Municipality of Ampelokipi-Menemeni

Operational Implementation Framework OIF

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Ampelokipi-Menemeni

Operational Implementation Framework

(OIF)

Index

Introduction

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The municipality of Ampelokipi-Menemeni, within the city of Thessaloniki, Greece, has had a focus on working with a specific community in the city as part of the Stay Tuned project. This is a Roma community, with a high level of very early school drop-out coupled with a range of social and economic problems, including poverty and health challenges.

1. The starting point

One of the priorities for the municipality (and for the national government in Greece) is the reduction of school drop-outs and Early Leaving from Education and Training (ELET). But as with all Greek municipalities, their role does not include the remit to get involved in school teaching and the curriculum. The content and shape of the school day is effectively "off-limits" for the municipality and they must not interfere with these aspects or work within the school.

As a result, officials in corresponding positions have typically discounted their being able to influence ELET and had left this exclusively to the schools. However, ELET negatively affects many areas that are within a municipality's concern and that are their responsibility to address, from unemployment to poverty, to the local economy.

The particular challenge for Ampelokipi-Menemeni in terms of ELET is the high level of school drop-out within one of the city's Roma communities, Agios Nektarios, within the Menemeni district. This is one of the areas within the Stay Tuned network where a city is truly dealing with early "drop-out" from school, rather than just a failure to attain upper secondary level qualifications - children in this community (girls in particular) will often drop out from school in their very early teenage years or even earlier.

2. Action Plan in brief

Local policy challenge that the city's Integrated strategy/action plan addresses

In Ampelokipi-Menemeni there is a problem of dropout and early school leaving strongly observed in the settlement of Ag. Nektarios, largely because of the large Roma community (2.500 people). Unfortunately, the problem is not only observed in this area but is also observed in schools all over the municipality, as there is an inhabit of 3,500 migrants and general population with low incomes in the area. Transport (or lack of access to it) is also a large barrier to attending school for many within the city.

The local Action Plan of Ampelokipi-Menemeni plans to introduce early school leaving-measures based on the strategic triangle: Educational system, School level and Personal level. The central educational policy level, local departments, social protection institutions, and the educational community should all join their forces and reorder their services to develop a strong social network of solidarity, to tackle the educational and social exclusion of children.

Main actions and measures included in the strategy/action plan

- Establishment and operation of social grocery and social pharmacy

- Establishment and operation of community centre, with ROMA Department. The Roma Department will employe, included amongst others, the following specialties:
  - social worker
  - psychologist
  - Roma mediator
  - pedagogist for students' learning support and adults' integration in education

  The Municipality took the opportunity to tailor the support offer to the needs of the specific community within Aghios Nektarios

- Cooperation with Alpha Network --- Creative workshops for parents and children Roma, lectures against addictions, exclusion and mental health, conducting group meetings with parents and individual appointment, establishment of groups against smoking

- Teacher Training / people working on Roma issues to support structures of the Roma culture, in cooperation with educational institutes, NGOs and other relevant organizations, a proposal to the Council of Europe for the purpose of training teachers in combating issues of Anti-gypsyism through use of the new manual "Mirrors" and prevention aspects of the phenomenon of school dropouts

- Empowerment actions for Roma women supporting and strengthening actions to continue the school, to be convinced of the importance of school for their children and become positive role models for the community

- Informational leaflets/ Educational Guides

ACTION	ACTIVITY	Related Activities	OUTPUT(s)	BLOCKER(s)
Take this from your LOGIC MODEL.	**What will be done?** Use *multiple* rows for each ACTION if needed – one row for each ACTIVITY.	Which other ACTIVITIES are related or dependent?	What will the ACTIVITY Create?	What will make it difficult, stop the activity from happening or reduce the quality / level of the output(s)?
Better distribution of school units in urban complex (more schools will be built?)	• Already being built a new primary school • Searching for funding in order to built an Art School	Improvement of the area around the school	New schools The transfer of the students has stopped Exclusive morning operation of the schools Motivation for new residents (young families)	Funding problems for the school equipment (computers, library, projectors, interactive whiteboards, etc)
Creating new attractive learning places	Yearly improvement of existing school infrastructure	Green school yards, Energy upgrading, Improvement of gyms, etc (European projects)	Enhancing student motivation Improving the quality of the provided education Improving the infrastructure and equipment of the schools	Funding problems
Equipment for the special classes of the municipality school units (classes for students with special learning abilities)	Improvement of the infrastructure and equipment of the schools	Yearly improvement of existing school infrastructure	Supporting students with learning difficulties Enhancing student motivation- positive attitude towards learning Improving interpersonal and social relationships Promoting equal opportunities Reducing the risk of educational failure	Funding problems
Sporting infrastructure (ex. "Karafotis" stadium in St. Nektarios)	Improving the infrastructure and equipment of the stadium	Sporting events Cultural events	Enhancing young people motivation	Funding problems
Social tutorial (in co-operation with the local church)	• Lessons to support students • Cooperation with private tutorials • Examination of the legal framework for the Municipality's ability to pay the tuition fees	Remedial teaching	Supporting students to improve their performance Enhancing student motivation- positive attitude towards learning Supporting students with learning difficulties Promoting equal opportunities Reducing the risk of educational failure Strengthening social justice Promoting social cohesion	Financial problems Finding volunteers
Remedial teaching	• Lessons to support students • Examination of the possibility to expand the remedial teaching	Social Tutorial	Supporting students to improve their performance Enhancing student motivation- positive attitude towards learning Supporting students with learning difficulties Promoting equal opportunities Reducing the risk of educational failure Strengthening social justice Promoting social cohesion	Funding problems Reduced participation Lack of interest

ACTION	ACTIVITY	Related Activities	OUTPUT(s)	BLOCKER(s)
Student transfer (ex. collaboration with the Organisation of Urban Transportation of Thessaloniki for publishing unlimited transfer cards for the students of the artistic high school)	Free unlimited transfer cards for the students	Food and Living Allowance Feeding of poor students Social Grocery	Supporting families Addressing the humanitarian crisis Fight against poverty	Funding problems
Professionalization of teachers related to the early school leaving in terms of diagnostic and teaching skills	Educational and training programs	Meetings and Workshops	Upgrading the professional skills of teachers Enhancing professional development of teachers Improving the quality of the provided education and teaching	Reduced participation Lack of interest Poor implementation of governant specialized programs
Optimising the labour professionalism that is occupied in the school unit (Human Resource Development)	Educational and training programs	Meetings and Workshops	Upgrading the professional skills of teachers Enhancing professional development of teachers Improving the quality of the provided education and teaching	Reduced participation Lack of interest Poor implementation of governant specialized programs
Optimising the collaboration between teachers and counsellors (in or out of school), in order to coordinate in dealing with specific facts	• Networking meetings on a regular basis • Implementation of joint actions	Educational and Training Programs	Reinforcing network Optimizing interpersonal and social relationships Ensuring maximization of the results of the actions	Lack of interest and participation
Parent consulting / Active participation of guardians, as parts in educational procedure and in making and implementing decisions	• Parent Schools • Organizing joint actions with the school	Counselling and Supportive services	Educating and sensitizing students' family environment Supporting parents in their parenting role Strengthening the family and the bonds between its members Bridging the gap between school and local community (school open to the society)	Lack of interest and participation
Operation of Creative Occupational Centres for children and children with special needs	Variety of programs for children (theatre, Folk dances, Pottery, etc)	Sporting and Cultural Events Remedial teaching Social Tutorial	Improvement of cognitive and social skills Developing special inclinations and skills of students Enhancing student motivation Improving interpersonal and social relationships	Funding problems Lack of specialized Educational Staff
Feeding of poor students	Daily meals to students	Remedial Teaching Social Tutorial Social Grocery Social Pharmacy Food and Living Allowance	Student health care Support for families Reduce the risk of social exclusion & marginalization Promoting equal opportunities Addressing the humanitarian crisis Fight against poverty	Funding problems

ACTION	ACTIVITY	Related Activities	OUTPUT(s)	BLOCKER(s)
Actions to enforce families in need (TEBA etc.)	Food and Living Allowance	Feeding of poor students Social Grocery Social Pharmacy	Health care Supporting families Addressing the humanitarian crisis Fight against poverty Reducing the risk of social exclusion & marginalization	Funding problems
Cultural events	Multiple cultural events	Sporting events	Developing social and cognitive skills of students Promoting student socialization - improvement of interpersonal relationships Enhancing student motivation Identify special student inclinations Promoting equal opportunities Strengthening social justice Promoting social cohesion Linking schools to local communities	Lack of interest and participation (on behalf of adults)
Sporting events	Multiple sporting events	Cultural events	Developing social and cognitive skills of students Promoting student socialization - improvement of interpersonal relationships Enhancing student motivation Identify special student inclinations Promoting equal opportunities Strengthening social justice Promoting social cohesion Linking schools to local communities	Lack of interest and participation (on behalf of adults)
Camping	Family Financial support	Food and Living Allowance Social Grocery Social Pharmacy	Children entertainment Improving interpersonal and social relationships Enhancement of socialization	Funding problems
Supportive services (ex. consulting services, psychologist, sociologist, pedagogist etc.)	Counseling and supportive services	Remedial Teaching Social Tutorial Social Grocery Social Pharmacy Food and Living Allowance Roma Census Local Action Plan for social cohesion of Roma Local Action Plan for the reduction of Early School Leaving	Providing psychosocial support of students and their families Improving interpersonal and social relationships Promoting social inclusion of students Boosting employment Improving living standards	Funding problems Finding volunteers
Individualized intervention, adapted to each particular case	• Implementation of personalized interventions as needed (ex. counseling) • Information and referral to	Community Centre Municipality Information Office for young, unemployed and businesses	Supporting students to improve their performance Enhancing student motivation- positive attitude towards learning Supporting students with learning difficulties	Ignorance Lack of interest

| ACTION	ACTIVITY	Related Activities	OUTPUT(s)	BLOCKER(s)
	competent authorities		Improvement of interpersonal and social relationships Supporting unemployed	
Meetings with the local group of Roma facilitators and other relevant bodies to education, with Bottom up approach, under the ROMED II, JUSTROM and FEMROM programs, for the illustration of the problems of the local community and the problem of early school leaving, in order to find solutions to the problem	• Networking meetings on a regular basis • Implementation of joint actions • JUSTROM: continuation and expansion for the new programming period 2014-2020 • ROMED: specialized actions for the new programming period 2014-2020	Community Centre	Developing actions tailored to local needs Strengthening relations between local stakeholders Strengthening networking and developing collaborations Optimizing effective management of problems of local groups and societies	Lack of interest and participation
Establishing and operation of Social Grocery and Social Pharmacy	Providing medicines and food supplies	Community Centres	Health care Supporting families Addressing the humanitarian crisis Fight against poverty Reducing the risk of social exclusion & marginalization	Funding problems Lack of participation on behalf of sponsors
Establishing and operation of Community Centre, one of them specialised in Roma. Community Centres are staffed by social workers, psychologists, an educator (pedagogist) specialised in intercultural education	Free counseling and supportive services	Social Grocery and Social Pharmacy	Providing psychosocial support of students and their families Improving interpersonal and social relationships Promoting social inclusion of students Boosting employment Improving living standards	Funding problems
Local Action Plan for social integration (inclusion) of Roma – it will be approved by the Council of the Municipality and will be available after the 20th November	• Roma census • Drawing up Local Action Plan	Local Action Plan for the reduction of Early School Leaving	Promoting social inclusion Boosting employment Improving living standards	Resistance to change and fear from Roma people
Local Action Plan for the reduction of Early School Leaving	• Info days about Education and Training Options • Info days about Labor Market and Employment • Career Guidance and Counseling Events • Information Leaflets • Participation of Municipality in Apprenticeship	Local Action Plan for social integration (inclusion) of Roma	Promoting social inclusion Boosting employment Improving living standards	Ignorance Lack of interest Reduced participation Lack of motives

3. Challenges and barriers

The biggest barrier the team have always faced with implementing the measures to support this particular community is that, whilst they can offer the right services for supporting Roma, the specific culture within the Roma community means that there is resistance to real engagement: a general lack of participation at an individual level and a pretty low view of education in general. Education is not a priority, so the support on offer is very often not taken up.

Another challenge was that much of the support on offer has typically been provided well outside the local area. The "second chance school" for example was several kilometres away and there was a limited public transport option for potential students to reach this school. If they did enrol, the distance and the costs of daily travel were an ongoing disincentive to continue attending. Students required ongoing support to remain in the education system. This wasn't a sustainable situation.

So whilst a lot of support was theoretically available, it wasn't well targeted and not always very accessible to those in the community who needed it. The municipality has not been able in the past to employ people within the community structures and hence has always relied on the school directors and school functions to provide knowledge and understanding about what is really going on within the district and what the specific problems are.

Overall, due to the fact that the municipality don't have jurisdiction over the educational and schooling activities themselves (and are not allowed to interfere) they are restricted to working outside the classroom. Education policy and curriculum, teaching etc. is the domain of the national Ministry. This presents a challenge on local level –the team needs to provide activities and support that fits in with the local school context, whilst only being able to adjust one side of that equation. This requires close collaboration with schools and school directors, who often have different priorities and pressures placed on them.

Consequently, the municipality staff is often seen as an outsider, particularly in the district of Agios Nektarios. This in turn means community are less trusting and therefore less likely to engage positively with the support on offer. This completes a cycle of challenging circumstances, whereby the root of the social challenges are essentially the same issues as the implementation challenges: the difficulties in getting the community to engage causes the initial problems and also makes implementation of (good) interventions much more difficult.
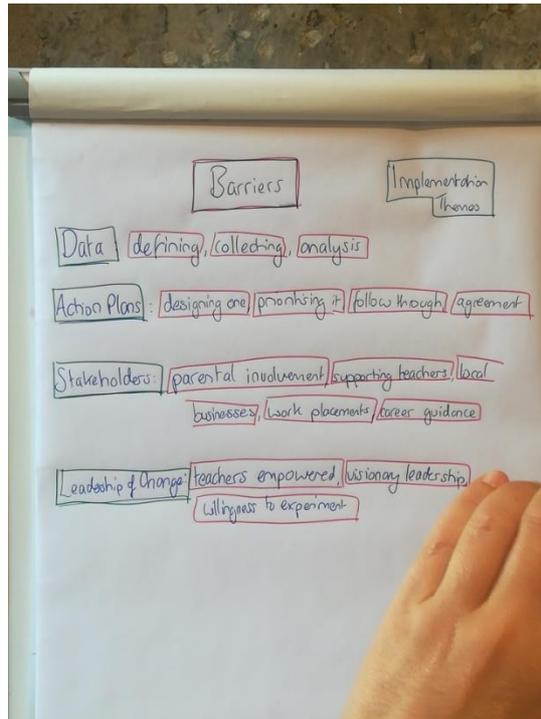
4. Tackling the challenges

When the team managed to get the community centre established within the Ag. Nektarios community, this provided a major opportunity to take a different approach to engaging with those most at risk (or those with most potential to gain from being supported).

Suddenly, the adequate planning and inspiring strategic created a strong presence in the area. Finally they had a social worker, a psychologist, a mediator and an educational specialist working day-to-day in the community, on the ground. They were interacting directly with people within from community, rather than going through proxies (where messages may get distorted or watered-down). Prior to that point, there was much less first-hand evidence of the challenges: the team had been aware of the general problems, but they didn't have specific data or hands-on observations to back that up. It was largely anecdotal. Soon, the pedagogist for students' learning support and adults' integration in education who had meanwhile joined the team and her colleagues were working directly with the community. A much more nuanced picture of the local people and the problems they experienced was starting to build. The team could therefore start to create a better idea of exactly what support might be needed and what would work best.

Gaining an understanding of the people they were trying to support was crucial. The team was able to collect more data about the situation and the challenges that existed within the community. The employees of the Community Centre were able to start to use their knowledge of their local situations and context to help encourage and support them to take steps to support themselves. As the Roma Department of the Community Centre is based within the district, the stuff was seen less and less as "outsiders". This helped them gain the trust of the community. From that point, it was

much easier to approach them. That was a great advantage as the educational specialist could start to work with them and "nudge" them towards (re)engaging with education.

One lever that was used was that of the "Social Solidarity Allowance" – the state support money received by those on a low (or no) income. However, in Greece there is a condition that people can only receive this allowance if they have completed compulsory school. Close working with the community meant made it obvious that being able to get this allowance was important to many of them – so this was used as an incentive ; a "carrot"… Stay engaged with education and you can secure your future allowance and become able to support yourself.

Re-engaging with education was a big step for many in this community. But the reward of accessing the "Social Solidarity Allowance" was clear and tangible and, most importantly, did not require a change of mindset to be and incentive. As many of the community don't value education, encouraging them to stay in education just to be become better educated is not a motivation. But encouraging them to stay in education and complete compulsory school to access the allowance… that was a motivation for them. This was without them having to become inherently interested in education in its own right.

Then, having got people to engage with education, going to the second chance school gradually became more normal for them, a routine. Afterwards it was easier to gently encourage them to take the next step: "have you thought beyond school? What job might you like? What about higher school or vocational school? Have you thought what you could do?" etc.
Once back in the education system, talking about their future (and the place of education in that future) became easier. They were studying with others who were in the education system. They were amongst peers, some of whom were also thinking about their future. That sounds obvious, but at home in their community, thinking about education and their future was not normal and not encouraged. There were few people to discuss that with. But now it seemed more possible for them. It is a small thing, but significant on the path to changing their future for themselves.

This re-engagement with education was normally via three actions: 1. remedial teaching programme for students 2. cooperation with Second Chance School and Night School for adults and 3. adult's education Programme for the acquirement of the Primary School Certification that existed already. However the team also realised that to be successful in their studies, the children needed support from their parents. However, very often the parents could not do this because the parents themselves could not read and write. They had never completed their own education. The opportunity for parents to engage with the second chance school adult education programmes and to gain their own primary school certificate was a way to help a family to re-engage with education together. As we know that parental engagement and support is one of the biggest pre-determinants of educational, this approach was an obvious response in some ways, but challenging to implement in the Roma context.

However, the relationship the community centre were building within the community enabled them to start engaging people in this process – to convince them and to help them enrol in the second chance school and to gain their compulsory education accreditation.

TARGET GROUP	IMPLEMENTATION BARRIER	IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGE	HOW TO TACKLE THE CHALLENGE
Roma Community	Lack of interest and participation, lack of motivation, negative view of learning and education	**IC1: ENHANCE MOTIVATION** Past negative educational experiences, socio-economic problems, unemployment, the fact that education has traditionally not been a demand, are some of the factors that inhibit children's education and adult's reintegration into education and training. It still remains a challenge to enhance motivation and engagement of the Roma community towards education.	Children's learning support: • Social Tutorial for primary, secondary, high school students – The Municipality organizes classes in collaboration with the Lighthouse of the World. • Remedial Teaching: This school year will be organized classes for primary school students by the Teacher of the Community Center Parent's support: • Parent's Association Training on ESL, children's support, youth problems etc : The Municipality, in cooperation with the Alpha Network, has begun training seminars for parents of students in primary education Adult's support: Provide information through the Community Center about: • Roma Adult Education Programs started for the acquisition of Elementary School Certificate - cooperation with the 5th Intercultural Primary School of Menemeni-18 Roma have been succeeded in Certification Exams (June 2018) • Second Chance Schools, Night Schools, Vocational Schools, Training Programs – (Sept. 2018: 50 adults have applied for registration at Second Chance School) • Provide support and counseling on school enrollment, classes, problems they face etc. The pedagogist, the social worker and the psychologist cooperate for each person and support them in their effort The Municipality is running a number of programs that provide social and economical support (Social Welfare, Social Grocery, Social Pharmacy etc.), as to facilitate the access to education. Moreover, the Municipality tries to promote and highlight good examples and people who achieved their goals for education, training and in job finding process, in cooperation with the Lighthouse of the World, Schools etc.
	Resistance to change	**IC2: CHANGE OF THEIR BELIEFS AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS EDUCATION, WOMAN'S ROLE etc.** It is very difficult to motivate adults to reintegrate into education or to participate in training, especially when they face economic, personal, family problems etc. Changing attitudes is a long, time consuming, difficult and painful process. People who want to change and live outside their social environment often face disapproval and marginalization from others.	The Municipality offers a great variety of programs for children and adults to engage and motivate both children and adults. It has a holistic approach and tries to address the problem by taking into account all the parameters. • Sporting and Cultural Events that promote intercultural exchange and social cohesion: ex. World Roma Day Celebration • Cooperates with other bodies and organizations and implement many programs (PROACTIVE, JUST ROM, I_do, In4Child etc) • Planning and implementation of Roma

		Roma Community at the present is facing a transitional phase. They begin to realize the need of education, especially for their children and are trying to support them so that they have better opportunities in their lives. Many women want to escape from the fate of Roma Community. They want to study, work and live outside their community. They want a "better life chance" for them. The change is reflected in - the children's enrollments in primary education: 10 years before the 5th Elementary School of Menemeni had an average of 80 students, today it has a constant of 130 pupils. - the number of adults who have received a Primary Education Certificate: 18 Roma Adults have been succeeded in Certification Exams for the acquisition of Elementary School Certificate (June 2018) - in Roma's enrollments in Second Chance School: in Sept. 2018, 50 adults have applied for registration	Social Integration Plan (in local level) • The operation of the Community Center and Roma Department
	Access to schools	**IC3: IMPROVING ACCESS TO SCHOOLS AND INTERCONNECTING THE AREA WITH SCHOOL- HOUSED AREAS** (avoiding isolation and marginalization) It still remains a challenge to be tackled.	The Municipality has sent a dispatch to: • Organization of Urban Transportation of Thessaloniki explaining the problem and asking to connect the Aghios Nektartios area with school housed areas. • Greek Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs asking for the operation of a Second Chance School in Aghios Nektarios area, in order to facilitate the access to education • Greek Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs asking for the creation of classes of remedial teaching in Roma Community
	Ignorance	**IC4: IGNORANCE ABOUT AVAILABLE CHOICES REGARDING EDUCATION AND TRAINING** One of the biggest challenges is the access to information and services. In many cases Roma don't know where to go or how to ask what they want.	The Municipality has created • 3 Educational Guides that provide information about ESL and available educational choices (educational paths): one for children, one for parents and one for teachers. The Community Center has a central role: • informs Roma Community about Social Services and support them in application forms and documents • provides door to door information to Roma Community for children's registration to school • Informs Roma about education and training programs • supports parents and teachers in the prevention of ESL- personalized

			intervention and cooperation with school directors
			• provides social and psychological support to parents
			• supports Roma Community in job finding process, CV creation, employment programs, professional training programs and cooperates with work counselors for specialized services (Manpower Employment Organization)
			• co-organized with the Labour Institute of the Greek General Confederation of Labour an experiential workshop on employment and effective job research
			Moreover, the Unemployment Office of the Municipality provides support to unemployed on job research, applying for a job, CV creation etc.
Municipality	Poor access and data sharing	**IC5: SETTING UP "SMART" INDICATORS AND A MONITORING SYSTEM FOR ESL** The education system in Greece is centralized and the Municipality doesn't have access to school life and data for school attendance. It is a serious weakness for the Municipality to plan actions to address the problem of ESL without first describing it in both qualitative and qualitative terms.	The Municipality has decided to • Conduct a survey for ESL • Have a closer cooperation with the Primary and Secondary Education Department of West Thessaloniki • Reinforce the close cooperation of the Community Center with schools.

4.1 What worked? (or not..?!)

During the implementation process the team noticed that they finally achieved a good level of cooperation with the general population and the local stakeholder team. Working from "within" the community was essential to success in this area.

The team also successfully strengthened the existing relationships with the school directors. This facilitated the communication and thus became essential so that the municipality would plan and set up support activities and programmes that fitted around the main school day and curriculum, without interfering with them.

By working closely with the schools, gradually made it easier to develop a more productive relationship that removed some of the structural barriers and enabled a dialogue with the schools to seek mutually beneficial solutions.

Another strength was the creation of a strong team inside the municipality, with good political support. The team developed a strong working relationship that made it quicker and easier to respond to challenges and connect with the other stakeholders. The political suport as a condition is very important for the success of the action plan and it is not granted for Local Authorities.

Unfortunately, the team still feel they didn't get good participation by Roma in general in the remedial teaching – improvements have been made but still it's not the level of change they were hoping for. More needs to be done. As the team states, "maybe we expected too much; maybe starting with just a few people engaging is enough to begin with…"

This is an important point, as lasting change, especially with this kind of topic, does not happen overnight. There are generational behaviours to shift and that takes times.

In that way, the team's approach is a strong example of understanding and working with the conditions for implementation when trying to get new projects and policies working effectively. The same measures implemented elsewhere would work better or differently, but in the specific conditions present in Ag. Nektarios, a different approach to implementation is required.

A specific example of this is the remedial teaching at high school level. The team set up two programmes for this – one within Ag. Nektarios and one at a different location in the wider Menemeni district. The offer and the structure of the two programmes were essentially the same. The subjects and content would be tailored to the enrolled students in both cases. The same teachers were employed in both schools. The difference was the context.

When invited to the first meeting about enrolment in the Menemeni school, over 20 students attended, all accompanied by their parents. There was a very positive atmosphere and the parents were appreciative that this support was being offered to their children. By contrast, the same meeting for the Ag. Nektarios school, only 2 students came to the meeting. Neither was with their parents.

This is a simple but stark example of how the team needed to adapt their approach to the delivery of their projects, based on the context. Or, where possible, also adjust the local conditions to be more favourable. The community centre was a mechanism for doing both of these things.

On the one hand, for the example of remedial teaching, it enabled the programme to be offered in a different way, being presented as something that is part of the community; on the other side, the work of the community centre was changing the local conditions, making the offer of remedial teaching more interesting and acceptable to the local people.

Understanding the conditions requires insights and data. Adjusting the conditions requires local collaboration with stakeholders and political support.

4.2 What did the team learn?

The team knew beforehand that working from within the community was a key element, but now they have clear view of what that means in practice. It's easy enough to say, "we will work in a bottom-up, community led way" but the practicalities of how you do that are not always so straightforward.

The team have used the community centre to engage more directly with the local citizens and develop a different credibility with them. The team are not viewed with suspicion or as outsiders and this put those in a different position, where they could now support and influence people much more effectively.

The power of this direct contact also wasn't fully understood beforehand. People in the Ag. Nektarios community had previously always worked through their community leaders to make contact with the municipality.
Now, the team understands the local people much better as well as their needs, challenges and their priorities, hopes and dreams. This ~~im~~proved that understanding is critical for designing and implementing future support programmes.

The importance of the role of parents is also now much clearer to them. Particularly, as the parents being are getting involved with education too, this also helps children to be more involved. There is better mutual support and understanding and a shift in values to be more positive towards education.

Consequently, the team realised that supporting parents to access adult's education program education and second chance school will mean that they are being active in the education system and are more likely to support their own children to stay or re-enrol in school.
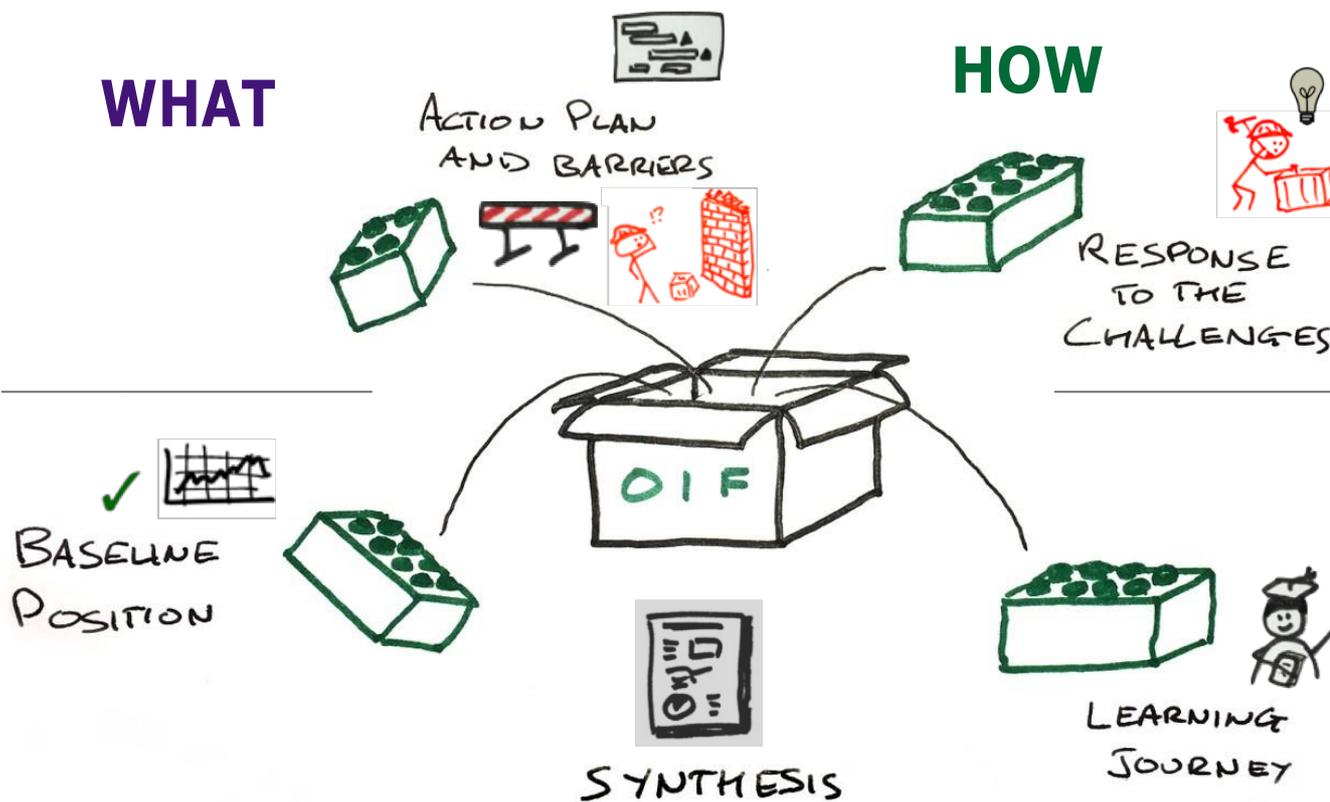
As the team observed, the new generation of parents has slightly different views on education to their parents. They are not as hostile towards it as the previous generation. That, combined with now having key education support services available within the community means that these newer families can be engaged more easily through the community centre and are more likely to participate in school, because it is less abnormal to them and the facilities for remedial school being nearby make it much easier for them to attend. There are fewer barriers and challenges that might make them drop-out again.

The team realise they need to harness this slight softening of attitudes to help further nudging of behaviour.

The team has also realised the different role that the municipality can take in supporting education success – becoming a broker in the process; linking together all the aspects that affect educational success (but not necessarily being the people who intervene directly in all cases). They are seeing other opportunities for combating ELET more generally. Having worked on their projects alongside the Stay Tuned network of cities has given them new ideas and new insights into how they could work locally.

WHAT

HOW

ACTION PLAN AND BARRIERS

RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGES

BASELINE POSITION

OIF

LEARNING JOURNEY

SYNTHESIS

So What...

4.3 What did the team change as a result?

4.2

The community centre being established in the municipality, along with a physical Roma department based in the area, has helped the team to change the whole dynamic of the work of the municipality in the community. For the first time, people from the community are dealing directly with people from the municipality; they are accessing help and support for themselves. Previously, such contact with the municipality was channelled through community leaders, so the community centre being part of the community is making support more accessible and empowering local citizens.

One of the team members points out that "We had some employees in the neighbourhood years ago, but without a strong relationship with the community. Now we have eight people working there and an immediate connection with the people and we can relate much more to them (and they to us). They can state their problems and needs and we have a much more clear understanding of these."

Another member adds that, "we are becoming a stronger link between the whole education processes. Before that we didn't have that strength. We are becoming facilitators. We are improving the methodology and tools so we can implement stronger actions in the future."

The team says that the community now feel more included in the whole policy of the municipality. It's not just the number of employees and the roles, but also who they are; they understand the full

range of needs of the people they are working with and have the skills and experience to support them.

Testament to this is the local second chance schools. Having applied to Ministry to get the second chance schools established within the community itself, this is now set up and running in the afternoon in the local school buildings.

Having community centre support within the municipality fundamentally changes the conditions for implementing future measures. The attitudes of the population are changing – they see the community centre as a team who are there to help them and more and more they turn to the team to seek out that support for themselves.

4.4 What difference has it made?

The new Department of the second chance schools was established in the community in the 2017/2018 academic year. These this? now have 41 students enrolled for the current academic year, compared to just 15 two years ago. 65 parents are studying to get primary level accreditation and a lot of people that received support from the community centre has supported are now securing jobs. These people in themselves act as role models and champions for staying in education and for enabling a new path for their lives. And 10 adults Roma enrolled to the Hellenic Open University (6 women and 4 men).

Having the second chance school now on site within the community also makes it much easier for the team to lay out a potential path for people – from obtaining primary education as an adult, through to a local second chance school and high school and on to getting a job. The fact the educational offer is now within the community, in the local schools makes a huge difference. Take-up is better as a result. Greater prospects come with that. Activating a few people starts to set a different tone for the community and their expectations. It is small steps, but significant.

In terms of the teams, their approach to implementation is also developing. Using the Community Centre as a key enabler, they are taking new approaches to working with the community and making their projects a success. Again, this is early stages but the path ahead looks promising.

## 5. The next step- What the team plans to change in the future

For the future, the team is hoping to get the second chance school made permanent. It was set up as a pilot by the education ministry, but the evidence is now building a strong case to have it formally established.

Using the community centre to build the engagement with the community and set different expectations for the future. There is already a gradual shift in mindset and culture, helped by the growing trust in the community centre staff.

The team plans to deepen even more the working relationships with the schools, talking more directly with teachers, not just the school directors. Like the community centre staff, the teachers are more connected to the people and the challenges and therefore are in the best position to influence and support people.

There is still an ongoing challenge around the levels of engagement of the community. When comparing the response to the remedial school offer to children and families in the wider Menemeni district, the engagement, enrolment and continuation rate was much better outside the Roma district of Ag. Nektarios. But whilst the team were disappointed with the take-up from the Roma community, their reflections were also that maybe their expectations were in fact too high. They did get some engagement, and maybe that is the first step to build on, not a reason to stop the programme.

The project in general and working on the challenges in a network of other cities has helped them to see that it is possible to influence the wider ELET problems – prior to Stay Tuned, the municipality only focussed on under 18 school drop-outs. Now they are seeing for the first time that they have potential ways to influence the 18-25 age group as well – not just tackling lower school drop-outs. This is pretty unique for a Greek municipality. The team is leading the way by looking to tackle true ELET in their city, boosting the frequency of qualification in all young people in Ampelokipi-Menemeni.

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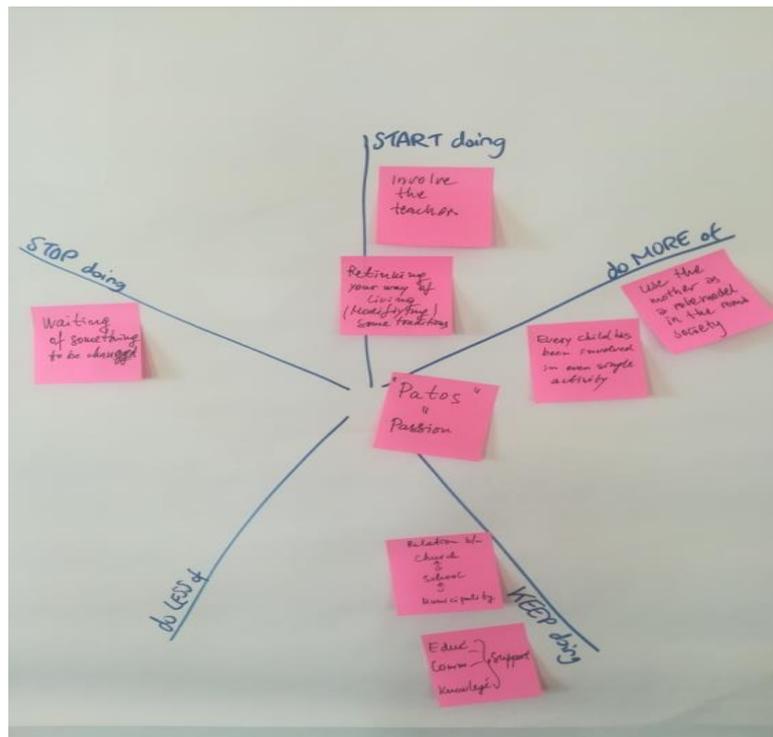
Conclusion

The municipality of Ampelokipi-Menemeni in Greece focused on the Roma community as part of the Stay Tuned project. This community suffers a high level of early school leaving and a range of social and economic problems, including poverty and health challenges.

Ampelokipi's approach has lessons for all cities working with vulnerable, disadvantaged or hard-to-reach Groups. Largely built around a new Department of the Community Centre, the municipality created a catalyst for education, along with extra-curricular activities for children and young people. Parental involvement and helping adults re-engage with education gradually became the main pillars of their plan.

The approach created bottom-up engagement, with the municipality creating opportunities, whilst maintaining their role as a broker between people and services. The importance of local community ownership and positive connection was key.

Theirs is a story about working with and changing local conditions, gradually shifting mindsets and expectations through sustained open working and leadership.

WHAT

HOW

Action Plan

- Building new schools
- Remedial teaching
- Educational guides
- Parent's training
- Cooperation with Second Chance Schools Department of SCS in Aghios Nettarios area
- Adult's education courses for Primary School Accreditation - Community Centre

Baseline Position

- School dropout
- Early School Leaving
- Absenteeism

- Adults that acquired the Primary School Accreditation : 2018: 18 adults
  2019: 65 enrolled to Adults Education Courses
- Adults in Second Chance School: 45 enrolled
- Operation of a Department of the Second Chance School in Aghios Nettarios area
- Scholarships for Roma Students of High School to study to Hellenic Open University : Inform Roma population and offer support for that specific enrollment allowance
School attendance is obligatory for
1. students 5-15 years old
2. adults till 45 years old (Completion of base education)

Challenges

PROBLEMS
- Lack of interest and participation
- Prejudices and stereotypes about education
- Roma Culture towards education: resistance to change, negative view of learning
- Lack of information and data

CHALLENGES
- Enhance motivation, engagement and participation
- Change the attitude and culture towards education and age
- Change of the beliefs and attitude towards education, the role of women etc.

AND BARRIERS

BASELINE POSITION
(Start your journey here)

OIF

SYNTHESIS

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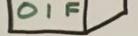
LEARNING JOURNEY

Future changes

- Involve more local stakeholders in decision making
- Encourage women to have a more active role in their lives (Community Centre)
- Personalized and focused intervention
- Teacher's training
- Closer cooperation with the teachers not only school directors (Community Centre)

What we have changed

- Inform and engage local stakeholders (Roma) in the implementation of the actions
- Involve local stakeholders in decision making
- Inform and cooperate with local stakeholders about the role of the women and mothers (Community Centre)

Delivery Approach

This is HOW we intended/needed to tackle the implementation problems and manage the risks...

Tackling the Challenges

We did/tried these specific activities to tackle the problems and manage risks...

WHAT DID WELL
- Cooperation with:
  - school directors
  - parents of general population
- Cooperation with ULG team
- creation of a strong team
- Political support
- Extroversion and networking

WHAT DID WRONG
- Lack of interest on behalf of Roma parents
- Poor participation by Roma students
- Resistance to change : it's still a problem

?

Learning Points

- Manage to systematize efforts to prevent and tackle the phenomenon of Early School Leaving
- Become a stronger link (facilitator) in educational process
- Created a strong team
- Succeeded extroversion and networking (local, national and transnational)
- Improved the methodology in problem solving (participatory approach)
- Improved the planning and implementation methodology (culture of reflection)
  Implementation of strong action plans