

How a blended training programme can change teachers' monolingual mindset – a programme funded by UNICEF.

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unicef



TeachIntegration
Greek Language &
Multilingualism Laboratory



The national context: Monolingualism as Objective

In Greece, monolingualism has been the (implicit) objective of educational policy. This is also the case even after the end of the so-called “Greek language question”, that is the diglossic context where a “high” and a “low” variety were in competition. The official instauration of Demotic, the low variety, in the 1970s did not change the goal of national linguistic assimilation and homogeneity, despite the emphasis given to more open educational frameworks, such as intercultural education and critical literacy. Several studies showcase that **monolingual ideologies fail to cope with increasing (super)diversity and social inequality.**

GLML-T4I project and Multilingualism

Our GLML-T4I project is a capacity-building oriented project and, as far as **multilingualism** is concerned, it includes **concrete actions and initiatives** that invite participants to:

- Discover and be **aware of the multilingual reality** in social contexts and in every person;
- Understand the **linguistic ecology** and its links with the **construction of identities**;
- Become able of **exploring resources and teaching methods that promote multilingualism**, such as language identity texts, multilingual landscapes, and plurilingual interaction/translanguaging.

Project “All Children in Education” (ACE)

- An international programme focusing on all refugee and migrant children to access quality learning.
- In Greece, it was launched by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, and UNICEF Greece in November 2021.
- Aiming at ensuring a pathway to formal education for every school-age refugee and migrant child.

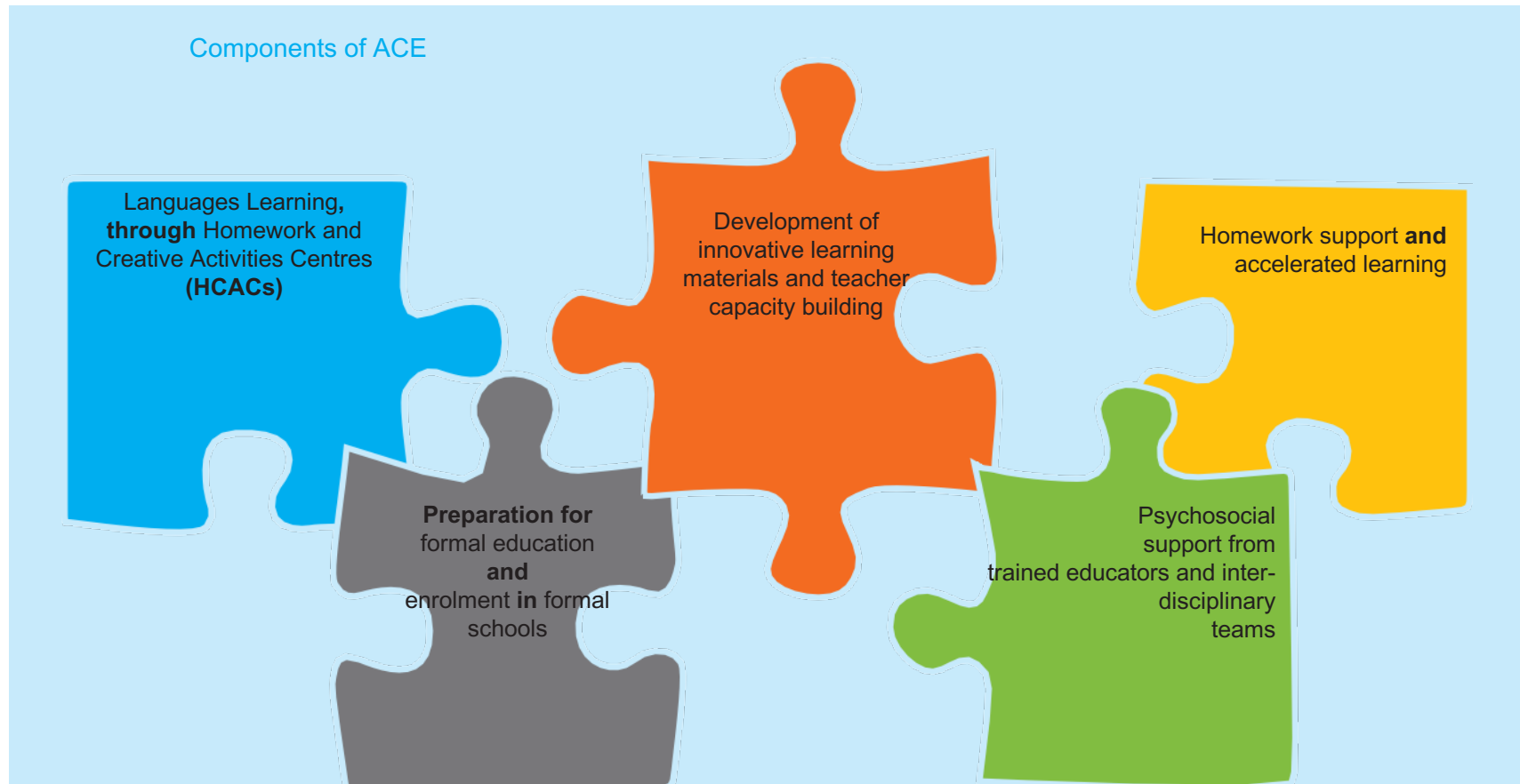
Source: UNICEF (2023). All Children in Education – Dashboard July 2023

Children benefitting from the ACE programme per Country of Origin
(Sep 2021 - Jul 2023)



Components of ACE

Source: UNICEF (2023). ACE – Programme Brief



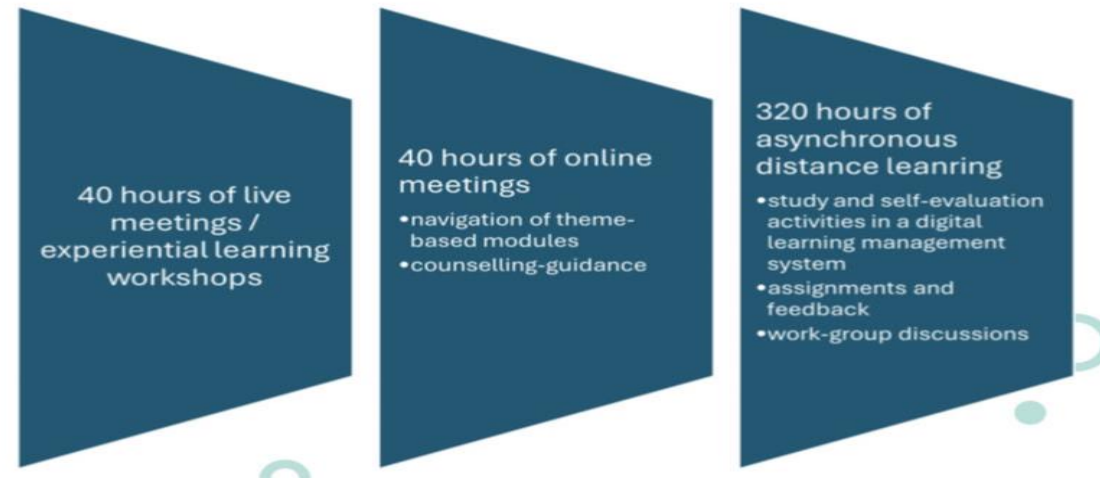
Teach for Inclusion (T4I): a teachers capacity building project

Teach for Inclusion (T4I) is a free of charge, accredited professional development programme for teachers and education administrators who are involved in the education of children with a refugee or migrant background.

It is a collaboration between the UNICEF Greece Country Office, and the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, and the University of Thessaly, with the support of the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports, under the supervision of the Institute of Educational Policy.



The structure of the T4I programme



The main aim of the programme is to **improve the teachers' skills and competences** in domains such as Multilingualism, Teaching Greek as a Second Language, psycho-social support and inclusion of refugee students, the institutional and legal framework, differentiated instruction, teaching subjects other than language, use of Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), developing collaborative – experiential learning activities, classroom management and group dynamics, e-learning and distance learning, community engagement, and the effective inclusion of students with disability or special education needs.

T4I - Modules (core)

- M1: Teachers' professional development, research in the school environment
- M2: Identities, migration and refugees
- M3: Psycho-social support for migrant and refugee students
- M4: Educational and language policies, multilingualism
- M5: Inclusive – Intercultural education
- M6: Design, evaluation and use of educational materials
- M7: Teaching/Learning a second language: general pedagogical principles and applications
- M8: Strategies for differentiated learning and teaching
- M9: Digital media education for vulnerable groups

T4I - Modules (elective)

- M10: Managing intercultural classrooms – Personal and professional development of teachers
- M11: Grammar and vocabulary in teaching Greek as a second language
- M12: Teaching non-language courses and Content and Language Intergated Learning (CLIL), Accelerated Learning Programs (ALP)
- M13: Education and human rights
- M14: Arts and expression in refugee education
- M15: Mathematics and diversity
- M16: Linguistic Landscape, translanguaging and education



MOOC version of T4I

- 6 of the modules of T4I as a Moodle course
- Freely accessible (designed for part-time teachers, appointed by the Ministry of Education)
- Available from October 2024

Program activities

During the program, trainees complete:

- **2 written assignments**
- **22 asynchronous activities** (varying from brief position texts, to forum discussions and commenting on videos or texts).

They also attend:

- **4 two-day training sessions** with trainers (face-to-face and online) and
- **3 two-hour support online sessions** with tutors.

Social orchestration

5 levels of participation

(beginning from the core group):

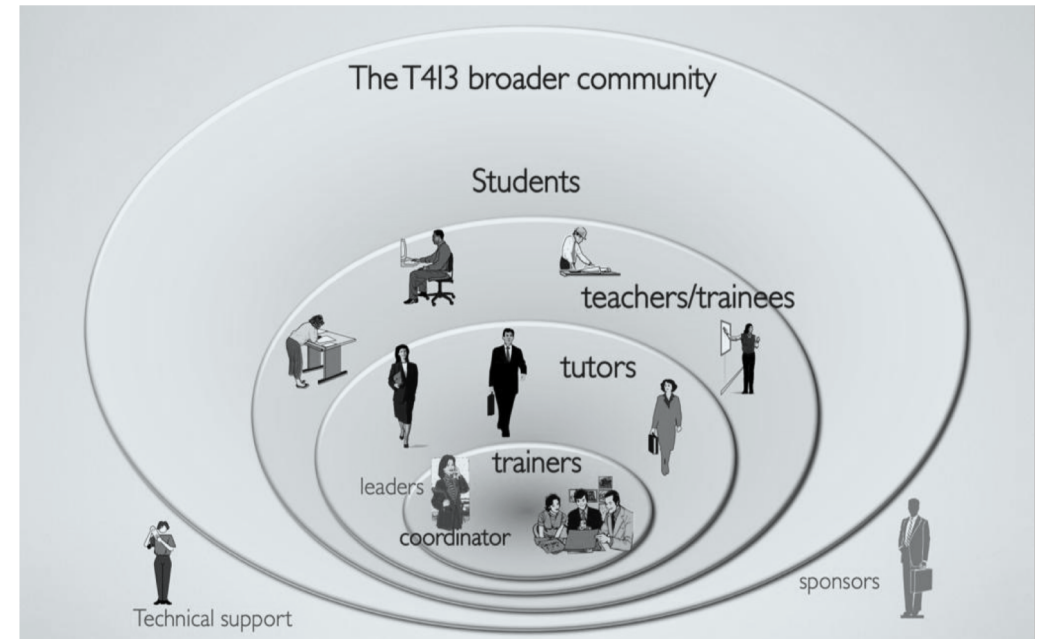
the coordinator,

the trainers,

the tutors,

the teachers/trainees, and

the students (not as direct participants, but as immediate beneficiaries).



Research questions

- a) Which **contextual factors** interplay positively or negatively with the teachers' determination (not) to implement changes?
- b) Which aspects of internal and external **motivation** for teachers emerge as the most important when taking part in a training program in refugee/migrant contexts?
- c) How the **turn to multilingual ideas and practices** is perceived and applied?

Data collection

Research undertaken by the core group of the project (coordinator, modules leaders, coordinating team) with participation of representatives of the other levels of participants (trainers, trainees)

- Data from **external evaluation** (by a specialized Lab of the University of Patras):
questionnaires, focus groups
- Data from **internal research**:
 - Focus groups (participants: trainers and trainees)
 - Trainees' written assignments. For the purpose of this presentation: an assignment in which trainees had to comment on a case study where a teacher faced parental reaction due to his decision to implement a project about Ramadan in classroom with 1/3 Muslim students (from Afghanistan, Egypt) and Roma students, including elements of Arabic, Farsi and Romani)

Method: Thematic Analysis



Findings 1

Contextual factors that impact positively or negatively on the teachers' determination (not) to implement changes

- Three emerging themes:

- 1.1. Sociopolitical pressures

- 1.2. Barriers posed by the Greek educational system and bureaucracy

- 1.3. Factors for pro-intercultural and pro-multilingual education stance and practices

Findings 1.1: sociopolitical pressures

Islamophobia within the Greek society (excerpt 1)

Teachers feel a sense of danger regarding the precariousness of their position as civil servants when faced with parental/social aggression (Excerpt 2)

Instances of naturalization of racist discourses within the school community (excerpt 3)

Excerpt 1

*"In Greece, having adopted a consistently defensive and certainly hostile policy towards Turkey (...), **everything Muslim is received with skepticism and suspicion**".*

Excerpt 2

*"Actually, **he risks creating a huge issue around himself as a public education employee, but also for his school in general, risking press exposure, etc**".*

Excerpt 3

*"We should definitely mention that **the school is Greek** and the **enculturation** in the Orthodox Christian Tradition is an integral part of Greek education."*

Findings 1.2: Barriers from the Greek educational system

In reality the Greek educational system is oriented towards monolingual language policies, assimilation and the promotion of the Greek orthodox Christian identity (excerpts 4, 5)

Lack of training programs regarding refugee-migrant education, magnified by increased teachers' mobility due to the ministry's policy of recruiting supplementary teachers (one year contract) instead of permanent ones (Excerpt 6)

Excerpt 4

*“the Greek education system theoretically embraces this approach, its whole rationale being **against diversity and in favor of assimilation**. It is therefore not paradoxical that there is a sense of ambiguity regarding the degree of freedom that teachers have in working with intercultural values.”*

Excerpt 5

“In the Greek school, with its clear ethnocentric character interwoven with the Christian orthodox tradition, it was more than expected for reactions to manifest to the use of “islamic” languages such as Arabic and Farsi”.

Excerpt 6

*“**We do not have stable employment** in classes with refugee children, so what we do may not be reusable next year. Also, those who work with such children often **lack relevant training**” (focus group).*

Findings 1.2.1: Barriers from the Greek educational system (the role of school leadership)

Centralism in decision making deprives classroom teachers from the freedom to implement changes

Instead of receiving support, many teachers feel that school leadership leaves them exposed to being challenged by parents

Excerpt 7

*"It is a common phenomenon for some school principals to attempt to prevent difficult situations through **invoking "imaginary" complaints from parents.**"*

Findings 1.2.2: Barriers from the Greek educational system (curricula, educational material)

Greek curricula promote monolingual, monocultural education

Especially, specific obligatory subjects such as “religious education” uphold the dominant religious dogma in Greece, leaving no room to different religious beliefs

Excerpt 8

*"they finally embraced the **monocultural and monolingual curriculum** and the common belief that these children had to **learn the language as soon as possible at all costs** in order to pave their way in their education in the Greek school"*

Excerpt 9

*"the curriculum in religion courses focuses on the **dominant religion** which is Christianity, whilst other religions are not presented in detail."*

Findings 1.3: factors for pro-intercultural and pro-multilingual education stance and practices

Educational reform

Practices they would adopt:

- Parental involvement at social extracurricular activities with the teacher at the role of the cultural mediator
- Re-educating parents (parental counseling, parent schools, seminars, etc.)

Excerpt 10

*“**activities**, such as participating in theater groups, dance groups, getting to know the cuisine of other cultures with the aim of finding common ground, but also **enriching their experiences** with diversity and generally, participating in activities of osmosis of cultures and cultural practices”.*

Excerpt 11

*“In order to deal with their fear of diversity, ethnocentric and stereotypical attitudes, and perceptions of assimilation or fighting diversity, **parents need to take in part in systematic, deep and meaningful training**”.*

Findings 1.3: factors for pro-intercultural and pro-multilingual education stance and practices

Practices that would resolve tensions between intercultural education and contextual pressures (eg. students' active engagement, collaborative methods, etc.)

Ethical motivation to promote educational integration, enhanced by their participation in the training program

Excerpt 12

*"To give a more personal tone to this case study, I would like to mention that I have experience of such a 'conflict (...)' At the time, I **defended the right to choose the language of communication by any student/citizen of this country**, so, in line with this, I would defend the intercultural education approach as **the only path to democracy and inclusion**".*

Excerpt 13

*"**My mindset changed, I overcame stereotypes**, the language I use changed, I came in touch with new educational practices, my overall ideology towards children changed (focus group)"*

Findings 2: Individual Factors

2.1: Aspects of external motivation

- Gaining verified expertise in intercultural education: completion of T4I awards 16 ECTS points.
- Improving their status in the recruitment procedure: In Greece teachers are recruited through lists for the creation of which academic skills, teaching experience in public- formal education and social criteria are ranked. Successful trainees add academic skill points
- Ameliorating their chances of promotion to educational leadership positions (school headmasters, refugee education coordinators, etc.)

Findings 2.2: Aspects of internal motivation

Better understanding (their) students of refugee-migrant background, **developing empathy**

- *Excerpt 14*
- *‘You complete the training and feel more active towards children, realizing that you have to search and adopt new practices from now on, continuously’*

Enhancing self-efficacy and becoming more innovative (transform teaching practices)

- *Excerpt 15*
- *Every new material to study, every meeting makes me want to learn more and try more in my class.*

Feeling empowered to **become agents of change** within the school community towards a more equitable and inclusive education

- *Excerpt 16*
- *‘the training (and especially the life stories we came in touch with) empowered me and I think I can use them to ‘convince colleagues’ and transform my teaching practices’*

Being part of a community of practice and sharing experiences, ideas and concerns

- *Excerpt 17*
- *A community has already been built with colleagues and the role of tutors is extremely helpful in lessons and study.*

Findings 3: the shift to multilingual ideas and practices

Encouraging multilingualism:

- as a "space" for first language preservation, new knowledge, and awareness-raising
- as a "space" for empathy, as a safe "space"
- *"At first we will analyse the case of students from Albania [...] In this case **we can mention respectively important dates (Albanian national days)** [...] in the celebration of 28 October, the discourse on the German occupation could be extended with Albanian history, with Albanian traditional songs, such as "Bir I tokes Kosovare" referring to a war hero, "Dy vajza-te dyja Labë" talking about women who were tortured and suggested further Albanian songs are the following: "Partizanë" (Toçe 2003: 35), "Partizani ne luft poshkonte" (Toçe 2003: 49) and "Kënga e Mine Pezës" (Mullai 2003: 87)"*
- *"The children (with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds) will not be able to communicate with each other verbally [...] So they will have to **express their thoughts and feelings by creating their own code of communication, for example with translanguaging or even with gestures or drawing.** Then after they have started to communicate in pairs or groups of two or three, they will be assigned to try to communicate and play a game together. In this way the children will focus on the common characteristics of people, their wants and needs and develop empathy."*

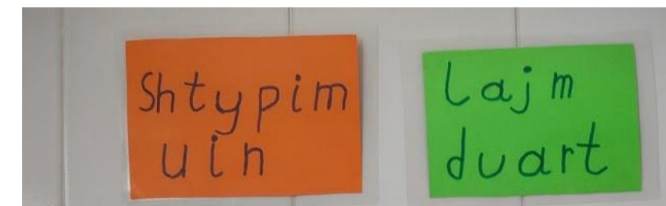
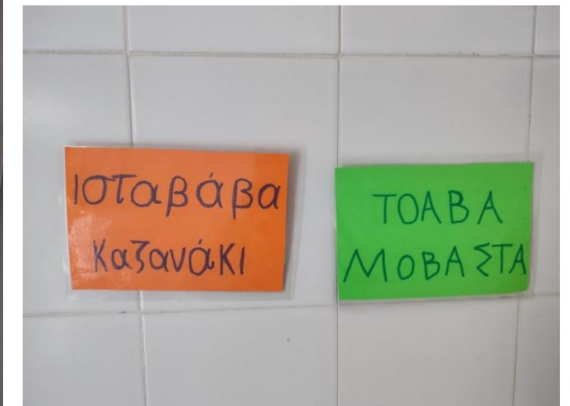
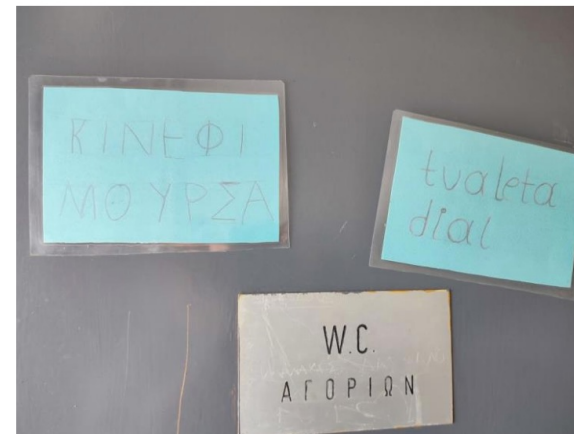
(Module 10, Written assignment)"

Findings 3: the shift to multilingual ideas and practices

- The **visibility of the (pluri) linguistic landscape of the school** as a practice of awareness and legitimation of multilingualism
(Module 16, Written assignment)

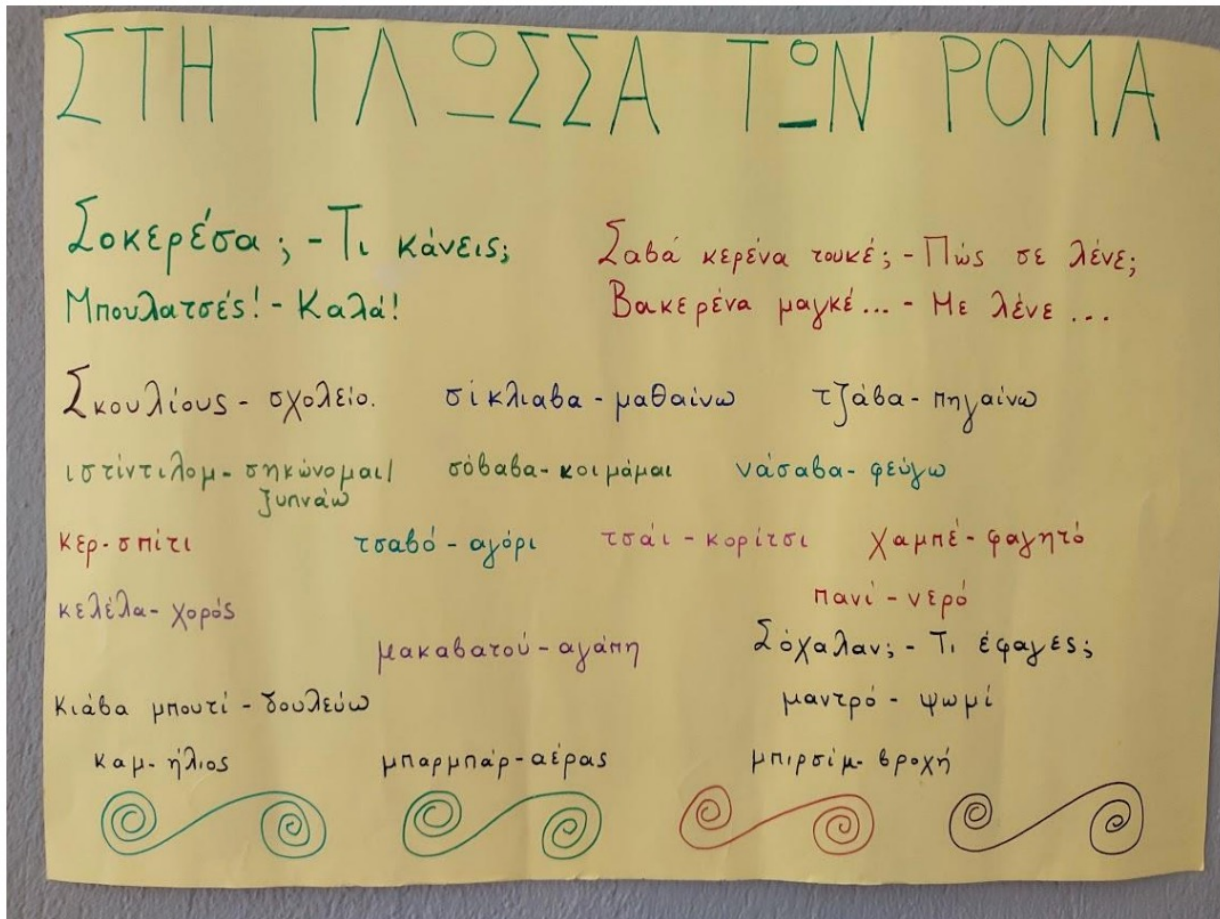
Signs in Greek, Albanian, Bulgarian and Romani in the school toilets

Πινακίδες με ελληνικά, αλβανικά,
βουλγάρικα και ρομανί στις τουαλέτες



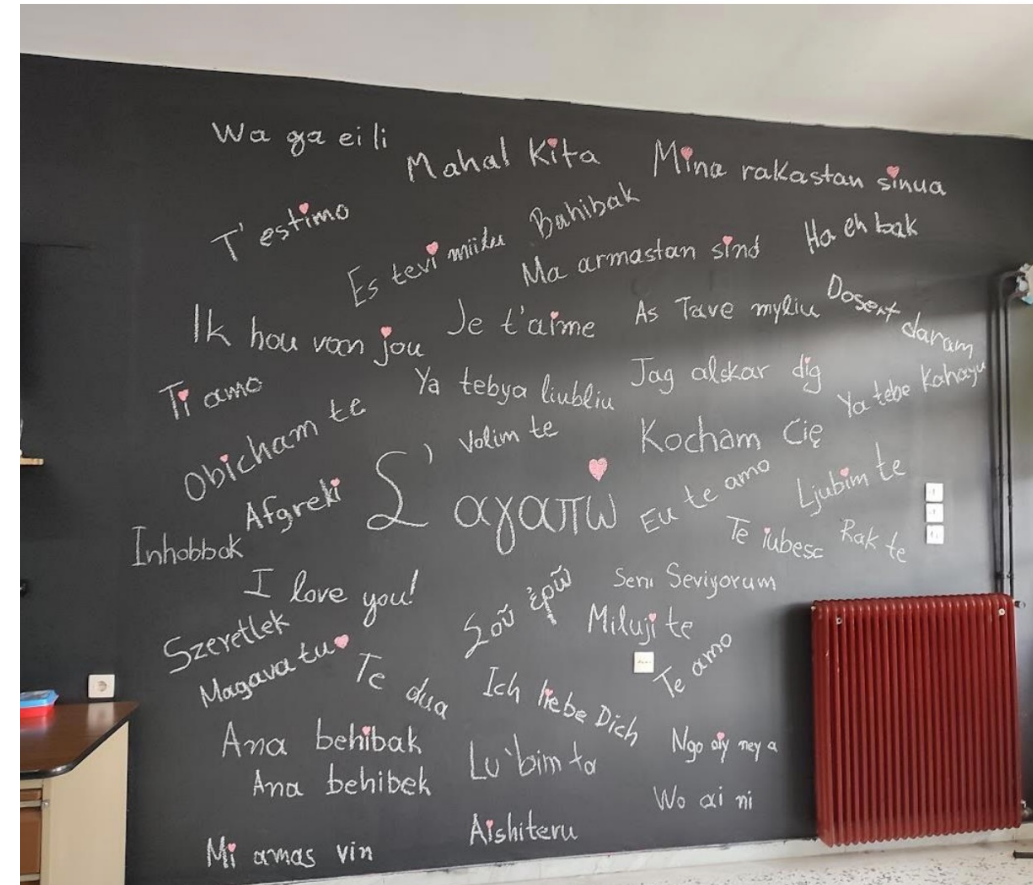
Findings 3: the shift to multilingual ideas and practices

Basic Phrases in Romani Language



@Katsouberi Georgia

The school entrance



Evaluation by the trainees 1: General View

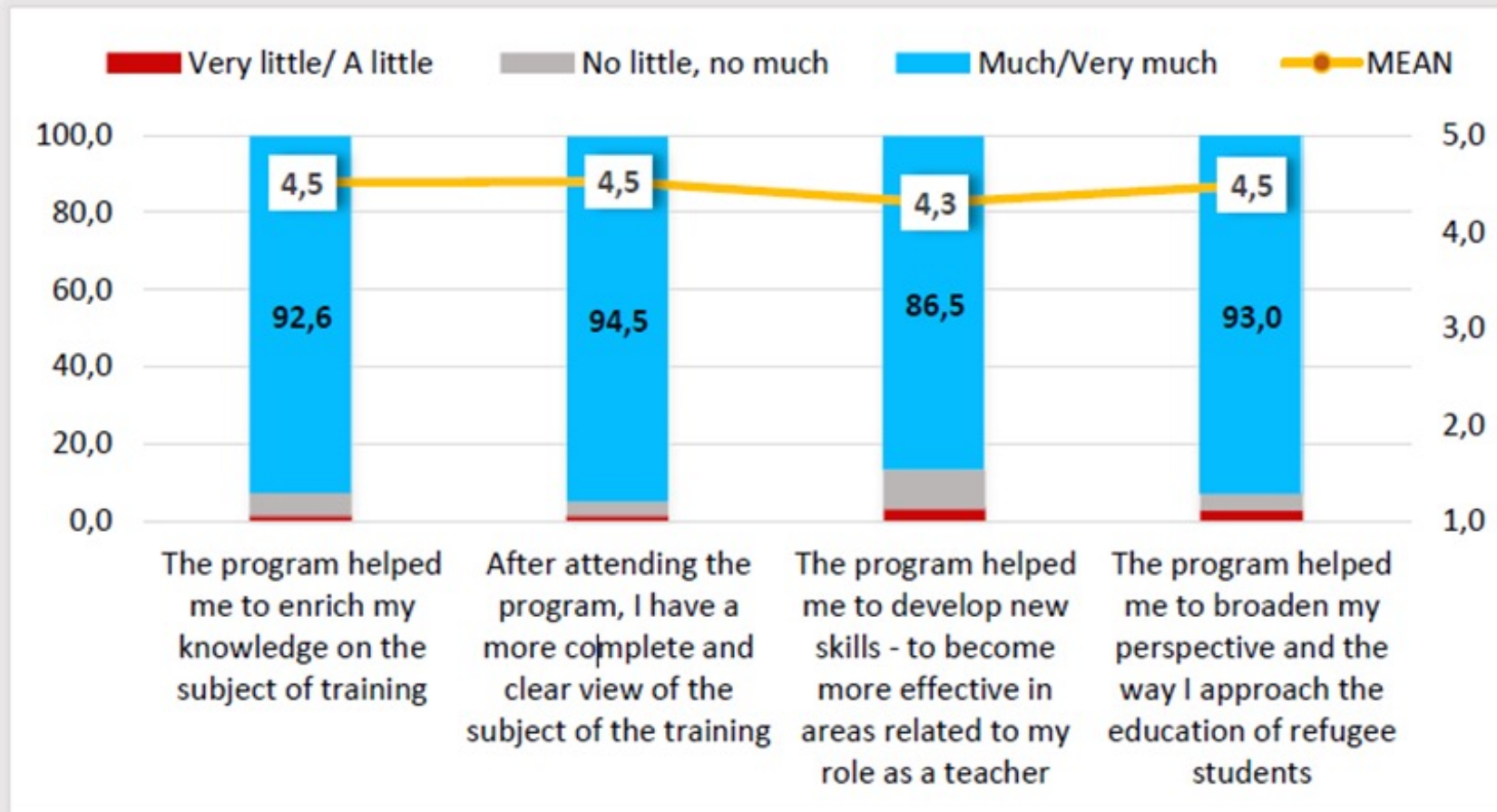
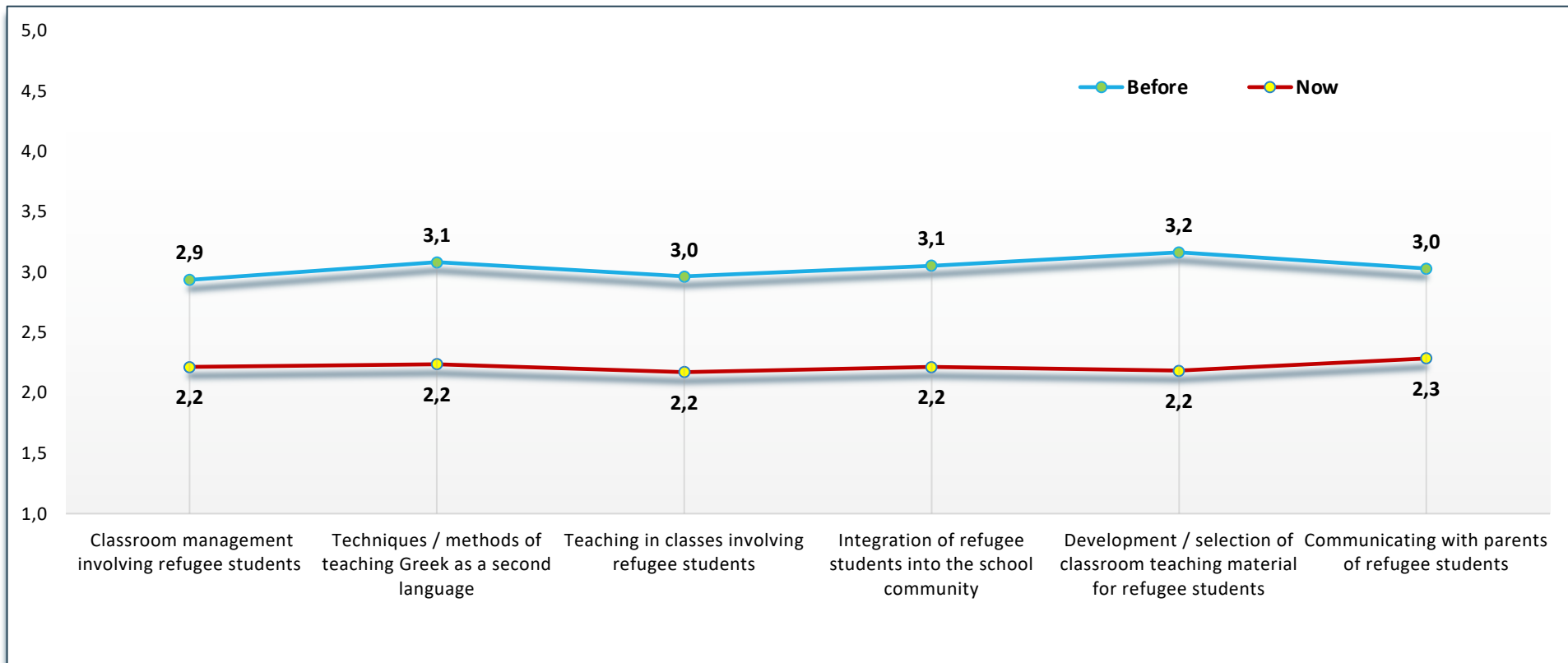
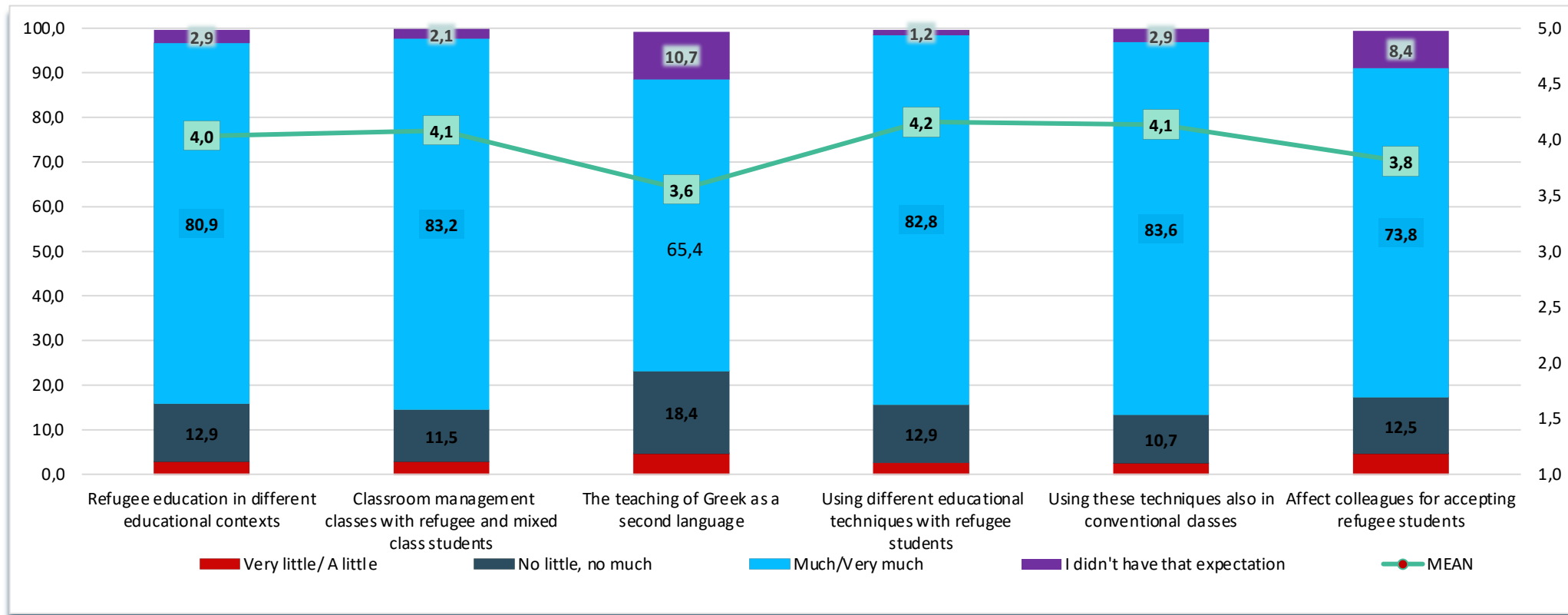


Figure 1: General view of the program

Evaluation 2: Comparison of facing difficulties before the program and now (means)



Evaluation 3: Expectations before the program / extent of fulfillment



Recognition at EU level

The T4I project:

- was awarded the **European Language Label** in 2022 (Module 3)

- was highlighted as a **Good Practice** in the European Commission's Education and Training 2022 Monitor Report:

<https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eac/education-and-training-monitor-2022/el/country-reports/greece.html>

Concluding remarks

In an increasingly adverse **context**, the project GLML-T4I strives to offer a free-of-charge training that

- strengthens the **skills and capabilities** of teachers in primary and secondary education
- proposes immediate and adequate **response to the challenges** of inclusive education

Closely bound to the needs of students and teachers, GLML-T4I

- focuses on educated/informed **hope, and well-being**
- encourages **change** at all levels: personal and professional development → teaching practice → inclusive schools → social consequences → counterbalancing impact to the **context**.

Thanks for your attention!

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