

ERASMUS Key Action 3 Policy Experimentation, “Building School- Wide Inclusive, Positive and Equitable Learning Environments Through A Systems-Change Approach (SWPBS)”

Newsletter 3

September 2020

1. Starting the project in Finland

Research project started in March 2019. In Finland SWPBS-model based behaviour support has been researched before, and there exists a Finnish universal schoolwide support program ProKoulu (www.prokoulu.fi). Within ProKoulu research more intensive individual Check in Check out -intervention has already been researched in Finland too. Therefore, Erasmus SWPBS project is a natural continuation for the research in Finland.

ProKoulu research partners were contacted about the SWPBS project. More intensive individual support is supposed to be built on a high-quality universal support - so in Finland at schools where ProKoulu has become part of the school's culture.

After initial inquiry, three municipalities Kontiolahti, Lappeenranta and Varkaus expressed interest in participating in the project and applied funding for the project together with the University of Jyväskylä research team. After the funding was ensured, there was a meeting with all the partners where the project's progression was agreed upon. In the end of March 2019 all the partners from Finland and other participating countries (Cyprus, Greece, and Romania) participated in a common kick-off -meeting, where the activities of starting the project were discussed and agreed upon.

Municipalities had a mission to report the situation of the universal ProKoulu support in the areas. The partners reported the situation in the meeting held with the research team in 13.5.2019. In the same meeting a focus group interview was made, of which results have been reported to the project. During the meeting local questions about the implementation of the universal support and the development of more intensive support, which is the project's primary mission of research and development in Finland, were discussed.

Research team worked on finalising the research methods and settled the research design in other participating countries. These were confirmed in the research group meeting in Pitești, Romania in the beginning of June 2019. During spring and autumn 2019 researchers worked on the ethical statement of the research in Finland, research processes and methods and planned the interventions and trainings. During the Autumn 2019 training needs of the schools and more intensive behaviour support methods of the schools were also inspected.

20.9.2019 an administrative meeting was held in Varkaus together with the researchers and partners from the municipalities. Situation in the municipalities and project's reporting and financing were discussed in the meeting. 10.10.2019 the research team held a support and training session for the ProKoulu-teams of the schools - especially for the persons coordinating the secondary and tertiary support. Training included discussion about the SWPBS project's activities and goals, and teams got training about monitoring the quality of universal support and implementation of the tier 2 CICO intervention.

2. Project activities in spring 2020

17.1.2020 a meeting with the researchers and the municipal partners was held in Lappeenranta before school staff trainings started later in the month. Meeting themes were project activities and individual and more intensive support and its requirements. In January 2020 the first tier 2 support CICO intervention trainings were held in Varkaus, Lappeenranta and Kontiolahti. In February second CICO trainings were held in the municipalities. There were participants from 22 different schools in the trainings during Spring: 31 persons from 10 schools in Kontiolahti, 37 persons from 6 schools in Lappeenranta and 39 persons from 6 schools in Varkaus.

During Spring staff was trained, CICO teams were and CICO interventions started in the partner municipalities. School lockdown due the COVID-19 pandemic was set from March 18th onward in Finland. There were 10 CICO interventions in the research before the lockdown. Tier 3 CICO Plus intervention did not have time to start before the lockdown. Schools opened again on May 14th, but interventions were not continued because there were only few weeks of school year left.

Research during Spring was mainly piloting and developing the process since lockdown halted the interventions in March. Research team was in continuous contact with schools and supported schools with the CICO processes. Data was collected during the CICO interventions and during the lockdown. During the lockdown research team used the time to develop the research design, data collection methods and CICO process guidelines based on the information from the CICO experiences and collected data.

3. Beginning of Autumn and plans for future

School year started in August in uncertain situation because of the coronavirus situation but schools have been working quite normally for now. Impact of corona is not certain, but interventions will be held as normally as possible, taking account on the needed precautions at schools. If the corona situation in Finland worsens again, alternative ways to implement the interventions must be considered. During August, the project activities have been started again in the municipalities: CICO teams have been composed and trained and CICO-interventions in the research started at three schools.

Researchers wanted to give support in the beginning of the school year for the schools, especially after the challenging spring. In June research team sent a CICO support package to schools, which was meant for training of the staff in the beginning of the school year. An online training and support meeting were held in 19.-20.8.2020. There were 37 persons from 24 different schools in the online training. Partners from the

municipalities reported the situation at the schools and there was discussion about the project activities and reporting. Online meeting was a good place to discuss, share experiences and answer questions.

Tier 3 interventions should be started this school year, since in Spring they were not launched because on the corona situation. Tier 3 CICO Plus intervention is supposed to be researched in the schools where universal support is strong, and the tier 2 CICO intervention processes have been established. The first CICO Plus-training, which was cancelled in Spring, was held in 9th of September. There were 40 participants from 12 different schools in the online training. Depending on the schools' needs, more training about the CICO and CICO Plus interventions will be given later.

You can follow the project on Facebook @swpbsproject

More information about the project, SWPBS-model, and behaviour support at www.pbiseurope.org