



Efficient Parenting Policy Recommendations Report

*Prepared by The Rural Hub CLG,
with support from all partners*

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Introduction to the Efficient Parenting Project

The Efficient Parenting - Effective and Innovative approaches for resilient PARENTING - project is a 24-month project that has been funded by the Romanian National Agency in 2019, with support from the Erasmus+ Programme. Efficient Parenting has aimed to build the competences of parents to be more resilient and efficient in their role as parents, allowing them to increase their children's well-being, while also practicing self-care and managing their own well-being.

Partners have been collaborating over the past 24-months to develop innovative training materials, self-help resources and practices that will develop the skills, competences and confidence of parents engaged in the project. The project has so far developed a comprehensive guide for parents, accompanied by a series of short animations that provide a snapshot of the content of the guide, and an online learning platform that provides access to all learning materials produced by the project team, as well as providing parents with additional learning materials and resources that will support them in their role as parents. These resources have been piloted with parents in Romania, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, and Ireland. Through this Policy Recommendations Report, our intention is to gather the perspectives of these parents to inform policy recommendations at practitioner and policy-level, so that the Efficient Parenting project can be viewed as a model of best practice in supporting parents to develop their parenting skills, as well as their self-care routines; and so that this model can be transferred to other communities and regions across Europe.

Policy Recommendations Report – An Introduction

The purpose of the Efficient Parenting Policy Recommendations Report is to present a collection of lessons learned, best practices and examples and recommendations targeted at both policy and practitioner level in Europe, that have been informed through project partners' collective experience of developing and delivering the Efficient Parenting project. Through this report, our intention is to present the findings and outcomes of the research and evaluation activities that were undertaken in each partner country to capture the lived experiences of parents and educators who have been engaged throughout the development and delivery of this project; and to ensure that their voices and experiences are included in forming the policy recommendations that are based on our collective experience of implementing this project. As such, this Policy Recommendations Report presents findings from a consultation that was undertaken with parents who participated in the project in each country, educators who supported the project in each country and project partners who have been engaged in the project from the beginning. This Paper has been drafted to present the collective findings from these consultations and to present the European recommendations from our collaborative work.

Through this report, our aim has been to engage family and parenting educators, practitioners and policy-makers from across Europe in the policy debate regarding how parents are supported as the first educators of their children, and what supports are offered to parents from diverse and often marginalised backgrounds; and to present the lessons we have learned through piloting Efficient Parenting in the six partner countries represented in this consortium, namely: Romania, Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Ireland.

Developing the Policy Recommendations Report

To inform the development of this Policy Recommendations report, all 6 partners conducted focus group sessions with parents and educators who were engaged in the piloting of IO1 – The Efficient Parenting Handbook and IO2 – e-Learning Space and Online Modules. Following on from this focus group, partners then answered a survey that was shared with them through Google Forms to capture their experiences of working on and delivering the Efficient Parenting project. Next, partners completed a national case study template that provides an overview of the process that they undertook to deliver the Efficient Parenting project in their countries. The aim of including these case studies is that other educators or parenting groups across Europe could read these case studies and choose an approach to delivering the educational materials developed by the Efficient Parenting project partners that has been piloted in one of the participating partner countries, and that would be applicable to their national or local context. Through these case studies, our intention is to provide a series of examples for practitioners for how they can deliver the Efficient Parenting project. Lastly, partners have been asked to provide a series of key recommendations at policy level and for other practitioners working in the adult education and family support sectors across Europe. The following Policy Recommendations Report provides an overview of the findings that have been gathered through this extensive research and evaluation process.

The Efficient Parenting Rationale and Approach

At its core, Efficient Parenting aimed to support parents to build their capacity as parents, and also to support them to identify and address their own needs and to practice self-care. This is a novel approach to parenting training, which aims to put parents at the centre of the curriculum development and implementation processes. The project partners identified the need to support parents, in being parents, due to the significant technological advances that we have seen in recent years, and the impact that this is having on children and parents' relationships and children's well-being. There is a digital divide between parents and children today, which has been the case for the past decades since the age of the Internet began, but which has never been so vast. Children have

access to more online platforms and channels today than ever before, and parents are lost in a sea of digital platforms that they are not familiar with, unaware if their children are safe in these online environments, but desperately trying to protect them. Screen-time has infiltrated family time as well. It would be interesting to conduct research to see how many dinner tables have a smartphone or an iPad resting in front of the child or parents faces. Screens are a necessity in today's digital world, but when they impact on family time, they also impact on family relationships. Screen-time can bring emotional and behavioural issues, a lack of social connection between parents and can also severely impact the well-being and self-esteem of children, and of parents. Therefore, the rationale for this project has been to support parents to invest in the emotional and social well-being of their families, by developing their parenting skills and ensuring that positive family relationships can be nurtured, even in the digital age.

Approach in Each Partner Country

To deliver this project and to ensure that the project could have the required impact among parents in each country, project partners undertook a series of different approaches to engaging parents in the training. An overview of these different approaches is included below, as well as some feedback that was received from parents through these different approaches:

Cyprus

To inform the development of the EFFICIENT PARENTING handbook, and in order to investigate the needs of parents with children between the ages of 0-7, CARDET conducted an online survey to identify current Parent's needs. Overall, 100 participants completed Cyprus's survey. The results of Cyprus's Needs Analysis Survey confirmed the aim of the project and there is an immediate need for Cypriot parents to find ways to enhance their skills and capacities connected with their well-being and their parenting role and responsibilities. Moving on, we have also conducted a focus group to identify current Parent's need in Cyprus. Due to the pandemic the event held online via ZOOM on 30/03/2020 attending 6 parents. After we have completed the online survey and focus group we were able to identify the needs and develop the handbook. As soon it was finalised we tested the material by having one more focus group to present to Parents the first draft of EFFICIENT PARENTING's Handbook and collect their feedback in order to proceed with any necessary alterations and/or additions to perfect the Handbook. The focus group took place online with 11 parents on the 08/07/2020. The feedback of the focus groups were that all parents were eager to find out more about the project and to receive invitations for our next steps and events. Cyprus's focus group participants did not raise any concerns for alterations or corrections and the overall response was positive and enthusiastic. Finally we proceed and translate the handbook. Note: the training lasted 2 hours each. For the E-learning space & online modules (IO2), CARDET was the responsible partners of creating the e learning platform. In order

to evaluate the platform we sent out an evaluation questionnaire with the aim to present to parents the platform and collect their feedback and proceed if needed with relevant alterations, perfect, and finalise the material. The 71.3% of the participants were female and 28.7% male. In sum, 160 responses were collected from all partner countries: Romania (32), Cyprus (33), Greece (32), Italy (32) and Ireland (31).

Related to feedback received from parents, the results of the Questionnaires Evaluation confirmed the aims and reasoning that initially enabled the Project's Consortium to embark with this Project. Parents embraced the eLearning Platform and Website and were keen to find out more about the project. All parents were extremely enthusiastic with the objectives and outcomes of EFFICIENT PARENTING Project. Expressed a keen interest in social connectedness (especially considering the timing and COVID-19 situation) and finding practical solutions and routines they can apply in their everyday life with all the members of the family as well.

Greece

UAegean followed a blended learning (hybrid learning), model that had face-to-face workshops with the parents based on the "IO1 – The EFFICIENT PARENTING handbook" combined with the ELearning space & online modules (IO2). Logistics of the face to face workshops Thursday 3/6, 08:15 – 16:10 60 Parents from Grade A and Grade B (2 classes each grade) of the 1st Primary School of Rafina The teachers of the relevant classes: Ms Maria Koutri (Class A2), Ms Sofia Korre (Class B1) and Ms Sevasti Mouxtoupi (Class B2) Facilitator: Anastasia Pyrini Teacher Class A1/Researcher, UAegean Observer: Professor Emeritus Konstantinos Tsolakidis, UAegean Friday 4/6, 08:15 – 16:10 15 Parents from Grade B of the 4th Primary School of Rafina The Class teacher: Ms Athanasia Beltertzi Facilitator: Anastasia Pyrini Teacher Class A1/Researcher, UAegean Observer: Professor Emeritus Konstantinos Tsolakidis, UAegean Tuesday 8/6, 08:15 – 16:10 15 Parents from Grade A of the Primary School of "Agia Marina" in Nea Makri The Class teacher: Ms Dimitra Raiou Facilitator: Anastasia Pyrini Teacher Class A1/Researcher, UAegean Observer: Professor Emeritus Konstantinos Tsolakidis, UAegean Wednesday 8/6, 08:15 – 16:10 15 Parents from the wider area of East Attica Representing the Directory of Secondary Education of East Attica, Dr Tilemachos Raptis and Mr George Sarrigeorgiou Facilitator: Anastasia Pyrini Teacher Class A1/Researcher, UAegean Observer: Professor Emeritus Konstantinos Tsolakidis, UAegean

Related to feedback received from parents, the parents and guardians welcomed the training programme with enthusiasm. They stated that the Open Educational Resources of the project fully meet their needs and are of very high quality. They also commented that the "Efficient Parenting" training programme is the first, as far as they know, which is available in Greek for free. They also mentioned other parenting counselling programmes that they have come across on social media that require payment.

Italy

During the need analysis phase, CSC collected 56 responses to the online questionnaire from Italian parents. CSC Danilo Dolci organised an online focus group with 7 parents to present IO1, afterwards CSC collected 30 questionnaires online to pilot the Manual IO1, all activities were held online due to the pandemic situation, a training session was organised with 7 parents which lasted two hours to pilot IO1 activities directly with the target group.

Related to feedback received from parents, all parents expressed positive feedback on the manual activities, especially those connected with the well-being and almost all participants appreciated the videos connected with the project topics.

Ireland

To deliver the Efficient Parenting project in Ireland, unfortunately, due to COVID-19, we were committed to only delivering the Efficient Parenting project online. We would have preferred to deliver this training in person, as we believe that the impact would have been even more impactful, however, we have had strict lockdowns and restrictions in Ireland on an almost continuous basis since March 2020, and so it was not possible to host the training or multiplier event in person. However, through the attractive e-learning platform and modules, and the short animations that we created to support the implementation of The Efficient Parenting project in digital and online formats has been very effective in allowing us to still deliver quality training to parents, despite its online format. In addition, based on the needs that were identified among parenting throughout the piloting, we learned that they have struggled a lot with remote working and home schooling as a result of the pandemic, so while it was less than ideal to host the training online also, parents enjoyed having a space where they could discuss these issues with other parents and share their experiences. Also, from this insight that we gained through this training; we have been able to engage an external expert in providing targeted support to parents on the topic of positive psychology. We engaged this external expert to provide targeted advice to parents so that they can care for themselves but also re-connect with the real world (not just the virtual world) and support their children to re-connect with the real world and with nature, now that Ireland is finally opening up from its long and arduous lockdowns. Because we were forced to host this training online, we ensured that we made our best effort to really connect with parents through this training, and so we feel that we have achieved very positive results with parents.

Related to feedback received from parents, as mentioned previously, parents really enjoyed the opportunity to connect with one another and to share their experiences and swap stories from

the last 18 months, which have placed a significant burden on parents in Ireland who were expected to work remotely and also to act as teachers for their children, with very little preparation or support. What came through in the feedback was that the topic of 'social connectedness' was particularly important for parents today. Many were worried that they had lost some of the social connection with their children, as they spent so much time on screens during COVID-19, but also that they and their children had lost some of the social connection with the outside/real world. Many children are scared of catching the virus, because they have been educated about it in school and through TV, and they are worried about re-engaging in this world where the virus is still active. Parents expressed a fear that they will not be able to socially engage in school when school reopens, and so the focus of our multiplier event was to unpack with parents how they can encourage this social connection between their children and the outside world in a post-pandemic world, and how children can connect with nature to maintain their well-being during this period. It has therefore been a very positive and insightful project in our region.

Romania

We have organised a face-to-face workshop with 5 parents in which we completed all the activities from the online modules, we presented the handbook and magazine, gave them some guidelines from the handbook and offered them advice and support on the specific needs we identified before and during the workshop. The workshop lasted for 4 hours. We made available the handbook for all the parents who came to our organisation with their children for therapies. They had the possibility to read it while waiting for their children. This included a number of 73 parents with kids of different ages.

Related to feedback received from parents, parents appreciated the event very much, all the information they've got was enthusiastically received. They expressed their desire to participate in this kind of workshop in the future as well. They felt that there is a lack of parental support and that this project brought them closer to people and information that can help them become better parents.

Impact of this Approach in Each Partner Country

As all partners undertook different processes in how they delivered the Efficient Parenting project, in keeping with what was possible due to local COVID-19 restrictions and what access they had to parents, it is important to understand the impact that each of these different approaches achieved among parents. The aim here is not to find the best approach, but to understand how different approaches impacted parents in each country differently. By including these perspectives on the impact that our different approaches had on parents, our intention is to show how different

approaches can achieve different results; so, for other practitioners who may wish to deliver the Efficient Parenting project, they can gauge which approach will achieve the desired impact in their own local context. An overview of the impact achieved in each country is included below.

Cyprus

The impact of all focus groups and training were very high and this is indicated by the feedback we have received. Many of parents reported that due to the inspiring content that served as a kind of a reminder to take proper care of themselves and wellbeing they expressed the intent to start taking upon more activities and practices that will safeguard their own wellbeing.

Greece

In the view of the research team of the UAegean, the impact of the training was:

1. Parents/Guardians became aware of how important it is to develop their active listening ability and their empathy.
2. Parents/Guardians looked at examples of their daily lives and found that they did not use the rewards they offered to their children in the most appropriate way.
3. Parents/Guardians became aware of how important it is to mind their personal needs and realized that looking after their wellbeing benefits the whole family.
4. Mindfulness proved to be a promising parent training tool to improve the well-being of parents.
5. Parents/Guardians assessed the effectiveness of their current communication practices and through the training activities discovered new methods to improve their communication skills for better interaction with their children.
6. Parents/Guardians noted areas for improvement (reflection and self-assessment activities).

Italy

Parents enjoyed the provided tools and said they will use the manual in their daily activity as parents. The training exposed parents to new tools to face their difficult tasks as modern parents.

Ireland

We believe that our approach to delivering the Efficient Parenting project was particularly impactful on parents who were engaged because they had the opportunity to share their stories with other parents. We cannot underestimate how isolated many rurally-based parents have felt in 2020 and 2021, and how much they needed the support of other parents to share what they have been through. We know from the feedback that the resources on social connectedness in particular will be used widely by parents in our group, and we have also received very positive feedback from the positive psychology session that was planned as part of our virtual multiplier event, so through this feedback and through our actions, we feel that this project has achieved a significant impact on the parents who have participated, and that this project will help them to re-build the social connections in their families and in their communities, following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Romania

In our opinion, the impact was very good. Parents had the opportunity to express their concerns regarding their parent-child relationship in a safe environment, with specialists who could guide them and advise them how to react in different situations. Parents saw that every parent is having difficulties and doubts when it comes to raising a child and it was comforting for them to know that they are not alone. The information from the handbook and the activities from the online modules gave them a basis and guidelines to use in building an healthy relationship with their children.

Findings from Our Focus Groups

The insights that have been shared so far in this Policy Recommendations Report are all from the perspective of project partners – informed by their experience of planning, developing and delivering this project. However, our intention in this Policy Recommendations Report is to ensure that the perspectives of parents and educators who have been engaged in the national implementation of the Efficient Parenting project are also included, and that their voices also help to shape the policy recommendations that are included in this Report.

To engage these two target groups in this process, project partners undertook a consultation process by delivering focus group sessions with representatives from these two groups. In these focus group sessions, a total of 8 questions were asked, as follows:

1. What has been your experience of engaging with the Efficient Parenting project?
2. What would you say have been the main positives or successes to come from this project?

3. How has this project impacted you personally and/or professionally?
4. Based on your experience as a participant and/or collaborator in the Efficient Parenting project, what would you say are the project's main strengths?
5. Also comment on any weak points in the project design, development, and delivery.
6. Can you please mention one key insight that you gained through this project? It could be a new skills, new perspective or new contact made, but please mention something that will stay with you after the project ends.
7. Based on your involvement in the Efficient Parenting project, and your experience as a parent and/or educator/stakeholder, if you were to speak directly to a policy maker in this field, what recommendation would you give to enhance how parents are supported in your country.
8. Do you have any other comments, feedback, or recommendations that you would like to offer at this time?

The following section provides an overview of the answers we have received to each of these questions through these focus group meetings held in each partner country.

Question 1: What has been your experience of engaging with the Efficient Parenting project?

- Most of the participants noted that since the activities and the objectives of Efficient Parenting Project were made know to them, they have been following the progress of the project and they actively engage in all stages. Parents in Cyprus, as well as professionals that work with the particular group (parents), shared with us that they were very happy to discover the existence of such an initiative and that they tested and implemented many of the suggestions provided in the Handbook, Magazine and Platform Resources and the results were positive. Moreover it helped them to raise awareness to their peers, spouses, etc. **(CY)**
- The parents/and guardians welcomed the training programme with enthusiasm. They stated that the Open Educational Resources of the project fully meet their needs and are of very high quality. They also commented that the "Efficient Parenting" training programme is the first, as far as they know, which is available in Greek for free. They also mentioned other parenting counselling programmes that they have come across on social media that require payment. **(EL)**
- "The project helped me understand my problems with my partner and my children". **(IT)**
- "I learnt about Emotional Education and how manage with children's tantrums". **(IT)**
- "I finally started team building among family members". **(IT)**
- "I am trying to balance between time for work and time for my family". **(IT)**
- "I had the chance to understand how to discipline the child without raising your voice, how to teach discipline without giving orders, how to manage anger moments". **(IT)**

- “My experience with the project was positive because sometimes you have no time to reflect on certain dynamics within the family as you are too busy with work and family business, so the project was a unique occasion to reflect on specific issues”. (IT)
- Focus group participants shared that they were very enthusiastic about this project from the beginning, as it had been a very lonely experience being a parent through the lockdowns in Ireland and the project seemed to raise awareness of many of the issues that were worrying parents. Building on this, they mentioned that the training provided by this project did not disappoint as it provided a safe and supportive environment where parents could engage with other parents and just talk about being parents. The training also provided very practical advice and activities that they can use directly in their daily family life, especially around managing challenge behaviours that have emerged in their children throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The module on social connectedness was by far the most popular and impactful on parents though, as it helped them to address some of the main concerns that they have about supporting their children to re-engage following the COVID-19 pandemic. (IE)
- The Efficient Parenting project brought a lot of useful information regarding parenting, in a positive manner. Parents were searching information on how to improve their relationship with the child and how to manage their own feelings when they are tired, frustrated, overwhelmed. The team delivering the workshop was perceived as very implicated and offering high-quality information. (RO)

Question 2: What would you say have been the main positives or successes to come from this project?

- Raising Awareness (CY)
- Giving practical solutions, ideas and exercises backed up by scientific resources in a user-friendly way that all parents can follow regardless their academic/professional background (CY)
- Short, time-wise flexible activities and resources that respect and fit properly with parent’s limited time availability (CY)
- Creating Communication among parents to exchange good practices, concerns, ideas, own experiences. (CY)
- Creating Communication Channels among IoD & CARDET with other organizations, groups, professionals with relevant expertise in order to find solutions and empower parents. (CY)
- Educating and/or amplifying the knowledge/expertise of IoD & CARDET members (not only the ones involved in the project but whole personnel due to internal dissemination and training events. (CY)
- The production of high quality intellectual outputs available as OER to be exploited by parents/guardians, educators and decision/policy makers. (EL)

- The project, even post the end-date, supports parents/guardians self-directed learning to enhance their knowledge, skills and competences in three major areas:
 - Behavioural Management
 - Parental Psychological Well-Being and
 - Social Connectedness. *(EL)*
- Parents/guardians can find answers to everyday problems at a one-stop-shop (e-learning platform) having instant access to the full suite of digital learning resources developed in the project. This has been recorder as a very important service especially for those who do not afford paid counselling services. *(EL)*
- Educators can save time during the pedagogical meetings with the parents/guardians by prompting them to the OER of the project. *(EL)*
- “I became aware of my limits as a parent and now I am trying to solve my relational problems with the others, the project helped me understand my limits and my mistakes in dealing with the others and with my children”. *(IT)*
- “The project helped me improve my communication skills with my relatives and other parents. I had the chance to exchange ideas and solutions to common problems with other parents”. *(IT)*
- “I found other ways to manage my child’s bad behaviour”. *(IT)*
- “Now I know how to stimulate my children playing together”. *(IT)*
- “I learnt more about child development stages and appropriate education (emotional, discipline, affective) for each development stage”. *(IT)*
- “Now I know how to perform the role of the mother in a best way. How to have a support and to have an exchange with other parents in the same situation”. *(IT)*
- Making parents feel like other parents have shared experiences and have also struggled during the past 18-months. *(IE)*
- Providing targeted training that put parents at the centre, and really focus on addressing their needs and their concerns. *(IE)*
- Supporting parents to overcome some of the social anxiety and behavioural problems that their children have exhibited during the pandemic. *(IE)*
- Promoting the importance of self-care among parents, and providing quality resources for parents so that they can maintain their own sense of well-being these days. *(IE)*
- Allowing for parents to network with other parents in a safe and supportive environment, without judgement. *(IE)*
- Giving practical activities that parents can directly use in their daily lives as parents. *(IE)*
- The main successes that came from this project are the online platform, the informative materials and the good collaboration between specialists. The main positives are that the project was delivered in a positive environment, were parents felt safe and understood and could discover their own needs. The project offered the occasion for

parents to socialize, to empathize and to exchange experiences about the parent life.
(RO)

Question 3: How has this project impacted you personally and/or professionally?

- The project succeeded in educating and/or amplifying the knowledge/expertise of IoD & CARDET members (not only the ones involved in the project but whole personnel due to internal dissemination and training events). (CY)
- The project also helped us to deepen our knowledge and inspired us to enhance our expertise in the matter with the aim of serving science, community and social life of the island. (CY)
- The project has inspired us to take more initiatives in relevant activities, projects and trainings. (CY)
- The professional impact recorded by the six educators and the two decision makers¹ participating in the project is: improved a) parental empowerment and competencies; b) parents/guardians-children interactions; c) children's behaviour; increased positive parenting practices and social connections. As a result a positive impact to a successful educational community has been achieved. (EL)
- On a personal level as a professional (primary school teacher) I had the opportunity to be engaged in the development of meaningful OER for parents/guardians that I will have the opportunity to exploit in my working environment in the future and to validate my pedagogical practices. (EL)
- As a parent I had the opportunity to reflect on and self-assess my own parental practices and to start a dialogue with my co-parent and my child on what is best working for our family. (EL)
- "The project gave me new insights on the profession of the "parent": sometimes you do your job as a parent, but you do it instinctively without any previous theoretical or practical experience". (IT)
- "The project impacted me by giving new tools to manage my children's bad behaviour". (IT)
- "Efficient parenting showed me how to balance time for work and time for my family". (IT)
- "I started meditation thanks to the project, and this is helping my self-consciousness and mindfulness". (IT)
- "On a personal level, I better understand the relationship with my partner, and I am trying to dedicate more time to my relationship. Before I was too focused on my child". (IT)

¹ Three of the six educators involved are still working with the same groups of parents. The other three have changed classes so they no longer cooperate with the parents that participated in the workshops. The two decision makers may record impact in the wider area of Attica.

- “Efficient parenting gave me new tools to be a more efficient parents in listening to my children!”. (IT)
- Personally, this project has allowed parents to recognise that they are doing their best and have done a good job despite all of the challenges that they have faced in the previous year. It also gave parents the opportunity to reflect on how they parent, and what they can change in their parenting style to achieve a greater connection with their children. Lastly, it has helped parents to feel empowered that they can affect positive change in the lives of their children as they struggle with social skills and anxiety following the COVID-19 pandemic. (IE)
- On a professional level, educators feel that they understand the needs and struggles of parents more now and that they are better placed to support parents in their daily work thanks to the Efficient Parenting project. (IE)
- Some of the parents said that the project helped them be more aware about the importance of connecting with their children on a deeper level. They’ve learned a lot of useful information about parenting and had a positive impact on their relation with the children. (RO)

Question 4: Based on your experience as a participant and/or collaborator in the Efficient Parenting project, what would you say are the project’s main strengths?

- Offering easy to follow, digest, understand and implement activities backed up by real scientific facts and research. (CY)
- Avid collection of material available in a user-friendly platform. (CY)
- State of Art and perfectly curated deliverables: Handbook, Magazine, Short Videos. (CY)
- The quality and accessibility of the OER produced by the project. (EL)
- The Efficient Parenting, offers a theoretical framework and practical tips that support the social and emotional development of the children while reduce behavioural problems. (EL)
- “The project deals with topics which are very urgent for modern families like behavioural management, well-being and communication”. (IT)
- “Cartoons and videos are very useful to explain how to solve real problems with your children”. (IT)
- “On-line platform is handy and use to use so it is constant resource for us parents”. (IT)
- “Efficient parenting is a project needed, especially now that we parents have to re-think our daily routine due to the pandemic, so it is now more than ever necessary to support the changing role of being a parent”. (IT)
- The online platform and the cartoons are very engaging – it is rare that supports and training for parents are so nicely presented. This is a very significant advantage of the Efficient Parenting project over other parenting programmes on offer locally. (IE)

- It is nice that there is no judgement of parents in this programme. The project seems to appreciate all of the strengths of parents and to highlight what they are doing right, and then offering practical advice for what changes they can make to their parenting style. (IE)
- The project offers a comprehensive training programme that really focuses on the well-being of parents and their children, which is a huge plus. (IE)
- The main strengths of the project are: openness, the focus on the parent-child relationship, meeting other specialists and exchange information, the topic approached and the fact that at the focus group we had a therapist who is a parent of 3 children. (RO)

Question 5: Also comment on any weak points in the project design, development and delivery.

- It could have more modules or structure the 3 main pillars – modules in sub-modules. (CY)
- Main obstacles during the whole life span of the Project was due to the phenomenon of covid-19 pandemic outbreak, the consortium handled it with a very masterful way though. (CY)
- No weak points have been recorded by the project research team during the face to face workshops, in the responses to the survey, and the multiplier event. (EL)
- On the contrary, parents/guardians expressed their gratitude for the implementation of this project which provides them with counselling and support completely free of charge and without the need to report the problem that concerns them. (EL)
- “Most of the activities were online so we missed the real contact with other parents”. (IT)
- It would have been better to have the training in person, but parents were happy to stay involved in a parenting network that hopes to meet in person when restrictions allow it. (IE)
- Parents would like more workshops held by the specialists. (RO)

Question 6: Can you please mention one key insight that you gained through this project? It could be a new skills, new perspective or new contact made, but please mention something that will stay with you after the project ends.

- The importance of Mental Health and personal care in order to be able to fill the shoes of any other relationship or role you have in life (professional, personal and interpersonal). (CY)
- The need of parents to invest time in themselves and their personal growth regardless of their parental role and duties. (CY)

- Certainly the partners with whom we had the opportunity to work for the first time in the framework of this project and with whom we hope to have the opportunity for future cooperation for the further development of this project. (EL)
- We have developed lifelong skills and knowledge that can be utilized in the future on a professional as well as personal level and can be shared, used, reused and adapted as needed. (EL)
- “Thanks to the project, I met other parents and I think this will lead to new friendships”. (IT)
- “I think I will use the relaxation methods forever! They really help me find the energies and the concentration even in my work”. (IT)
- “The techniques to calm down and deal with my children’s tantrums are life-time tools to be a better parent”. (IT)
- The need for parents to invest in their own well-being if they are also to support the well-being of their children. Self-care is so important. (IE)
- The fact that parents are doing a good job, and have the best interests of their children at heart. This project puts into focus the important role of parents, and that no matter how we parent, we also do it with love and best intentions. (IE)
- The fact that all parents have struggled during COVID-19 and that that’s okay, but now we can be empowered to help ourselves and our children to re-emerge from the pandemic, as a community. (IE)
- Awareness, connecting to specialists and other parents, the approach of well-being of the parents as a starting point in efficient parenting, the desire of becoming a better parent. (RO)

Question 7: Based on your involvement in the Efficient Parenting project, and your experience as a parent and/or educator/stakeholder, if you were to speak directly to a policy maker in this field, what recommendation would you give to enhance how parents are supported in your country.

- Offer financially sensible solutions to parents in order to take care of their own mental health and the wellbeing of the whole family. (CY)
- Create opportunities for parents to interact with each other and exchange good practices, concerns, ideas and take initiatives. (CY)
- Inform and raise awareness among professionals who work with parents (Educators, Psychologists, Social Workers, Adult Educators, Parents Unions). (CY)
- Organize events and initiatives whereas parents & children can be informed and or take part in initiatives that promote their overall wellbeing and strengthen their unique bond. (CY)

- Invest in parent/guardian education through free training programmes in their native language. [\(EL\)](#)
- Support the sharing of the existing programmes and OER by creating a Repository where parents/guardians can easily retrieve what's available. [\(EL\)](#)
- To motivate employers to make it easier for employees to participate in such training programmes while recognising their social value and the impact they can have on employee productivity. [\(EL\)](#)
- Educational support for all the family
 - Families have the right on non-formal educational offers on family management, compatibility of family and career, parental skills, sexual education, health and wellbeing for all kind of families and request for a general law in Italy supporting all these aspects of the “parenting” profession. [\(IT\)](#)
- Increasing policies and financial support for families
 - In Italy families need a social system that brings together different actors from the educational field, social work, labour market and medical system in order to develop or strengthen a policy for families that focus among others on a payable care system for children, elderly and disabled family members. [\(IT\)](#)
- Family policies - takes the balance of job and home life into account
 - Creating a balance between a (fulfilling) career and a happy family life needs recognition as well as structural support by law makers instead of only holding the parents accountable. [\(IT\)](#)
- More partnership/multi-agency working for family support
 - Different organisations and institutions should connect and work increasingly together and foster a holistic support system for families. [\(IT\)](#)
- Recognise that parents need support as parents – and not just financial support or help with healthy eating, but actually with being a parent and maintaining family well-being – starting with the parent. [\(IE\)](#)
- Provide well-being training for parents and children – mental health is such a huge concern for parents with children of all ages these days, and not enough is done at policy level to help parents to manage the well-being of their children and their own well-being. [\(IE\)](#)
- Establish parenting groups not just for marginalised or socially disadvantaged parents, but for parents who work and who also need support. [\(IE\)](#)
- In Romania parents feel like it is their own responsibility to take care of their children, as they know better, based only on their own experiences and instinct. They don't have a real support from specialists and they don't have a support group to go to when in need of advice. That is why in Romania there is an acute need of more workshops for parents held by specialists with focus on the well-being of the parent especially in schools and kindergartens, as the need of parental adviser or counsellor in every school and

kindergartens. Parents need more and easier access to useful materials regarding parenting. [\(RO\)](#)

Question 8: Do you have any other comments, feedback or recommendations that you would like to offer at this time?

- Both IoD & CARDET members were very happy to participate to this Project and we will utilize all the outcomes to the full extent in order to carry on the important message Efficient Parenting is passing to the world. [\(CY\)](#)
- Based on the feedback we received from the parents/guardians, it would be good to extend the content of the e-learning platform to other modules and to create a special module exclusively for guardians who seemed to be in greater need of support. [\(EL\)](#)
- In Italy families need more projects like Efficient Parenting as the state support is really weak and sporadic. Our society is based on the institution called “family” but active policies are not really helping young people start a family. Too many areas in which families should receive a better support for the welfare system. [\(IT\)](#)
- Participants generally just wanted to share their thanks and appreciation with the Efficient Parenting project partners for providing such a targeted support for parents who have struggled in the last period. [\(IE\)](#)
- Parents were grateful of the opportunity to take part of this project and for all the useful information. They’ve expressed their desire to participate in future workshops about parenting. [\(RO\)](#)

Collection of Best Practice Examples – Implementing Efficient Parenting in Each Partner Country

National Case Study

Partner Organisation:

CARDET & IoD

Country:

CYPRUS

Summary of the training implementation in Cyprus:

CARDET and IoD followed an online approach due to the pandemic and had the training and workshops with the parents based on the “IO1 – The EFFICIENT PARENTING handbook” combined with the e-Learning space & online modules (IO2).

- Online
- 06/10/2021
- 52 participants
- Facilitator: Irene Theodoulou & Georgia Karaoli
- Guest speaker: Eva Christodoulou & Vasilis Pavli

To keep the parents fully engaged we invited our guest speakers to provide insight information’s around parenting and possibly answer questions that parents have. The workshop model offered parents the opportunity to take charge of their own learning according to their personal needs and interests and to become active and engaged in their training and development of understanding.

Time of the training sessions:	<input type="checkbox"/> Morning (9:00-12:00) <input type="checkbox"/> Afternoon (12:00-17:00) <input type="checkbox"/> Evening (17:30-19:00)
What were the main highlights of this training programme in your country?	<p>The main success of the training was that parents were encouraged to share their experience and our guest speaker was available to them in order to provide answers, guidance and activities relevant to our Project’s thematic topics.</p> <p>One mother mentioned how blessed she felt when she found out about our project and that she finally found a European project focused on parents empowerment. Moreover, she mentioned she is a mother of an autistic child, and the needs of children with autism are very complex and all the material provided can help her everyday life and how to navigate more successfully her plethora of duties and her heavy schedule.</p> <p>Efficient Parenting material is optimal for the needs of parents nowadays since is utilizing the available technologies and at the same time offers the option of traditional studying – acquiring information through the availability of the material for printing.</p> <p>Efficient Parenting also points out and highlights the crucial point of parents taking care of themselves, accepting themselves and not striving for perfection rather than embracing authenticity – which is a marvellous example for kids as well.</p>

In your opinion, why was the training in your country so effective?	The training had a great success to Cyprus, due to the material we develop, our guest speakers and the fact that all outcomes were addressing and offered solutions to the currents needs of the participants – which was the main objective of the Efficient Parenting project in general
Please summarise some of the main feedback you received from participants in this training.	<p>Parents mentioned that our material was excellent and they are looking forward to put them into practise.</p> <p>They requested to have access in all the material and we encouraged them to register on the e-learning platform.</p>
How did your training help parents to enhance their parenting skills?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and respect the different needs of each parent. • Allow parents to share their own perspectives, concerns and ideas. • Encourage more team building activities and share experience.
How did your training support parents to practice self-care and to maintain their well-being?	Our guest speaker: Eva Christodoulou presented a plethora of practical applications that parents can do alone and/or with the whole family.
Did you use any innovative tools or approaches in your training? If yes, please provide details of them here.	We followed exactly the guidelines for the focus groups developed by the Rural Hub and the training materials available.
What topic from your training programme was most popular or interesting for parents who attended?	ALL three modules developed were equally popular since parents pointed out that they embraced the notion of a holistic approach
Please include here some quotes that you received from parents who attended the training.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “I feel blessed to see a European project focus on parents. The needs of my child with autism is very complex and all the material provided can help me in the everyday life” 2. “My child is 4 years old and is currently doing the exercises you are telling us” 3. “You are right, we forget our needs and put our children needs first, so thank you for reminding us how important is to take care of our own wellbeing”

National Case Study

Partner Organisation: University of the Aegean
Country: Greece

Summary of the training implementation in Greece:

UAegean followed a blended learning (hybrid learning), model that had face-to-face workshops with the parents based on the “IO1 – The EFFICIENT PARENTING handbook” combined with the ELearning space & online modules (IO2).

Logistics of the face to face workshops

- Four days, 08:15 – 16:10
- 105 Parents/Guardians from Grade A and Grade B from three primary schools located in East Attica
- 5 teachers from grades A and B teaching at the schools where the parents came from
- 2 decision makes from the Directory of Education of East Attica
- One workshop facilitator: Anastasia Pyrini Teacher Class A1/Researcher, UAegean
- One observer: Professor Emeritus Konstantinos Tsolakidis, UAegean

To keep the parents/guardians fully engaged the selected teaching structure was workshop to encourage parents/guardians to be creative and responsible in their own learning. The workshop model offered parents/guardians the opportunity to take charge of their own learning according to their personal needs and interests and to become active and engaged in their training and development of understanding.

Time of the training sessions:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Morning (9:00-12:00) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Afternoon (12:00-17:00) <input type="checkbox"/> Evening (17:00-00:00)
What were the main highlights of this training programme in your country?	<p>The participation of guardians who have adopted children and expressed the need to learn how they can become effective parents for their children.</p> <p>The participation of successful professionals who, by expressing their difficulties and concerns as parents, have shown that all parents share the same concerns regardless of their socioeconomic background and other special characteristics. We are all together in this saga!</p> <p>During the lockdown (year 1 of the project) children and families have been deprived of their educational, work, and sport activities, but also from all their friendship and relational contacts. Suddenly parents/guardians had to manage their children at home from school</p>

	<p>24 h a day and, at the same time, most of them had to start smart-working from home, still carrying out their children's school commitments. Many parents/guardians also had to manage difficulties and pain related to having sick or dead relatives, having had wages reductions, or in some cases, having lost their work. In these difficult circumstances, the project provided a "lifeline" for parents/guardians seeking solutions and support to everyday and unprecedented problems.</p>
In your opinion, why was the training in your country so effective?	<p>A training is successful when it meets the real needs of the participants and that was exactly our case.</p>
Please summarise some of the main feedback you received from participants in this training.	<p>Parents commented that the training material is of excellent quality and they were very happy to hear that it will remain available for future reference.</p> <p>They requested to extend the content of the e-learning platform to other modules and to create a special module exclusively for guardians who seemed to be in greater need of support.</p>
How did your training help parents to enhance their parenting skills?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents/Guardians became aware of how important it is to develop their active listening ability and their empathy; • Parents/Guardians looked at examples of their daily lives and found that they did not use the rewards they offered to their children in the most appropriate way. • Parents/Guardians became aware of how important it is to mind their personal needs and realized that looking after their wellbeing benefits the whole family; • Mindfulness proved to be a promising parent training tool to improve the well-being of parents/guardians; • Parents/Guardians assessed the effectiveness of their current communication practices and through the training activities discovered new methods to improve their communication skills for better interaction with their children. • Parents/Guardians noted areas for improvement (reflection and self-assessment activities).
How did your training support parents to practice self-care and to maintain their well-being?	<p>The workshop facilitator first presented the learning objectives of the module "PARENTAL PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING". After a short presentation of the theoretical framework the participants got engaged in the following activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personal Manifesto 2. Mindfulness

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Journal writing Staying active (a 10 min. example routine)
Did you use any innovative tools or approaches in your training? If yes, please provide details of them here.	We followed exactly the guidelines for the focus groups developed by the Rural Hub and the training materials available in the Handbook and it worked perfectly well which is a proof that the training can be duplicated at different contexts with different participants.
What topic from your training programme was most popular or interesting for parents who attended?	All topics but maybe a bit more the "PARENTAL PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING" because it was a rather new concept for most of the participants.
Please include here some quotes that you received from parents who attended the training.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> "I am a "mother of the heart" and came here seeking for ways to become a better mother. I am not the biological mother of the children and although I live them so much, I do not know how to be a good mom." "I am perfectly incompetent to say no to my little daughter. I feel I am spoiling her and I need to learn how to control and balance my own behaviour." "I felt like garbage every time I attended a "training" session for parents for children with ADHD. In this training I felt welcome, valued and ... normal!"

National Case Study

Partner Organisation: CSC Danilo Dolci
Country: Italy

Summary of the training implementation in Italy:

CSC Danilo Dolci organised an online training for parents with 8 participants. CSC used ppt presentation and the videos produced during the project to engage parents.

What were the main highlights of this training programme in your country?	The training programme was based on the materials developed during the Efficient Parenting project: IO1 The EFFICIENT PARENTING handbook, IO2 E-learning space and online modules and the video cartoons. In Italy parents enthusiastically welcome the project and the
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	training sessions as parenting has become a hard job to do, especially during the pandemic.
In your opinion, why was the training in your country so effective?	The training was very welcomed as, stated before, the pandemic has made parenting more difficult and stressful: parents had to face new situations and change their daily routine to the new exigencies (for example, online and distance schooling and lack of social opportunities for their children) so a training on efficient parenting was really appreciated and parents showed a big interest in participating and exchanging experiences with other parents.
Please summarise some of the main feedback you received from participants in this training.	Parents expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to re-think about their experience as mothers and fathers in such a troubled period. One of them said: <i>"Thanks to the training I had the chance to think about my role and on it is changing in recent times. Now I am also a teacher, an entertainer, a school mate"</i> .
How did your training help parents to enhance their parenting skills?	Parents had the opportunity to understand their role which is changing and subjects like well-being and self-control are always appealing to parents, especially mothers who work at the same time and have issues with time management and how to deal with their children's tantrums. So, in a way the content of the training supported the parents and improved their parenting skills in the field of time and anger management.
How did your training support parents to practice self-care and to maintain their well-being?	Some parents became aware of the issues about self-care and well-being thanks to the chapter "Parental Psychological Well-Being" and the video "Efficient parenting: Parental Psychological Wellbeing. You are my sunshine". Being a busy parent sometimes leads to neglect oneself. The chapter on parental well-being was very useful to raise the issue in some parents, especially in working mums.
Did you use any innovative tools or approaches in your training? If yes, please provide details of them here.	CSC Danilo Dolci used the tools provided by the project, in particular the videos which were very useful and appealing with parents. The video is probably the best tool to be used when working with parents. Also, time for sharing experiences and solutions in the parenting role were much appreciated by participating parents.
What topic from your training programme was most popular or interesting for parents who attended?	The most interesting topics were "Behavioural Management" and "Parental Psychological Well-Being" as they are the most frequent issues that a parent has to face in her/his difficult role. With the pandemic, these two topics are even more important now because the

	change in the daily routine and habits at the beginning on the pandemic really created new situations and problems to solve in the daily management of the children. So, these two topics were particularly followed by parents attending the training.
Please include here some quotes that you received from parents who attended the training.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Since I am a mother, I really changed the relationship with my partner and the people around me. This training can maybe help in restoring an healthy relationship with the others". 2. "I should spend more time on my well-being and not only concentrate myself on my children". 3. "We need more project like this because sometimes exchanging ideas and experiences really helps".

National Case Study

Partner Organisation:

The Rural Hub

Country:

Ireland

Summary of the training implementation in Ireland:

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions that were in place in Ireland during the summer 2021, it was not possible to host this training in person as we had hoped to. Therefore, The Rural Hub had to deliver the training online. In total, we engaged 8 parents in this training, although over 30 had previously been engaged in testing the online modules and registering on the platform. We also engaged 26 parents in the multiplier event that was planned as a final event in the training programme, as a means of engaging more parents in the Efficient Parenting training, and also addressing some of the additional training needs that were identified throughout the training that was delivered in Ireland. To engage parents in this training, we promoted the Efficient Parenting course through local family support centres and parenting networks. To deliver the training, we relied on the content of the IO1 – Efficient Parenting Handbook and the content of IO2 – E-learning Modules. Furthermore, we used some of the slides on Social Connectedness from the LTTA in our virtual multiplier event, as this was the topic that was deemed to be most important for local Irish parents based on the results of our piloting.

What were the main highlights of this training programme in your country?	The training programme allowed rurally based parents who had experienced a lot of isolation and challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, remote working and home-schooling, to connect with other parents and to feel supported to help their children to re-emerge from the pandemic. The parents who engaged with the training remarked that they felt supported through the training, and that it gave them the confidence to feel empowered in supporting
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	<p>their children in the post-pandemic world. Connecting parents together, making them feel less alone and supporting them is probably the most impactful aspect of our training in Ireland.</p>
<p>In your opinion, why was the training in your country so effective?</p>	<p>This training was so effective in Ireland because the themes of the training really addressed the concerns and struggles of parents who had so much to deal with during the pandemic. It offered very practical training to parents and was delivered in an open and supportive environment so that parents did not feel judged or did not feel that they couldn't share their struggles with other parents in the group. With Efficient Parenting, it was a case that this training provided the exact support that parents needed at the exact time they needed it.</p>
<p>Please summarise some of the main feedback you received from participants in this training.</p>	<p>Parents were very grateful for the opportunity to meet with other parents and to be supported. The training also put the focus on them as parents and as people, who also need to be supported. This was repeatedly mentioned by parents. Before the training, they never had the chance to stop and think how difficult the COVID-19 pandemic had been on them as parents, and how well they have coped with these challenges, so the training was very impactful on a personal level for the parents engaged in Ireland, and this was highlighted many times in the feedback we received from parents.</p>
<p>How did your training help parents to enhance their parenting skills?</p>	<p>Through this training, parents had the opportunity to reflect on how they parent, and how they could improve their parenting style. The most significant changes were reported in relation to supporting their children to rebuild their social connections after COVID-19, within their families and also in school and in their community; and also supporting parents to address some behavioural changes and challenges that emerged during the stressful situations that parents found themselves in when they had to home-school their children during the pandemic.</p>
<p>How did your training support parents to practice self-care and to maintain their well-being?</p>	<p>With the pandemic situation in Ireland, many parents expressed that they did not have the time to care for their mental health and well-being, but thanks to this training, they are aware of how important this is and they have made time to prioritise 10 minutes per day for themselves to check-in with themselves and see how they feel and what needs they have. While 10-minutes is not a lot of time, it is seen as a manageable time for parents to find in their busy lives.</p>

<p>Did you use any innovative tools or approaches in your training? If yes, please provide details of them here.</p>	<p>As the training was held online, The Rural Hub used a ‘flipped-classroom’ approach to some of the online training sessions. By this we mean that we sent a copy of the IO1 handbook to parents in advance of the online sessions so that they could read the content in their own time, and then the online sessions were used to unpack the handbook and to discuss some of the issues that came up for parents with this handbook content. While we did deliver some sessions on the e-learning modules (IO2), we were aware of the need to support parents to talk to one another and to connect, even if they cannot meet in person. We thought that this was quite an innovative approach, and it was also effective in supporting parents to connect with one another.</p>
<p>What topic from your training programme was most popular or interesting for parents who attended?</p>	<p>The most popular topic by far was ‘Social Connectedness’ – this module addressed many of the concerns of parents who were worried that they had lost some positive and meaningful connection with their children during COVID-19, because of the amount of screen-time children had, because of the change in their relationship due to home-schooling and also because of the general anxiety that their children felt about the outside world due to the COVID-19 virus.</p>
<p>Please include here some quotes that you received from parents who attended the training.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “It has been so nice and very meaningful to be able to share my experiences with other parents and to find out that we have all struggled but that’s okay. We are only human, but we try.” 2. “Well-being is so important. I am so aware of my child’s well-being, but not my own. From now on, my focus will be the well-being of everyone in the family, including myself.” 3. “Thank you for putting the focus on parents in this programme – it has really come at the right time because I needed this support. Thank you”.

National Best Practice/ Case Study

Partner Organisation:
FUNDATIA DE ABILITARE
SPERNATA

Country:
Romania

Summary of the training implementation in Romania:

The workshop took place face-to-face at our organisation headquarter. It lasted for 4 hours and we had 5 parents participating. At the beginning of the workshop parents completed a questionnaire regarding their expectations from the workshop. The first minutes we did a warming activity, were every parent had to present their self's and to speak about the reasons they've signed up for the workshop.

In the first part of the workshop we've presented the handbook and discussed about the importance of every aspect presented in the parenting handbook. The second part of the workshop, every parent had to enrol on the platform and we completed together the activities from the platform.

The final part of the workshop we had some practical activities together with a therapist. Every parent had to talk about a difficult experience where they felt over-whelmed and had the feeling that they are losing control over their feelings and reactions. They've talked about their feelings and their children feelings regarding the experience they had. Together with the therapist and the other parents they made a practical plan how to proceed next time they are in the same or a similar situation. These practical activities from their own experiences, the empathy form the other parents and the useful tips from the specialist were very well received and highly appreciated by parents.

At the end of the workshop, parents filled out a questionnaire stating if and how their expectations regarding the workshop had been met.

Time of the training sessions:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Morning (9:00-12:00) <input type="checkbox"/> Afternoon (12:00-17:00) <input type="checkbox"/> Evening (17:00-00:00)
What were the main highlights of this training programme in your country?	Parents had the opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences with other parents, to socialise and to get useful information about parenting in a safe environment from specialists.
In your opinion, why was the training in your country so effective?	Parents feel the lack of events that have the focus point the well-being of themselves and the importance in building a positive parent-child relationship. They feel alone in their responsibilities as parents and don't have a real support group where they can

	go when they feel over-whelmed. The training was a solution for their real needs.
Please summarise some of the main feedback you received from participants in this training.	After the training, parents felt more confident in their role as a parent, they've identified their needs and made a plan on how to meet those needs. They felt understood in their struggle and the empathy they've got from other parents made them feel more comfortable. They've appreciated the involvement of the specialists and the high-quality information they've received during the training.
How did your training help parents to enhance their parenting skills?	They are more aware of their needs and the importance of well-being. They are more confident in their capacity of being a better parent and building a positive parent-child relationship. They've got practical advices from specialist on how to proceed in difficult parenting situations. They know now that they have to ask for help from specialists when they feel over-whelmed and have knowledge where to get the help they need.
How did your training support parents to practice self-care and to maintain their well-being?	We had different activities where parents had to identify what are the things they used to do to relax before they had children. They had to say how much time they invest daily for their well-being and how to increase that time. They had to identify hobbies and to make a plan in order to make time for them. We had a short meditation and relaxation exercise which they can use every time they feel over-whelmed. We have encouraged them to ask for professional help (therapist) every time they feel they are losing control of their positive attitude. We have discussed on how important is to have a support group and helped them identify key persons in their life who can help them in different situations.
Did you use any innovative tools or approaches in your training? If yes, please provide details of them here.	The relaxation and mediation exercise. We discovered that they had no insight regarding these simple and very useful exercises that they can do by themselves every time they feel over-whelmed.

What topic from your training programme was most popular or interesting for parents who attended?	<p>The most interesting part for parents was the last part where they could speak about their own experiences and get feedback and insight from the specialists and other parents regarding their attitude and reactions in those difficult situations.</p>
Please include here some quotes that you received from parents who attended the training.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A wonderful atmosphere and a safe environment, very useful information. 2. I've got a better awareness on the importance of connecting with my children on a deeper level. 3. Setting up a safe environment for sharing our own experiences and learning from other parents and specialists about new techniques and aspects regarding our profession as "parent".

Our Successes and our Challenges - Lesson Learned from each partner country

In forming our Policy Recommendations, the next step for partners was to reflect on how the Efficient Parenting project was delivered in each country, and to identify the main successes that were enjoyed in each partner country, but also to identify what challenges the partners faced in developing and delivering this project, and how these challenges were overcome. These successes and challenges are included in this Policy Recommendations Report to support other adult and family education providers and practitioners from across Europe in delivering the Efficient Parenting training package to parents in their local communities.

Successes in Each Partner Country

Starting first with the successes, the following section provides a detailed account of each of the main successes that were witnessed in each partner country as a direct result of the piloting of the Efficient Parenting project.

Cyprus

The success was despite the fact we held the event online due to the pandemic, parents show up and engage in the conversation and gave us their support and positive feedback. The project is really important to them. In addition, the following successes were witnessed:

1. Raise of awareness.
2. Exchange of ideas among parents themselves.
3. Networking of parents.

Greece

One mother introduced herself as the "mother of the heart" and explained that she had adopted her three children (a teenage girl and a pair of twin 7-year-old boys) who were refugee children from Syria. With tears in her eyes she told us that she was looking for ways to become a "good mother" to her children and she felt that the program would help her and support her effort.

A father of a boy with ADHD told us that every time he has been involved in training activities he feels that they point the finger at him for what he does not do well as a parent and almost accuse him of inadequacy for the behaviour of the child, mainly in the school environment, but in the Efficient Parenting workshop he felt that the training programme really meets his personal needs and that he might be able to find solutions to the problems of everyday life that concern him through the educational material.

One teacher, extremely successful in his work, stated that he is completely incapable of setting limits on his 4-year-old daughter, that he does all the nods to her and realizes that he is spoiling the child, but he cannot do otherwise. He came to the training programme with the hope of finding guidance in the problem that concerns him, in order to become a more efficient parent. At the end of the training he reported that he will study and follow the guidelines and proposed activities hoping to improve his parenting style.

Italy

In Italy, the following successes were witnessed:

- 1) Parents increased the knowledge of solutions to manage their children
- 2) Parents became aware of issues like self-well-being and psychological well-being
- 3) Parents had the chance to exchange experiences and solutions with other parents

Ireland

In Ireland, the project partner enjoyed a lot of successes in the response we received from parents who participated in the training. We saw an improvement in the group with each session, they seemed more willing and open to sharing with one another about their experiences as parents during COVID-19, and their concerns and worries about parenting in the post-pandemic world. Specifically, successes that we witnessed included:

1. Engaging parents in networking with one another – providing support to each other and sharing their stories and experiences as parents during the pandemic. This was achieved through the supportive and open environment that was created in this training.
2. Highlighting to parents the need to care for themselves as well as their children and families, and seeing parents committing to giving themselves 10-minutes each day to check-in with themselves and manage their emotional and mental well-being, through simple meditations and breathing techniques that were promoted through the training.
3. Parents reported feeling better connected in their own communities by making links with other parents. This had a significant impact on parents who are living in rural locations, who reported feeling isolated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Romania

In Romania, the following successes were witnessed:

1. Bringing comfort to parents, realising that every parent has difficulties in raising their children, even if they are different.
2. Parents realising that there is always a good way to face the difficult situations when raising a child, which will help not only raising a well-balanced child, but also building a healthy parent-child relationship.
3. Offering the possibility for parents to become better in raising their children.

Challenges in Each Partner Country

While there have been many significant successes in this project, and while the project has been positively evaluated in each partner country, the partners have faced and overcome some challenges, especially implementing this project during the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, it is necessary to list these challenges and to highlight how the partners overcame them; as this will help other adult and family education providers in other regions and countries around Europe to avoid these obstacles if they decide to implement the Efficient Parenting training package in their community, or to learn from our experiences in case they also encounter similar challenges in delivering this training in their own context. The following section provides an overview of the

challenges faced in each partner country, and an explanation of how the partners overcame these issues. As you will see, the majority of the challenges relate to delivering this training during the COVID-19 pandemic, as you might expect.

Cyprus

The main challenge was to hold the events online and not be able to be face-to-face with the parents to have a more interactive conversation. To overcome this, we encouraged parents to have their cameras turned on and we also started conversations to keep them active. In addition to that, we played games and use other tools (like Mentimeter) to be make the training more interactive. In addition, another challenge in Cyprus was that also due to the COVID-19 restrictions was the toning down of the exchange of ideas, thoughts and energies in the training. While everything went smoothly and the feedback was exceptionally positive, this still impact the training. To overcome this, the partners found online solution and kept a positive, friendly outlook and also made sure to repeat many times to the audience that we remain at their disposal for any further information, clarifications and familiarization with Efficient Parenting training materials .

Greece

In Greece, the only difficulty was to comply with the protection measures against the coronavirus. Participants tended to take off their protective masks, especially when speaking. To overcome this issue, the partner made polite recommendations for the proper use of the protective masks but at times the need for communication through facial expressions was such that the partner overlooked the use of the mask.

Italy

Of course, the impossibility to have face-to-face meetings and the online modality of carrying out all the activities was a limitation of the training. There was no way of overcoming this, other than to commit to delivering the training online.

Ireland

As you would expect, our main challenge was that we could not deliver the training or the multiplier event in person with parents in our community. Instead, we had to deliver the training online which impacted the nature of the training, the level of engagement we were able to encourage and also the networking between parents. While it was all so positive, and while it achieved a significant impact on parents, there is a feeling that it could have been so much more if the training was in person. To overcome this challenge, The Rural Hub decided to pilot a 'flipped-classroom' approach, where parents completed some of the course work at home in advance of the online session, and then the online sessions were used for discussion, to unpack the content of the handbook and to share stories and experiences among parents. This led to the online sessions being more lively and engaging, because parents were looking at each other's faces and not just at a screen with a PowerPoint.

Romania

The pandemic has limited our access to parents and the face-to-face interaction with them. To overcome this, the partner used online platforms to get in touch with parents and to inform them about the project outcomes and to encourage them to use the information from the handbook and the activities from the online modules. The partners also organised workshop with a limited number of parents.

Lessons Learned and Key Recommendations

Based on our collective experiences of delivering the Efficient Parenting training package to parents in our communities, the project partners would like to highlight what worked well in our piloting of this training package, and also to make the following recommendations to adult and family education providers who would seek to deliver this training in their own communities:

What Worked Well:

- The parents were very active and they were interested to learn more. For sure we will use again more material that is relevant to them and give them additional topics to be discussed.
- We followed the Handbook step by step and everything went well. Maybe if we had the necessary resources (room and time available from the parents/guardians) we could extend the duration of the workshops to three days, one for each topic unit.
- It was very helpful to have specialists delivering the activities for parents.
- Having examples from day-by-day practical situations.
- Giving them information about support system (parent counselling services).

- I would use the online call to increase the number of participants, parents responded well to the online modality.
- The flipped classroom approach was very effective in allowing parents the time to speak to one another.
- The practical applications were very engaging.
- Giving the chance to the parents to talk and share their own experiences.
- Connecting people with same concerns to each other.

Our Recommendations:

If we were piloting this training with parents again, this is ideally what we would do differently:

- We would try and have the piloting in person.
- The only difficulty we encountered and would like to be able to change in the future is being able to track the enrolment and learning process of the parents/guardians on the platform and have some interaction.
- More training hours, give the handbook before the training for parents to read it.
- I would try to contact parents' associations which we tried to do but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was difficult to get hold on people and associations.
- Just would prefer it to be face-to-face and even more interactive.

If an external adult education provider was to deliver this training package from scratch, we would make the following recommendations:

- Practitioners need to listen to the parent's needs. We are here to provide them with a material that covers their needs but also to be more "light" and fun for them to learn more!
- For face to face workshops to follow the Handbook step by step and for the online training to develop a monitoring system for the registrations.
- To ensure that you have empathy with working with parents who have experienced a lot of stress, and to provide a safe and open environment for them to collaborate in.
- To explain to the parents that there is a support system for them, that materials and information to help them become better parents are now easy to get.
- To offer them constant support and to direct them to the specialists who can help them.
- To get involved with parents' associations and groups in schools, kindergartens and other places where parents meet.
- To give the parents the chance to speak and interact with each other, be an active listener show empathy and compassion.

Recommendations for Practitioners

While Efficient Parenting project partners have provided their own recommendations for practitioners based on our experience of developing and delivering this project, we have also conducted a consultation with other staff members, and with external educators and parents who were engaged in the piloting of this project, to ensure that we can provide a holistic set of recommendations to other practitioners who may wish to deliver the Efficient Parenting training package in their own local contexts. The reason is that we do not want to only present our experience, but instead, we are eager to present the perspective from all stakeholders and participants who engaged in this project, to ensure that other practitioners can benefit from this collective experience of all parties engaged in Efficient Parenting. The aim of these recommendations is to provide other practitioners across Europe with a set of key insights into how this project can be delivered effectively in a range of educational settings and contexts, even during a global pandemic, and how it is still possible to achieve a meaningful impact with parents when care and consideration is given to the parents engaged in the training.

The following recommendations are provided for practitioners who wish to deliver the Efficient Parenting training package in their own local context:

1. Identify and respect the different needs of each parent.
2. Allow parents to participate in more relevant trainings.
3. Encourage multidisciplinary board training and activities and be mindful regarding team-building, self-confidence and self-esteem during the training.
4. Value and respect the background and life experiences of parents and guardians.
5. Allow parents and guardians to create their own learning pathway according to their personal needs and interests.
6. Enhance team-building, building of self-confidence and self-esteem during the training activities.
7. Be mindful as regards the literacy skills of the participants and adjust the activities as needed discreetly.
8. Make sure participating parents are familiar with ICT, if they have difficulties in using the internet or a computer, the tools developed by the project are not very suitable with parents with low ICT skills.
9. Prepare the materials necessary for the practical activities and carry out the face-to-face activities in nice spaces, possibly outdoor when possible.
10. Try to mix families and parents from different cultures and different background. This can help the exchange of ideas and can also highlight different problems for the parents by bringing in new perspectives.
11. Parents need a safe environment where they can feel understanding and empathy for their struggles and concerns.

12. Make sure to deliver the training in a positive way, with a lot of empathy and give the opportunity for the parents to talk about their own experiences.
13. Present the information from the handbook before parents get access to the online platform. It will be easier for parents to go through the activities on the online parents, if they understand the concepts presented in the handbook.
14. Include practical activities with focus on the well-being of the parents. They need guidelines on how to face difficult situations of parenting and how to handle their feeling when they feel over-whelmed.
15. Listen to the needs of the parents - Parents don't need to be told what they can do and what not to do. Give them advice and let them choose.
16. Apply activities and offer support for developing the well-being of the parent.
17. Help parents to face the difficult situations with their children in a positive manner.
18. Give information about support system for parents: parents counselling services, therapists, parents support group.
19. Use the materials and exercises included in the manual and try to adapt them to your training/supporting context if applicable.
20. Support the parents with specific exercises and tools after discussing with them their learning needs and objectives.

Recommendations for policy makers

Throughout our experience of developing and delivering this Efficient Parenting project, and in conducting research and consultations to inform the development of this Policy Recommendations Report, we have gathered a lot of rich insights and experiences which should be transferred to policy-makers at regional, national and European level to affect change in policy that supports parents as parents, and as the primary educators of their children; especially in the technology-enhanced society of today when children and young people live their lives increasingly online, and face many challenges in this digital world. As such, project partners have compiled the following key recommendations that we would like to share directly with policy-makers on a regional, national and European level:

1. Provide more free training programmes for parents.
2. Support parent's individual needs based on their children needs.
3. Support and motivate more stakeholders around this topic to educate parents.
4. Invest in parent and guardian education through free training programmes in their native language.
5. Support the sharing of the existing programmes and OER by creating a Repository where parents and guardians can easily retrieve what's available.

6. To motivate employers to make it easier for employees to participate in such training programmes while recognizing their social value and the impact they can have on employee productivity.
7. The Efficient Parenting project helps families look for support outside the sphere of parents and relatives so supplying to the lack of public spaces for children (kindergartens, baby-sitting etc.) giving parents new social connectedness skills and improving their ability to look for support
8. The project provides methodologies and techniques to parents to improve their well-being and self-awareness of their role. This is important because local authorities and the central government is not supporting families in the right way, with a real problem of absence of basic services for families and their children.
9. The Efficient Parenting project develops parenting skills from a personal and relational point of view, so supporting parents as individuals and also as persons taking care of their children in a modern and efficient way in a period of great changes for the parenting role.
10. Public services should use the materials developed by the project to support families and their children.
11. Every school and kindergarten should have a support system for parents that include specialists how can help them become better parents: parental advisers, counsellors and therapist.
12. Every school, kindergarten and institution involved in children and parent's life should offer workshops to help parents in their responsibilities. They need clear guidelines how to deliver efficient parenting and to build a positive parent-child relationship. The Efficient Parenting project's results (handbook and online platform) is a starting point in delivering these workshops.
13. Offer the opportunity for parents to get together on a regular base and help each other to overcome difficulties in their life by socializing, exchanging impressions and experiences, building a support system that focuses on their own wellbeing and on the importance of having a balanced life. Parents need hobbies and time to practice those hobbies.
14. Invest more to parents well-being (happy parents, happy children
15. Provide free parent counselling services in every kindergarten/school.
16. Provide monthly workshops for parents
17. Develop an open-source, easy to access database with information about services, materials and events for parents in every country/city.
18. Increase the spaces and services for parents, in Italy family is not properly supported by local and national authorities.
19. Improve legislation supporting parents, especially single parents and support families with real services which are lacking in Italy: kindergartens, active policies and funding schemes for families, parental leaves and financial support
20. Create a kind of community or forum where parents can discuss with each other

21. Disseminate everything via Social Media (parents get most of their information from there) or even schools

Conclusion

Parenting support has gained interest from policy makers at the European level (Committee of Ministers recommendations on Council of Europe policy to support positive parenting, 2006; the parenting support policy brief- European Commission 2013) who recognize the significance of parental role on children's development and well-being. In today's modern, digital society, the role of a parent is constantly changing, and so parents need targeted training to support them in their role as parents. This is something that is supported through all of the feedback that has been collected by all partners in the Efficient Parenting project. At the outset, our objective was to design a training package that would support parents to enhance their capacity as parents, and to ensure the well-being of their children; while this has been achieved effectively in each partner country, the project has gone beyond this initial objective and has supported parents to also prioritise their own well-being and the well-being of all members of their families.

Through the policy recommendations included in this report, our intention has been to make an argument for policy change in how parenting support and education is provided in each of the regions where the Efficient Parenting project has been piloted, and further afield across Europe; and also, to provide practical advice and guidance to other practitioners across Europe who may wish to deliver the Efficient Parenting training package with parents in their communities. We hope that by sharing our experiences and the lessons we have learned, that the impact of the Efficient Parenting project can be felt far and wide across Europe, and can positively impact the lives of many more parents than the Efficient Parenting project was able to reach.

What we have learned through this project is that many parents have struggled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially considering their dual-role of being parents and teachers engaged in home-schooling; but what we have also learned through this project is that the Efficient Parenting approach is effective in supporting parents. Thanks to the Efficient Parenting project, parents feel supported and empowered to update their skills as parents, and to support their children in the modern, digital world, especially considering how they will emerge from the pandemic and the social restrictions. Thanks to Efficient Parenting, some parents are now practicing self-care, mindfulness, meditation and are allowing time for themselves each day to take care of themselves. Thanks to the Efficient Parenting project, parents now have targeted training in their native language for the first time. Thanks for Efficient Parenting, parents are aware of the supports that are available to them, even where public services are limited, they can identify additional supports that they can rely on, external to their family unit. Thanks to Efficient Parenting, parents across



Europe have been able to stop, take stock and evaluate their own parenting style, and commit to making the changes necessary to ensure their own well-being and the well-being of their children. Therefore, the Efficient Parenting partners feel that we have vastly exceeded our initial objectives and are proud of the impact that we have achieved with parents in our communities.

