings, outlined under data analysis below. Professional dialogue and the collaborative sharing of ideas on effective reading promotion in schools were positive features of the workshop.

At the request of the school principal the second training workshop took place exclusively with the School Self Evaluation team and the Reading Promotion team, as the main focus of the workshop would be drafting the reading promotion action plan. A group of eight teachers attended the workshop. The group worked together to draft the school reading promotion plan. It was decided that this plan would be presented to the teaching staff at the next training workshop.

The final training workshop was attended by all teaching staff members of the school. A short overview of the evaluation results was once again given and the action plan to meet the needs outlined was launched. Some of the more creative activities from the lifelongreaders programme were met with apprehension and unease from the teaching staff. Concern was expressed by teachers of the issue of lack of parental support in school activities. These concerns were eased by the principal and the action plan was accepted by the teaching staff.

United Kingdom:

The three workshops were conducted over a two month period and explained and explored the project and the training materials. The first workshop introduced the nine teachers and five Teaching Assistants to the aims of the project and the specific objectives in order to set out the contextual framework for the research. It also explored the staff's attitudes to reading and what they felt were the key traits that made a reader; these were listed as confidence, enthusiasm, interest, curiosity, pleasure and motivation. In addition, we examined recent research by The National Literacy Trust (2011) which claimed that more than a fifth of children and young people (22%) rarely or never read in their own. In addition, more than half (54%) prefer watching TV to reading and almost a fifth (17%) would be embarrassed if their friends saw them reading. These figures were examined in relation to the school context and initiated a conversation around what happens within school to promote a love of reading. Having discussed our own reading journeys and personal values about reading, the teachers described their ideal 'reading classroom' which included a welcoming environment, a variety of books and other reading materials, having displays upon the walls that actively promoted reading, books on the teacher's desk, a 'book/author of the week' display; referring to the invisible ethos of the school together with the physical environment. There was a general consensus amongst the staff that reading was held in high regard as part of the underlying ethos of the school and represented in all classrooms. From completion of the whole school reading promotion evaluation plan, having a whole school strategy to develop reading for pleasure was central to the school's culture and practice and judged to be at an enhanced stage. Areas for development were peer to peer recommendation and accessibility and display within the school library. This was because the library had recently been revamped and was due to be re-opened housing a number of new resources. Informal evaluations of the first workshop revealed

that teachers were surprised by national statistics that revealed there were a significant number of children that did not engage in reading for pleasure as this was contrary to their own experiences and the experiences of the majority of their pupils. The whole school reading promotion evaluation plan encouraged staff to identify areas to develop as a school and areas that they could enhance within their own classrooms. It was agreed that this would be useful to inform the school Literacy development plan.

For the second workshop, teachers were asked to become familiar with the reading activities on the LiRe website and trial some of these in their classrooms and to ask pupils to recommend some books which they could share. In addition, six students from University of Worcester volunteered to carry out some of the activities with small groups of pupils and to offer feedback. This mainly involved pupils sharing books within these small groups and carrying out 'booktalk' and implementing some of the website activities in order to trial and select the most effective for the reading programme. Evaluation revealed that these activities were carried out during the course of a school day on a regular basis and contributed to the positive comments that were noted during the administration of the pupil questionnaire. One of the challenges faced at this point in the implementation programme was that not all of the activities were wholly suitable for those children between the ages of 4-7 years. There was also a demand for the activities to be differentiated so that they could be used with pupils of all ages and abilities.

The third workshop was adapted as a meeting with the Head teacher and Literacy manager in order to finalise the development plan and to co-ordinate how the actions would feed into the overall plan as the Head teacher did not feel that they could spare the time for a full three hour meeting with all staff; again one of the challenges faced during the implementation programme. As the school have a very comprehensive reading promotion agenda, this workshop was not judged as quite so effective on the evaluation sheet as the purpose and intention of the meeting was already embedded within the school ethos.

Greece:

The staff training did not follow the modules proposed by the program. The problem was that most of the teachers of the school had a quite different programme and it was too difficult to remain at school until the end of their working hours in order to attend the training modules. As a result, the main presentation of the program took place in a plenary session and had a rather informative character about the project and its objectives.

The three training meetings were held in different places and there was not participation from the whole school staff. The first one was part of the in-school training, which was held in the school of the implementation, in which almost all of the teachers participated since there were not lessons that day. The trainees discussed about the existing situation of the reading promotion programme and after familiarizing with the website of the project and considering the resources proposed in there, they worked in groups to suggest ways for the reinforcement of the reading habits of the pupils. According to the evaluation sheet, half of the teachers (50%) considered it as quite helpful. The second one was also part of the in-school training in another school of the same region. In that training not all the teachers of the school participated. The theme of the training in regards with the project was about utilizing ICT in order make reading more experiential. Some of the activities that make use of the computers were presented in the trainees and two tools concerning the creation of digital comics (Comic Lab and Comic Strip Creator) were displayed to the teachers. Even though the trainees seem to get enthusiastic about the tools, there was a lot of questioning because of the lack of a computer laboratory that would facilitate such activities. All of the teachers agreed on standardizing specific days of the week that children would borrow books from the library

The third training was conducted under the two – day conference of a private school in Athens and took the form of a workshop. In that training some of the teachers attended, but not all of them. The theme on which we focused was some case studies about reading books, as a motive for the creation of a reading promotion plan. Trainees chose the ones they liked best and justified their

answer. The revising of the reading promotion actions, led them to the production of a draft reading promotion programme, which would implement in their school. Issues that have to do with resource, timeline and personnel management were also discussed.

Austria:

Meetings with the directors of both schools in order to get their agreement to make the LiRe Implementation in each of the schools preceded the training of the staff.

The training took place between October 2012 and January 2013. Meanwhile some reading promotion activities, proposed by the Institute of Children's Literature in Vienna, also took place in both schools as practical examples of the cooperation between the schools and the Institute, and of the approach towards developing a whole school reading promotion plan. (See Annexes 1 and 2)

The training in the School No. 1 was provided by the representative of the Institute Lilia Ratcheva, while the training in the school No. 2 was divided between Lilia Ratcheva and the School coordinator Karin Veit.

In the School No. 1 three teachers took part in the workshops, two of them primary school teachers, teaching children between 8 and 10 years, and one secondary school teacher, in whose classes children are between 11 and 14 years.

In school No. 2 the workshop participants were 6 – four of them teachers of German and two – teachers of English. The age of the children they teach is between 11 and 14 years.

Altogether between 5 and 6 working meetings took part in each school.

All the participating teachers had university education.

Only two of the teachers had less than 20 years of teaching experience. All the rest were very experienced teachers, who have been entering school class rooms already between 25 and 34 years. As it becomes clear from the above said, both schools focus mainly on reading and their teachers are experienced in reading promotion.

This fact influenced the training modules. The training was made in an informal way – as working meetings with the teachers, exchange of ideas and taking decisions together. Two workshops instead of three were made. The first workshop took 2 hours, the second – 2.5 hours. Besides, about 3 or 4 short informal meetings with the teachers of each school took place.

The book presentations to be done by teachers for their colleagues that were previewed in the Training Modules were not included in the workshops. All participating teachers have university education. They have done such presentations during their studies or in their everyday work as teachers. What is good for students and inexperienced teachers is unthinkable for an in-service teacher with university education. Besides, the Institute for Children's Literature works in close cooperation with these two schools recommending books and even supplying books for the school library.

During the informal training the teachers were:

1. Informed about the LiRe project, its main idea and purposes. "Reading for fun" was the slogan repeated many times during the training.
2. The Reading Promotion Evaluation Tools and the Reading Habits Evaluation Tools were distributed to teachers, filled, analysed and discussed during the next session.
3. Most of the reading promotion activities were shortly presented to the teachers. Those in German translation were distributed or sent them on-line in order to get acquainted in details with some activities. The guidelines for a book discussion were presented to the teachers and distributed among them.
4. The teachers exchanged experience and ideas which was an essential part of the training.
5. The reading promotion activities that already took place in both schools were highly appreciated.
6. During the on-line sessions the teachers who understand English got acquainted with the rest of the activities on the website.
7. Together with the instructor Whole School Reading Promotion Plans were developed.

8. During the implementation of the Reading Promotion Plan, the instructors had at least three or four meetings with the teachers, discussing with them details of the activities and helping them with books suitable for the topic.

Poland:

The training modules were organised in the Science Reading Room in Public Library in Ursus on 15th, 16th and 22nd November 2012. It was led by the librarians of Public Library in Ursus and two local writers-journalists. The participants of the training were 16 school teachers (among them the director of the school) and two librarians.

The teachers were generally the masters of the classes 1st till 6th, who teach Polish, English, German, History, Maths, Art and Music, Chemistry and P.E.

During this presentation of different activities the group was discussing reading strategies that assist students in learning to develop through reading. All the participants have been provided a copy of the materials to serve as a note-taking guide. It freed them to concentrate on the presentation and add their own notes rather than copying the information. The course started with the activities, which the teachers might have been more familiar with. Then the effective components of the reading programmes from other partner countries were presented and discussed. Then based components of the successful reading promotion programme were determined and the discussion on the exact reading promotion programme for the Primary School No 4 was discussed. During these workshops the teachers explored each of the component areas and then looked at the solutions to support activity development for each of these areas.

The solutions were meant to provide the teachers with knowledge of the crucial elements, which support reading promotion at school. The participants were encouraged to make their own proposals and look for advantages and disadvantages of them. As the result the group prepared the satisfying reading promotion plan, which was planned to be implemented since 1st March.

All the details of all the actions were deeply discussed and the teachers, responsible for the implementation were chosen.

Cyprus:

This pressure for regular classrooms in the place of specialized ones has led to discussions and considerable friction among school staff. Teachers specialized in specific subjects did not want to lose their subject-devoted rooms, so they would argue for the need to keep the Science or Technology or Art room, competing about each subject's importance and needs. Other teachers would say that it is more important to have spacious and well-equipped general classrooms. As one of the school's "special rooms" was the central school library, at the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year some teachers suggested that it were turned into a general classroom. While the principal was willing to consider this option, a group of teachers opposed it, arguing for the value of a central library.

These discussions were quite relevant to the *Lifelong Readers* project, since CARDET researchers considered the revamped library pivotal to steering up student, teacher and parent interest in reading, and transforming the school into a reading community. In fact, during the previous year (2011-2012) CARDET had collaborated with the school to equip the library, initiate some use of it, and prepare the ground for the *LiRe* implementation to follow next year. Before that, the library room featured mainly empty shelves and was not really being used as a library. The PTA was involved, painting the library in bright colours and adding some furniture, while three teachers worked with CARDET to choose and purchase books (other teachers were asked for suggestions as well). One of the three teachers was working towards her PhD in Children's Literature, the second had done some action research in reading promotion as part of her Graduate work, and the third had worked at a bookstore in the past and had a special interest in books and libraries. The first two were teaching first grade, while the third one was a special-ed teacher, working with small groups of students and dividing her time between this school and another one. The first two frequently expressed their concerns to colleagues about keeping and further upgrading the library. They even

asked a CARDET researcher to help them convince the principal and the rest of the staff about this need.

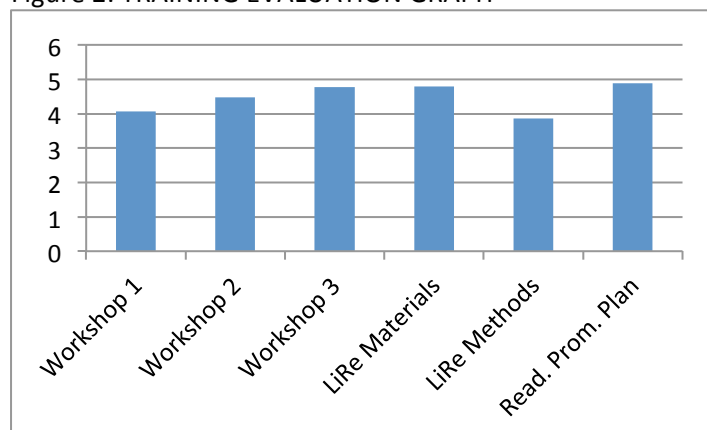
As CARDET researchers fully agreed with this view, the objective of convincing the school to keep and utilize the central library as the heart of its reading promotion efforts was added to the following initial objectives:

1. Introduce staff members to the *LiRe Framework* and its approach;
2. Help them explore effective reading promotion and become familiar with quality children's books;
3. Have them assess where they and their students stand in terms of reading promotion and reading habits;
4. Help them identify needs and set objectives;
5. Facilitate their collective effort to design and implement a whole school reading promotion plan.

So, it was decided that the first staff training module be adopted to accommodate a discussion and convince school staff about the central role the central library could have in their reading promotion programme. It was deliberately chosen that the workshop takes place in the actual library. Almost all teachers (26 out of 27) and the principal attended this training, which only lasted for an hour, due to the school's schedule. They preferred to have two of the training workshops during regular school staff meetings, taking place on Wednesday noons, right after the children left school. Thus, an additional difficulty was that the participants seemed quite tired after having gone through an entire school day. While 5-6 teachers looked excited about our meeting, most were positive but not in the mood to actively participate in the training.

There was not much time for active participation anyway, except for discussions following two presentations delivered by the trainer. The first presentation introduced the LiRe project (concept, aims, philosophy). The second presentation focused on the importance of reading attitude in improving reading aptitude and the central role of school libraries in this process. Several research findings were offered as proof, such as McQuillan's finding (1998) about students' reading skills being analogous to the number of books in their school library. In the discussion that followed, while one teacher questioned the validity of such findings and another one wondered about the relevance of this data to the Cyprus context, in the end they all seemed to be convinced about the value of reading promotion and the importance of the library. This was reflected in their decision, later on, to not turn the library into a regular classroom, at least for a year or two. In this sense, one of the meeting's central goals was achieved; however, the teachers were probably overwhelmed by the body of research presented to them. As a couple of actual yawns had communicated to the trainer, this was too much theoretical talk at the end of an exhausting school day. The teachers' evaluation of the training seems to support this observation, as this first workshop received the lowest score (Figure 2).

Figure 2: TRAINING EVALUATION GRAPH



One does note, however, that all three workshops were generally evaluated in a positive manner by participants; with the maximum being 5.0, they all received a score of 4.0 or above.

The second workshop received a better score than the first one, most probably because it was more practice-oriented. Teachers were divided into two groups, depending on the grade level they taught. During regular school-time, teachers of younger ages observed a demonstration of *LiRe* reading promotion activities with first graders in the library. Similarly, the teachers of older students observed a demonstration of *LiRe* reading promotion activities with fifth graders, again in the library. Seeing their own students respond to these activities with joy and enthusiasm, was the best way to inspire teachers and give them a solid idea of how the *LiRe* approach is implemented. The trainer deliberately involved observing teachers in the activities, achieving the transfer of some of the students' enthusiasm to their teachers. It is also important that after this observation, teachers were convinced that they could easily bring their students to the library and do similar activities. It is indicative that at the end of the demonstration one teacher approached the trainer, stating in a mildly surprised tone: "We could organize similar activities with our students, with no need to devote much preparation time!" Another teacher commented that this is the kind of activities that can drive "boredom" out of teaching and learning, because they are diverse and more playful, compared to the school's daily routine. These results fully justify the trainer's decision to divert from the suggested *LiRe Training Modules*. After this experience, CARDET proposed that the suggested modules be revised to include such demonstrations of *LiRe* activities.

The last workshop received an even higher score, in spite of the fact that, like the first one, it also took place during a Wednesday noon staff meeting. The workshop took place in the library and focused on the results of two self-evaluating tools that seemed to be of particular interest to school staff: the *Reading Promotion Evaluation Tool* and the *Reading Habits Evaluation Tool*. Their participation in data collection stimulated their interest and curiosity about the results. When asked during an interview, a vice-principal said that using these tools to collect data about the school's current state "mobilized" her; it helped her realize that she was entering a specific process and she was motivated to organize her thoughts around the subject and to engage her students in a discussion about what and how often they read. The self-evaluation process, she continued, also helped students realize that reading books is important and that "we" (meaning the class) would start paying more attention to it (Transcribed Interview #1).

So, in spite of being tired after teaching for a whole day, most teachers were actively involved in an energetic discussion about their students' reading habits and skills and what the school is doing or could be doing to help them. The visual presentation of results by the trainer facilitated the discussion. This was a practical and interactive session, which led to setting the objectives to be pursued by the school's Reading Promotion Programme. The draft of the actual Reading Promotion Plan was left for the coordinating group (the two first-grade teachers mentioned before, a fifth-grade teacher and one of the two vice-principles who taught sixth grade). This may have been a mistake because if all staff had actively participated in drafting the plan, they might have been even more informed and engaged during its implementation. This is further discussed in a later section of the report.

In an interview, a first-grade teacher said: "This [the training] was a beginning; we internalized the need to pay attention to reading promotion; even persons that had never cared for it have started to think about it and implemented some activities" (Transcribed Interview #2). She then continued to say that, even though both the training and implementation had an impact, this impact would become more intense if the programme were to be continued during the following school year. She believed that one year was not enough and that continuation was important, in order for the school to really become a reading community.

It is important to note here that teachers assessed all statements but one on the training evaluation questionnaire with average scores of 4.0 and above (5.0 being the maximum). The lowest score was received by the statement "The methods suggested by *LiRe* are Realistic" (Figure 2). We

acknowledge that the Cyprus educational system and the way schools and teaching/learning time are structured in Cyprus present obstacles in the implementation of *LiRe* reading promotion methods. Time and curricular pressures were recognized as inhibiting factors by interviewees at the end of the year. This is probably the reason behind the relatively low score received by the statement; however, the response is close to 4.0, which means that teachers still find the methods quite realistic. Besides, they did have a positive response to the teaching demonstrations they observed during the second workshop. In any case, teacher-trainers should take this result into account, proposing to teachers ways in which *LiRe* methods could be practically adopted to their school's specific context and implemented in a realistic and feasible manner (e.g. ways to find the additional time or resources needed for *LiRe* reading promotion, or concrete examples of applied activities in similar settings). It should also be noted that *LiRe* materials were rated as original and innovative by most participants, which reflects their enthusiasm about several proposed *LiRe* actions and activities.

A general conclusion about the school staff training is that teachers seemed to appreciate workshops that lead to concrete outcomes and had immediate results and meaning for their everyday practices. The relevant statement on the questionnaire ("The WS have helped the staff of my school to form a reading promotion plan") received a high score (Figure 2). Additionally, the first-grade teacher quoted earlier suggested that if workshops were to be repeated next year, they should focus exclusively on specific reading promotion activities and practices, such as literary circles. She believed that teaching demonstrations and suggestions of specific books and activities are what teachers need. She proposed to divide teachers into three groups during training, depending on the grades they teach: 1st-2nd, 3rd-4th, and 5th-6th grades; it seems that teachers prefer training that provides them with material and ideas they can immediately apply with the students they currently teach.

According to the trainer's estimation, all five objectives mentioned earlier (six when the library objective is included) were achieved to a high degree. The only exception is the objective about teachers becoming familiar with quality children's books. Because of time limitations, this part was left to the school-staff to develop during other staff meetings and informal conversations; however, by the end of the programme only two booktalks by two members of the coordinating committee had taken place. This was an important weakness in the implementation process, since reading promotion is more effective when teachers are familiar with and enthusiastic about children's books, forming themselves a reading community. Other than that, training:

1. managed to introduce staff members to the *LiRe Framework* and its approach;
2. helped them explore effective reading promotion—even though it could have done better if teachers devoted more time to explore the *LiRe* website or if they were given more time to do so during the workshops;
3. encouraged them to assess where they and their students stand in terms of reading promotion and reading habits;
4. helped them identify needs and set objectives;
5. facilitated their collective effort to design and implement a whole school reading promotion plan.

The preceding discussion, which was mainly based on school staff's responses to training, attests to the achievement of these objectives.

Description of Reading Promotion Plans:

Ireland:

The reading promotion plan formed part of a wider School Self Evaluation Plan for Literacy, which was being conducted nationwide as a directive from the Department of Education and Skills in Ireland. Data was collected using an adapted version of the Reading Habits Evaluation Tool and Reading Promotion Evaluation Tool from the lifelongreaders framework. A School Self Evaluation

Team was established to draft a reading promotion plan based on the evidence gathered. The plan was then presented to the teaching staff of the school and consultation sought. The final draft of the action plan is attached as appendix 1 of this report.

Objective 1: To engage parents with reading promotion activities to link home and school reading. Two actions were proposed to address this need. The Bedtime Stories Activity would be used in a selection of older classes to encourage parental involvement. Classroom teachers along with the reading promotion team would be responsible for organising the events in the Spring and Summer term of 2013. The Family Writing Workshop would also be used to encourage parental involvement. It is proposed that this activity take place in June 2013 and will be organised by the reading promotion team.

Objective 2: To engage mature males in reading activities of school. The Lads and Dads Reading Promotion Activity was planned on a monthly basis to address this objective. It is hoped that through engagement with mature males that the boys of the school will take more of an interest in reading. The activity will take place throughout the Spring and Summer terms.

Objective 3: To encourage families to use their local library. The school will actively promote events held in the library. The school will also organise trips to the library for 1st and 2nd classes. These activities will run throughout the Summer term of 2013 and will be led by the Principal of the school. It is hoped that families will avail of the services of the library as a result.

Objective 4: To involve parents in their child's reading within a classroom setting. The Shared Reading Activity is to be used to promote involvement of parents within the school. The activity will continue throughout the Spring and Summer terms.

United Kingdom:

The school chose to implement a number of activities as part of the reading promotion plan based on trialling of activities and recommendations from case studies in order to address key priorities around reading.

The main areas to be addressed were: visibility of reading within school, teachers as readers, suitability and use of the school library and reading events to promote reading for pleasure. The Literacy co-ordinator for the school had responsibility for developing the reading plan and ensuring all staff were actively involved. As part of the school development plan, improving teaching of reading and encouraging reading for pleasure were identified as the two key priorities. From this a reading promotion plan was developed by the Literacy co-ordinator outlining actions and success criteria. See appendix 1 for Action Plan.

Greece:

The activities that have worked best up to now are the following :

- The "tree of books": Pupils were eager to fill the tree with leaves and make it denser. It was a creative and playful activity which promoted interaction between the readers and literature texts.
- The "wall of books": this activity was already implemented by the previous year. Each book that was borrowed from the library, was accompanied by a report that the child should complete. The LiRe project inspired the teachers to use a more playful and inspirational format for the book reports, which encouraged children to observe it and spot books that might interest them.
- The "Comic Mania" was an activity that from the beginning provoked a lot of enthusiasm between the pupils. It is common accepted that the majority of children are fans of comics and that is why this activity was accepted with great pleasure.
- The "books we loved" was an activity where children are asked to choose their favorite paragraph or part of the book they have read. Children fancied have their favorite parts of the books exhibited in the corridor. Most of the pupils flaunted and discussed with their classmates about their selections.

Children seem to be very willing to perform the activities suggested by the project and respond with pleasure. The reading program that was developed allowed pupils to take responsibility and ownership of their independent reading. Furthermore, children were encouraged to make their own choices and become more enthusiastic readers.

See appendix 2 for action plan.

Austria:

Both schools developed Reading Promotion Plans in compliance with their specific tasks:

School No. 1 – teaching Bulgarian as second language

School No. 2 – promoting the reading and understanding of texts in German language.

The Reading Promotion Plans were designed based on proposals and ideas by different teachers, and on previous reading promotion experience. The results of the Analysis of Students' reading habits and the recommendations of the Instructor were also taken into consideration.

Both schools have implemented all points of their Reading Promotion Plans.

During the implementation of the Reading Promotion Plans it became clear that some of the planned or recommended activities could be slightly changed or combined.

For example:

15 Minutes Reading for Fun Every Day was enlarged and became 15 Minutes Laugh Every Day, thus combining the following activities: 15 Minutes Reading for Fun Every Day, Humour Marathon, Book Discussions and Reading aloud (School No. 1).

Or, the activity "Cacao Book Discussion Club with my Favourite Book" combined the suggestions to Forming Reading Communities with book discussions and book exchange among the peers. (School No. 1)

See appendix 3 and 4 for action plan.

Poland:

The reading promotion programme lasted from 1st March till 15th June 2013. The activities were held in the classrooms, in the school library, in the corridors and on the playground.

The main actions of the programme were:

1. Fairy-tale Thursdays
2. Magic journey with Alina Centkiewicz and her books
3. International Day of a Book for Children
4. Spring Book Fair
5. The Day of Loud Reading
6. 310th Anniversary of the Charles Perrault's Death
7. 90th Anniversary of Henryk Jerzy Chmielewski's Birth

Different activities were chosen:

- Book Review
- Fairy-tales loud reading
- Books presentations
- Games- word games, scrambles
- Library orientation- such as library ethics; library registration, types of library materials etc.
- Care of books and library materials
- Book Fair
- Meeting with writers
- Creative Arts such as drawing, painting and decoration, singing etc.
- Exhibitions

15 teachers and 2 librarians (from 36 teachers of the chosen school) were responsible for the implementation of different activities. The plan was completed and the whole programme was a great success. Almost 70% of the students took part in programme. Many parents were involved,

too. Due to the collected comments of the students and the teachers, such activities should be organised every year. The programme integrated the school community of teachers and students and their parents, everybody had fun and learnt a lot about books, writers, illustrators and genres. Attached there is a relevant table with the plan of the programme.

Cyprus:

As mentioned earlier, after reviewing the results of the self-evaluation tools, school staff agreed on the reading promotion objectives. These were 14 objectives, covering the following areas:

1. Whole-staff engagement
2. Visibility of reading
3. Peer-to-peer recommendation
4. Utilizing ICT
5. Reading events
6. School library accessibility and display
7. School library stock
8. Class libraries
9. Pupil involvement
10. Involving organisations and adults from the community
11. Reaching boys
12. Pupils and families from diverse cultures and backgrounds
13. Communication with families
14. Family events and activities

These were basically all the areas evaluated by the reading promotion self-evaluation tool. The results had shown that there was room for improvement in all areas, so the staff agreed to include all of them in the plan. The researcher encouraged this approach, but the results discussed later indicate that it may have been over-optimistic.

In order to address all the areas listed above, several actions and activities were incorporated in the plan. These were arranged to take place throughout the second semester of the school year, starting in January and ending in June. The plan included diverse action points, from everyday practices like Free Voluntary Reading (FVR) and dedicated pin-boards, to one-time events like author visits, talks to parents and book exhibitions. In addition to Objectives and relevant Actions Needed, the plan listed the Time Scale for each action and the Member(s) of Staff Responsible. While the LiRe template for the plan includes three extra columns: Resources, Success Criteria, and Achieved (Date), these were not substantially used by the school. The trainer got the impression that the coordinating team considered such elements redundant. He also observed that the school did not have prior experience in putting together and administering this kind of action plans, and thus seemed to find this way of thinking and planning as “foreign” to school management in Cyprus.

Description of Data Collection Activities:

Ireland:

In order to reduce invalidity when collecting data for the project a mixed methods approach was adopted. Quantitative research methods such as questionnaires and surveys were used to collect data from large audiences within the school community. While qualitative methods of individual and group interviews were conducted to collect data from important stakeholders within the school community.

Pupil Reading Habits: Before proceeding with the lifelongreaders programme St. Patrick’s were eager to understand the needs of their pupils. The pupils reading habits evaluation tool was used to elicit data from the pupils in regards to their reading habits and their disposition towards reading. The first collection of data was took place on the 14th December 2012. A random selection of one class in each year group was sampled. A total of 101 pupils were surveyed using an adapted version

of the Pupil Reading Habits Evaluation Tool. For the purpose of data analysis and organization it was decided to organize the pupils into two groups. The Junior and Senior Infants classes were surveyed as group 1 (ages 4-7) and the 1st and 2nd classes were surveyed as group 2 (ages 7-9). A second collection of data on the reading habits of pupils was conducted on 24th June after the implementation of the lifelongreaders framework.

Reading Promotion Evaluation: An audit to the current reading promotion activities in St. Patrick's was conducted after the first training workshop. Teachers were asked to reflect on the reading promotion activities in the school and to determine if reading promotion was at an initial stage, developed stage or enhanced stage. All members of the teaching staff completed the audit.

Individual Interviews: School Staff-Due to the involvement of management in the promotion of the Lifelongreaders programme it was agreed to interview the two most active members: the school principal and the literacy support teacher.

Parents-Single interviews with two parents were also conducted in order to assess the impact lifelongreaders has in the home.

Group Interview: A single group interview of four teachers from across the school year groups was also conducted. The group interview served to gain insights into the perspective of teachers implementing lifelongreaders.

All interviews followed the framework devised by LiRe partners. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed.

United Kingdom:

The implementation programme took place during the academic year 2012/13 which begins in September and ends in July and was limited to staff and pupils (ages 4-11 years) from the identified school. I was able to collect and analyse the emerging data using a mixed methods approach of questionnaires, surveys and interviews. A mixed methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative research has not only allowed me to evaluate reading habits through a specific questionnaire but has also sought to put this into context with the more open ended questions employed during the administering of the reading habits tool so that the data can 'enhance the performance of the organisation and individuals through changes to ...procedures' (Denscombe 2002:27). In addition, the semi structured approach of the interviews and focus group discussion has enabled me to explore responses in depth thus eliciting a rich narrative from which to draw and inform conclusions which have informed recommendations as stipulated in the initial programme brief.

A reading promotion tool was administered to the 14 members of staff before and after implementation to assess the success of the reading promotion plan on a school based level, from the staff's perspective. Interviews with key members of staff (the literacy co-ordinator and the Head Teacher) and a small focus group comprising three teachers were also carried out separately with the purpose of gaining a deeper understanding of staff views on particular areas of success and to ascertain their evaluation of the programme. All questions posed during the semi structured interviews and focus group were closely aligned to the purposes of the study and used to evaluate the extent to which the programme was successful.

An initial questionnaire containing closed and open ended questions was carried out with 21 pupils ranging from 4 years to 11 years to assess current reading habits prior to implementation of the reading programme and again at the end of the reading promotion timescale as identified in the report so as to ensure informed conclusions were reached as to the appropriateness and success of the reading promotion plan.

Greece:

The data collection was both quantitative and qualitative. Two questionnaires were applied before and after the implementation, one for the school staff (Reading promotion tool) and the other for the pupils (Reading habits tool). The sample consisted of 8 teachers and 29 pupils. These tools were

very objective and collected the information in a standardised way, since the questions were highly structured and the conditions under which they were answered were controlled. The only disadvantage was the length of the Reading habits tools, which was proven as an obstacle for the return rate and respondents might have answered superficially.

Furthermore, the data collection activities included 2 interviews with key school staff and a focus group with school staff. The interview allowed the facilitator to clarify any questions and observe verbal and non-verbal behaviour of the respondents, without the anxiety of the questionnaire. Both interviews were very well structured and contributed to the effective evaluation of the data. They consisted of several key questions and guidance, which helped to define the areas to be explored. Regarding the focus group discussion with school staff (5 teachers), it was easy to moderate because all of the participants work in the same school for many years and share almost the same views about issues related to school. Therefore they expressed their feelings and opinion openly, emphasizing the strengths and the limitations of the reading plan. The discussion was quite effective to complete the feedback from the overview of the project.

Austria:

Different forms of data collection were used:

- Feed back was received during the discussions and exchange of experience.
- School staffs completed Workshop Evaluation Sheets before and after the Implementation.
- Pupils answered the Reading Habits Evaluation Questionnaire.
- School staff completes Workshop Evaluation sheets.

- Several visits of the instructor in schools took place during the implementation in order to personally observe the process. (The Institute provided 5 visits to the School No. 1 to observe the activities; in school No. 2 the instructor from the school was charged with closely following the activities.)

- Interviews were made with two teachers and two parents.
- Additionally two interviews were made with a discussion group of parents.

The quantitative analysis of the collected data concerning reading promotion evaluation or reading habits evaluation was not relevant as the sample was very small – 4 classes in the one school and three classes in the other. The qualitative analysis of the data gave a rich material for research in the field of children's reading preferences, about the books they read, about the use of technical means in reading, about the family reading, the role of the parents in reading promotion, etc.

Poland:

During the workshops the activities of promoting reading used before the implementation were discussed. Then during the final meeting they were compared with the activities, used in the programme.

The questionnaires from 38 kids – girls and boys were collected and analysed.

The school was visited twice during – in March and June and the chosen sample of activities were analysed and estimated.

The interviews with 2 parents and 2 teachers were accomplished.

During the last meeting with the teachers and the director of the school the programme was estimated and discussed. Some conclusions were collected.

Cyprus:

The questions that guided our inquiry were:

1. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the school-staff training process? How were these perceived by the participants and the trainer?
2. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the planning process?
3. How were the students benefited by the implementation of the reading promotion plan?

4. What elements of the implemented reading promotion plan had the most positive effects?
5. What challenges occurred during the implementation?
6. After the implementation of the reading promotion plan, which areas improved and to what extent? Which did not improve and why?
7. What suggestions might be proposed to schools and policymakers that are interested in developing whole-school reading promotion?

The implementation and evaluation of LiRe at 3rd Makedonitissas Elementary School followed a case-study approach. The data collection procedures and tools are described below:

Reading promotion evaluation tool before and after implementation

At the beginning and end of the programme, teachers completed the LiRe Reading Promotion Evaluation questionnaire (attached under Annexes) where they had to rate their school's reading promotion practices in various fields, such as whole-staff involvement, library access, communication with families and reading promotion events. For each area, they were given four options and were asked to choose the one that best described the current situation at their school; for instance, these were the options presented to them regarding "whole-staff engagement":

Reading Promotion Area	Not yet initiated	At initial stage	At developed stage	At enhanced stage
Whole-staff engagement	Does not apply to our school.	Some school staff members promote reading for pleasure.	All staff members promote reading during class time.	All school staff actively promotes reading in and out of class time.

This tool was developed by revising and adopting a similar tool developed by the UK-based Literacy Trust organisation. Before administering the tool, we had a discussion with three teachers (members of the coordinating team) who reviewed the options and commented on areas that were not clear enough. The questionnaire was revised accordingly.

Fourteen teachers completed the pre-evaluation questionnaires; results were then discussed during workshop 3, where needs and objectives were identified. Post-evaluations were completed by nine teachers, in order for the results to be compared with pre-evaluations and draw conclusions.

Reading habits tool

Additionally, before and after the implementation of the reading promotion programme, students completed the LiRe Reading Habits Evaluation questionnaire (attached under Annexes). The questionnaire was developed after reviewing several other tools that have been used in other relevant research projects; these tools included questionnaires developed by Link (1984), McKenna & Kear (1990), Mullis et al (2001), Malafantis (2005) and Clark et al (2008). Questions and options were drafted mostly based on McKenna & Kear's questionnaire (1990) and the relevant part of the international PIRLS research tool (Mullis et al, 2001). Five students (ages 9-12) were then asked to review the questionnaires and point to questions that need to become clearer. Questionnaires were revised accordingly. These questionnaires are addressed to students aged between 9 and 12. Younger students completed simplified questionnaires that were only used for the schools' initial self-evaluation.

All fourth-, fifth- and sixth-graders attending the school completed the LiRe Reading Habits Evaluation questionnaire at the beginning of the programme; the results were used to investigate the students' relationship with reading, diagnose needs and set objectives. At the end of the programme, two classes (a fourth and fifth grade) were randomly chosen to complete the questionnaire once more, so that their pre- and post- results could be compared and possible changes in habits and attitudes might be identified.

Observation of whole-day event

CARDET researchers observed the whole-school, whole-day event that took place at the school on April 2, 2013. Researchers observed diverse reading promotion activities that took place during that day and took observation notes. They later added interpretation comments on these notes. Additional, informal observation of activities and behaviours took place throughout the programme.

Two interviews with key school staff

Near the end of the school year, two separate interviews were conducted with two members of the school's coordinating team. The first interviewee was a vice-principal who taught sixth grade and represented the school's administration in the coordinating team. The second was a first grade teacher who was particularly active in the programme and had prior experience in reading promotion practice and research during her graduate work. Both interviews provided valuable insight both into the process and its results.

A debriefing focus group with school staff

A focus group discussion with three other school staff also provided valuable insights. Participants included: another first-grade teacher who was also a member of the coordinating team and is currently working towards her PhD in children's literature and reading; a second-grade and a fifth-grade teacher who participated actively in the whole programme.

Data Analysis:

Ireland:

Reading Habits Evaluation:

Part 1: The pupils reading habits evaluation tool was used to elicit data from the pupils in regards to their disposition towards reading and their reading habits. The first collection of data took place on the 14th December. A random selection of one class in each year group was sampled. A total of 101 pupils were surveyed using the quantitative method. For the purpose of data analysis and organization it was decided to organize the pupils into two groups. The Junior and Senior Infants classes were surveyed as group 1 (ages 4-7) and the 1st and 2nd classes were surveyed as group 2 (ages 7-9). Comparisons between the results from the two groups were made and are presented in findings section below.

Part 2: A second collection of data on the reading habits of pupils was conducted on 24th June after the implementation of the lifelongreaders framework. The same pupils were sampled, allowing the use comparative and longitude (changes over time) methods of data analysis.

The data collected from Group 1 (ages 4-7) outlined the following:

- * Infants find reading Fun and Important.
- * Infants read mostly books, comics and magazines.
- * Infants read mostly at home and with mum and dad.
- * Mum read most to Infants.
- * Infants enjoy visiting the library, bookshop and getting books as a present.

The data collected from Group 2 (ages 7-9) outlined the following:

- * 1st and 2nd Class pupils indicate that reading is Important, Fun and Hard.
- * They read mostly books, comics, magazines and some websites.
- * They read mostly in school.
- * 1st and 2nd Class pupils enjoy visiting the library, bookshop and getting books as a present.

Interviews: *Individual Interview with teaching staff members/Group Interview with teaching staff/Individual interview with parents:*

The following process was used to analyse the qualitative data collected from the above interviews: All interviews were transcribed.

All interviews were listened to in full to get a sense of the whole.

Noting units of general meaning using both verbal and non-verbal gestures to elicit the participant's meaning.

Noting units of meaning relevant to the research question.

Clustering units of relevant meaning.

Determining themes from clusters of meaning.

Identifying general and unique themes for all the interviews.

This process resulted in the emergence of the following themes:

- Training in reading promotion
- Whole school approach to reading promotion
- Parental involvement
- Attitude to reading promotion
- Reading culture in school
- Enjoyment of reading

United Kingdom:

The data gathered from the reading promotion tool, the reading habits tool and the semi structured interviews and focus group discussion, were analysed by first sorting and listing the information and presenting the questionnaire data through graphical representation and through identifying key themes. Following on from this, trends and patterns were detected so as to establish meaningful links between the various forms of data collated before and after implementation of the programme. Initial evaluative statements collected prior to the implementation of the reading programme were examined and key themes were identified by collating and listing key words and phrases. The inclusion of the two open ended questions with prompts, included at the end of the questionnaire, provided an opportunity to collate some qualitative data which would provide a greater breadth and depth.

The interviews and small focus group discussion were recorded having first acquired consent in the form of written permission. Concepts and meanings were explored in order to identify any similarities or recurrent issues that arose during the discussion and connections were made with the emerging themes identified from other data sources. This was then mapped against the original purpose of the research project in order to inform conclusions and evaluate the success of the reading promotion plan in this particular context.

Greece:

The tool used to analyse the questionnaires was the Google Forms in which the findings were depicted in figures and shapes. It was a very helpful tool to collect information in an easy, streamlined way. The form was connected to a Google spreadsheet where the responses were automatically sent. [Here](#) you can view the results of the responses of the Reading habits questionnaire before the implementation of the reading program and [here](#) after the implementation. The same thing with the Reading promotion questionnaire, whose results are reachable [here](#).

The interviews were conducted according to the template of the project. The two teachers that were interviewed were the ones responsible for library matters, while the focus group consisted of 5 teachers. Unfortunately, parents were not available to conduct an interview.

Austria:

The reading habits qualitative analysis was made for each class separately in order to get a general view of the level of reading in the class and to help teachers determine specific reading promotion strategy for each class.

The comparison of the data analysis (Evaluation of Reading Promotion and Evaluation of the Reading Habits) shows some development. The trends noticed before the start of LiRe implementation gain at the end of the implementation clearer form. Among the primary school children the reading interest is growing and enlarging. Their reading preferences slightly change.

A bigger variety of books is quoted in the Reading Habits Evaluation Questionnaire after the

implementation. The number of books quoted is also increased. The self-confidence of the children (even of those who do not read) is bigger and they claim the reading is not at all difficult and they understand what they read. Children start finding pleasure in reading aloud. They already discuss with each other what they read, some of them do it even every day. More genres are quoted as reading preferences. For Example, books about old times appears already often.

Poland:

The methods of data collection were questionnaires, focus group, observation and interviews. The comments of the teachers and the parents were read, analysed, compared and collected accordingly. All the questionnaires were analysed. The interviews were read carefully and all the most appropriate answers were chosen. The conclusions and opinions were collected and presented at the special meeting of the teachers with the board of school in June.

Cyprus:

For data analysis we followed the inductive and deductive stages of qualitative data analysis (Stake, 2011). Data were collected, transcribed and organized. We then calculated descriptive statistics for the quantitative data. After multiple readings of the data, assertions were generated. Assertions are statements that indicate some form of generalization in the data. We then looked for evidence that both supported and disconfirmed the assertions generated. Based on careful data analysis and weighing of all the evidence, only the assertions that were supported by enough evidence were adopted.

The validity of this account depends, among others, on the comprehensiveness of the study and description of the procedures followed. This study should be judged for coherence and not for correspondence of the findings with the "objective" world. By presenting a detailed, comprehensive, and coherent account the reader is allowed to act as a co-analyst of the study and make judgments about the strength of the categories that will be presented. Generalizability begins within the case at hand. In this study, we attempted to find instances that illustrate recurring themes in the setting. The reader should compare the findings of this study with their contexts and others that they are familiar with, in order to see if the results of this study generalize to their cases.

Findings:

Successes:

All partners reported on the successes of the lifelongreaders programme. Key themes included: increased pupil interest levels, reading for enjoyment, enriched reading culture in schools, parental involvement and reading during school holidays.

1. Increased Pupil Interest Levels:

All partners reported a rise in pupils interest levels in reading. Evidence of this was found through the Reading Habits Evaluation Tool. Some of the comments from our partners included:

"It was surprising that the 12 year olds, who usually are tired in the afternoon and for this reason very excited and noisy during the classes, were listening carefully to each other during the Cacao Book Discussion Club with my Favourite Book activity; they made comments, gave additional information about the books presented. "I never had such order in those classes as during the Cacao Book Discussion Club activity", shared her experience the teacher who implemented this activity." (Austria)

"According to the findings, pupils after the implementation checked out books for the library every day in a 33%, while before the implementation 1-2 times a week in a greater percentage." (Greece)

2nd Grade Teacher: "And having a small library and checking out books... this way [the children] developed certain attitudes. The library, the librarian, checking out and returning a book... this way they acquire some attitudes and skills they will need in the future. They are not satisfied anymore when we tell them "pick a book from the classroom library and sit and read." I can see that we lose them a little bit there, while whenever I bring them here [to the central library] their mind-set is completely different." (Cyprus)

"All staff that were interviewed concluded that the programme had been successful in enhancing current provision with the opening of the new school library being heralded as a key factor in this: 'children were missing their lunch because they were so excited to get to the library' and 'constantly ask me to get books by particular authors'. " (UK)

"70% of the students took part in the activities and we could notice much interest and much fun in common reading and knowing new things." (Poland)

2. Reading for Enjoyment:

All partners reported an increase in reading for enjoyment levels. Some of the comments from partners are reported below-

"All respondents indicated that there has been evidence of more children reading for pleasure than prior to the implementation of the lifelongreaders programme. A teacher remarked "we've also had a few mention that they are going to buy Kindles with their First Communion money so that's a good thing too".(Ireland)

First-grade teacher: "Our book day was the zenith, as children liked it very much, and I even heard comments by variedly aged kids saying that this was the best school day of the year and that they were very impressed". (Cyprus)

"The percentage of the pupils that they read during the holidays rose to 38% and there was also a very important improvement in reading aloud in class (63%). At the same time pupils stated that they dedicate more time to read at home and school as long as it is not part of homework." (Greece)

"One key member of staff spoke about how reading had helped to develop confidence and self esteem with some children. One child who had previously struggled to finish a book had come to her and talked about how many pages she had read and how she would be finished very soon because she was eager to reach the end." (UK)

First Grade Teacher: "When we had them read for 10-15 minutes every morning, they liked it so much that they would take out their books and read even during recess time; it was as if they were addicted to it. I believe that they enjoyed the 10-minute FVR a lot". (Cyprus)

"The impact upon reading at home is evident with an increase from 4 pupils to 12 pupils indicating that they have time to read at home. In addition, there was more than a 100% increase of pupils responding that they like reading in their free time, a view reinforced by one interviewee who alluded to the amount of children choosing to take books outside with them during break times." (UK)

"The positive results of the programme convinced us – the teachers, that such activities are very important in developing our students. Many of my students started having fun in reading not only the sport news, but also literature." (Poland)

3. Enriched Reading Culture in Schools:

The effective implementation of the lifelongreaders programme on a whole school level resulted in an enrichment of the reading culture of each school that took part. Some examples are documented below.

“The school library stock in School No. 2 was enlarged; the library stocks offer now books in many different genres or reading material such as magazines, newspapers, comics, films on DVD, etc. A range of dual language texts or appropriate materials reflecting pupils’ diverse cultures and backgrounds is available for pupils to borrow.” (Austria)

“Even teachers that were not that actively involved in the reading-promotion effort said at the end of the day that this event should definitely be repeated next year. In the two interviews and focus group discussion, teachers marked this whole-day event as important because: It included a wide variety of activities; Children interacted with diverse people: teachers, university students, actors, authors, etc.; Children did not get bored or tired, as they would move from one activity to a completely different one and so on; It was very well organized; Children were actively involved and engaged; Parents were excited about the event and asked to be more intensely involved in a similar event next year.” (Cyprus)

“Both teachers and parents remarked on the change of reading culture in the school. This was seen as a positive development. Many remarks echo the following “it’s great to hear kids talking about books and saying “oh have you read this one?” and “try this one” and “oh I like that bit”.” (Ireland)

“There was a significant increase in the response to question 41, with nine more pupils indicating that they discuss what they have read in class with their teachers and peers. This seems to suggest that the heightened visibility of reading throughout the school has promoted and encouraged more conversations around books. One interviewee felt that ‘children were more aware of books’.” (UK)

“ Similar with the school library stock, which was enriched with many genres of books and was upgraded at a developed stage. Moreover, after the implementation of the reading plan, the tool showed an improvement in the organization of events related to books and to peer-to-peer recommendation. The most important was the development of visibility of reading culture at a developed stage (88%), as well as the development of a strategy for the reading promotion.” (Greece)

Second Grade Teacher: “And they did it [FVR] during recess as well. They would bring 3-4 books from home and share and read with their friends during recess; this was quite nice to watch and it showed that kids liked it.” This observation is even more important in its description of book-sharing as a social phenomenon; as part of a developing reading community and culture.(Cyprus)

“Hopefully, we will have the continuation of the programme, and with the support of the teachers, I am looking forward to the second, third or fourth programme like that” (Poland)

4. Parental Involvement:

Some partners reported a positive increase in the involvement of parents in regards to their child’s reading. It was also noticeable that parents were heavily involved in many of the lifelongreaders school activities.

“Parental involvement was a concern of teachers prior to implementing lifelongreaders, as they had negative experiences in the past. However in the implementation of lifelongreaders the contribution of parents was seen as very positive. A teacher remarking on the participation of the Bedtime Stories activity remarked “it (the room) was packed to the gills with parents”. A parent remarked on the

programme “the LiRe programme can create social skills and have a great impact on a child’s development. Reading to a child is very rewarding as the child loves to hear stories and will hang on your every word”. (Ireland)

“The fact that both teachers and parents like reading books at a great percentage (67% and 50%), is a significant factor that motives and encourages children to read more. Moreover, the majority of pupils choose by themselves the books that they read (71%), which refer at a topic that interests them and like discussing it with friends or family.” (Greece)

“Parents should be involved in teaching their children to spend their time with books. Such a programme integrates parents with the school and helps them to understand their role in children education”.(Poland)

“Time to read at home (Q23) revealed a significant increase which would again suggest that reading for pleasure was being valued within the home environmentanecdotal comments from parents during consultation evenings indicated that this was as a result of the implementation programme within school.” (UK)

5. Reading During the School Holidays:

One partner reported a marked increase in pupils reading during school holidays.

“The percentage of the pupils that they read during the holidays rose to 38%.” (Greece)

Challenges:

As is evident above there were significant successes of the programme across all European partners. However as with any implementation process challenges and areas for development of the programme were highlighted and reported as follows.

1.Sustainability of the Lifelongreaders Programme:

“The particular challenges were mainly articulated by the 2 key members of staff and included.....the logistics of monitoring the process within the school and how they could sustain the impact of the programme in the future.” (UK)

“a reading promotion team is needed to oversee the implementation of the lifelongreaders programme. It is important that this group is not part of a larger School Evaluation Team, as reading promotion must be a priority of one team of practitioners, if it is to be sustainable” (Ireland)

2. Teacher Training:

“Throughout the course of the interviews both teachers and parents expressed their desire for further training in how to promote reading for pleasure for their children and that they have learned a lot from the experience of implementing lifelongreaders in their school. Teacher: “learning not to take it for granted that children are reading, are readers and just because you’re teaching them how to read doesn’t mean that they are readers so that’s a whole other area that has to be taken into account.” (Ireland)

3. Unengaged Children:

“There are children (fortunately a very small percent) from both schools who refuse to read at all.”

(Austria)

"In summer holidays most of the children visit their grandparents in their country of origin. There they don't have opportunities to be involved in reading promotion activities. In families where parents are either not interested in reading, or not able to help in it, children do not read a single book during the summer holidays." (Austria)

"an area that needs to be addressed is the summer reading program so that you can continue to guide the students in their intellectual development even when they are out of school." (Poland)

Recommendations:

Recommendations for Practitioners:

Gathering Data:

- The lifelongreaders pupil reading habit evaluation is quite lengthy and time consuming to administer. Adapting and shortening the questionnaire is a sensible option.
- Involve all school staff in the initial evaluations and identification of needs and objectives, as this will mobilize them and stimulate their interest in and thinking about reading promotion.
- It is also recommended that a fair sample of pupil be taken. There is no need to survey all pupils, a fair selection is adequate to get an overall picture of the pupils needs.
- Have all teachers participate actively in the formation of the actual plan, as this will enhance staff's feeling of empowerment, agency, ownership of the reading promotion process and engagement in implementing the plan.
- Make sure that all stakeholders are convinced that reading promotion is important and worthwhile, and it should thus be part of the school's efforts year after year after year. Creating and sustaining a reading culture cannot be achieved in a one-off approach, but needs to be continually explored and developed.
- It is important to assess the reading habits of the pupils at the beginning and end of the implementation process in order to obtain data reflective of the effectiveness of the programme.
- Set realistic objectives and agree on a reading promotion plan that takes into account the availability of resources (staff, time, materials). The plan should feature a limited number of targeted areas and include organized and systematic activities (that take place regularly) as well as one-off events. The plan should be detailed, listing meticulous information about what exactly will take place, who will participate and at what time, as well as resources, success criteria and achieved dates.
- Ensure that during the first couple of years your efforts are supported by reading promotion experts, who function as trainers at the beginning and advisors or critical friends as the programme evolves.

Using the Lifelongreaders Reading Promotion Activities:

- It is recommended to start small. Begin by testing out one or two of the reading promotion activities in the classroom. At this time it is important to keep notes of how the activities went, what worked well and what could be improved.
- Involve pupils with the formulation of activities so as to build upon their interests
- Take time to explore the variety of activities on the website and adapt as necessary
- Trial activities with small groups of pupils so as to determine the most effective activities for reading promotion
- Reading promotion activities need to be tailored to the needs of individual pupils and so may need adapting

- If possible involve parents in the activities of the classroom, alternatively inform them of the reading promotion initiative of the school.
- Children from an international background may be helped from reading books in their native language and through the engagement of parents.
- It is important that awareness of reading promotion is kept high on the agendas of the teaching staff. Posters highlighting reading for pleasure, having it as an item on the staff meeting agendas and talking to fellow professionals about it are all effective ways of spreading awareness.
- The use of the local library is a great way of enhancing reading promotion activities. Often libraries run community events and initiatives to promote reading. Practitioners are recommended to investigate how the library and school can work together to promote reading among young people.

Recommendations for Policymakers:

- It is recommended that policy makers should not impose the lifelongreaders programme in a directive manner to practitioners. It is important to empower practitioners at an early stage, if they are to become active contributors to the programme.
- Complete an audit in order to pinpoint areas for development and compare views on the reading ethos within school as assumptions can sometimes be made rather than judgements being based on research. Once findings have been made policymakers can endorse the lifelongreaders programme as a possible solution.
- It is recommended that leaders of schools should provide teachers with the tools to research the need of reading promotion programmes in their school. Invest time in discussing the value that individual staff members place on reading so that there is a shared vision and an informed action plan.
- Responsibility for drafting and implementing the action plan for reading promotion should be given to teachers. Use expertise of staff members to collectively develop a reading promotion programme.
- Ensure that all staff are actively engaged in the reading promotion programme through systematic monitoring.
- It is important to place emphasis on the dissemination of awareness. It is recommended that digital media be used to articulate the message to the wider school community.
- It is recommended that a reading promotion team be established to oversee the implementation of the lifelongreaders programme.
- It is recommended that policy-makers invest in teacher training in the area of reading promotion. All efforts should be made to encourage teachers to up skill in this area, perhaps by means of a CPD certificate or accreditation.
- Invest in a high quality school library that stocks books chosen by pupils and staff to increase engagement
- Set up reading clubs for pupils based on the reading cafe model as a whole school policy.
- Support financially and technically the formation or renovation of the central school library and classroom libraries, as these are proved pivotal in the formation of a school's reading culture. Librarians should be employed in central school libraries.
- Encourage and promote reading events for pupils, staff and parents. For example, world book day dressing up events, extreme reading competitions, wall of books, bedtime reading
- Involve the project results as an integrated part of the teacher education programmes, and in –service teacher training programmes, especially the Reading Habits Evaluation Tools (LiRe Questionnaire for pupils), Reading Promotion Evaluation Tools (Questionnaire for School staff), the Training Modules, the Book Presentations and the Book Discussions.

Conclusions:

The findings presented in this report provide some initial evidence that the reading promotion plan implemented in the various schools across Europe have been successful in enhancing a continually developing reading culture amongst staff, pupils and home. Due to the differing local and national contexts and resources available, the implementation of the Lifelong Reader Framework has resulted in a variance of successes across schools. It is testament to the flexibility and durability of the Framework that it was successfully implemented whilst challenged by local constraints such as curriculum overload and library resources, to name but two.

Analysis of the findings confirm that the Lifelong Readers Framework was successful in further engaging pupils in reading for pleasure due to the raised visibility of reading within the schools and gave a high profile to reading for pleasure. Findings drawn from interviews with staff suggest that European teachers were initially curious about the project and were eager to implement activities that might further enhance reading for pleasure. Results from the reading promotion audit and data collected from initial pupil questionnaires were met with varying degrees of surprise. The findings indicated that not all pupils were eager readers and that pupils did not always perceive their teachers as readers themselves.

Following the reading implementation programme, data revealed that the programme had been most successful in raising awareness of reading for pleasure, encouraging reading at home, widening children's reading experiences and increasing the breadth of texts read both in school and at home. One European partner (CARDET) outlined ten conclusions that could be drawn from their implementation of the Framework. These are largely reflected in the conclusion of fellow European partners:

1. Staff training was most effective when it included demonstrations of activities and led to concrete outcomes and had immediate results and meaning for their everyday practices.
2. Teachers' involvement in the initial evaluation and identification of needs and objectives, mobilized them and stimulated their interest in and thinking about reading for pleasure.
3. Had all teachers participated more actively in the formation of the actual plan, results would have been even better.
4. The central school library proved pivotal in the formation of the school's reading culture.
5. Three elements of the reading promotion plan worked particularly well: (i) Increased library use; (ii) The whole-school, whole-day event that was devoted exclusively to reading; and (iii) Free Voluntary Reading (FVR).
6. Four areas were most noticeably improved after the implementation of the reading promotion plan: (i) Whole-staff engagement; (ii) Visibility of Reading; (iii) Reading Events; and (iv) Involving Organizations and Adults from the Community.
7. Reading promotion is important and worthwhile, thus it should be part of the school's efforts year after year after year. Creating and sustaining a reading culture cannot be achieved in a one-off approach, but needs to be continually explored and developed throughout the years.
8. The initial plan could have been more detailed, listing full information about what exactly would take place, who would participate and at what time, as well as the three omitted columns (Resources, Success Criteria, and Achieved Date).
9. A revised reading promotion plan would be more focused (targeting specific areas and groups), have fewer targeted areas and include more organized and systematic activities (that take place regularly); it would also preserve the elements that worked well in the previous plan.
10. While the ultimate goal is for the school to become an independent, growing, and self-sustained reading community, it seems that during the first 1-2 years external support is necessary.

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