

STAY TUNED – CITY IMPLEMENTATION CASE EXAMPLE

Summary

Case Example Title and City:

Second-Chance School

Municipality of Ampelokipi-Menemeni (Greece, greater urban area of Thessaloniki)

Case Example Summary (6 lines max.)

The municipality of Ampelokipi-Menemeni has a significant 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. By working through a new community centre, based in the Roma neighbourhood (Aghois Nektarios), the municipality team have built up a stronger interest in the “second-chance” school and remedial teaching offer, and from that successfully made a case to have new school established with the Roma district.

Solutions offered by the case example

WHAT was the action being implemented? (1 line)

Using the new community centre to increase engagement with second chance and remedial education; using that uptake for a business case to create a new Second-Chance School in the neighbourhood.

The CHALLENGE with this implementation: (4 lines)

A key challenge was that much of the support on offer has typically been provided well outside the local area. This makes it difficult in most situations, but particularly problematic when trying to work with a relatively closed Roma community. Although 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 nearest “second chance school” was several kilometres away and there was limited public transport options 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. It didn't make it easy for them to engage with it.

How was the above challenge overcome? (6 lines)

The team used the opportunity of a new community centre being established within the Ag. Nektarios neighbourhood – they used this centre as a base for services, with people working day-to-day in the community, on the ground.

The team built good relationships with the school directors. This was essential for setting up support activities and programmes that fitted around the main school day and curriculum, without interfering with them. By working closely with the schools they could develop a more productive relationship and removed structural barriers, having a dialogue with the schools to seek mutually beneficial solutions.

They 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 or remedial 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.

What difference has this approach made? (10 lines max.)

After the initial engagement, the team made the case to the Ministry that there was demand for a local second chance school and that this would greatly increase uptake of the support on offer. This was approved and the new second chance school established in the community in the 2017/2018 academic year, up and running in the afternoon in the local school buildings. There are now 45 students enrolled for the current academic year, compared to just 15 two years ago.

65 local parents are studying to get primary level accreditation and people the community centre have 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.

The second chance school within the community makes it much easier for the team to show a potential path to people – from obtaining primary education as an adult, through to a local second chance school and high school and on to getting a job. Because the educational offer is now within the community it makes a huge difference and 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.

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.

What lessons might other EU cities take from this Case Example? (10 lines max.)

Now, the team understand the local people much better as well as their needs, challenges and their priorities, hopes and dreams. This improved understanding is critical to designed and implementing future support programmes.

The importance of the role of parents is also now much clearer to them. Particularly, that the parents being involved with education too 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 remedial 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.

They also observed that the new generation of parents have a slightly different views on education to their parents. They are not as hostile towards it as the previous generation. When combined with having support services available within the community, these newer families can be engaged more easily and are more likely to participate in school. It is less abnormal to them and the facilities for remedial school are nearby makes; it is 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

Key Facts and Figures:

Start and end dates of case example

Date of preparation of this case example

April 2019

Who prepared the case example?

Budget

Extra information and hyperlinks

Annex

At least 2 good quality photos to be included

