

InFo-TED , multiplier event 4, session at the Teacher Education Policies in Europe (TEPE) conference in Braga, Portugal, May, 19th 2018

Multiplier event 4 is described in the Erasmus+ application as having a meeting with invited policy makers and teacher educators in relation to the TEPE conference in Braga, Portugal, May 2018.

16 European researchers and policy makers were invited to the event, including participants outside the InFo-TED countries. The 16 invited participants were offered a reimbursement of 200 Euro if they came from outside Portugal, and 100 Euro if they came from Portugal. The University of Limerick is responsible for the reimbursement. 13 of the 16 participated in the session, and the list of these are attached to this document and sent to the University of Limerick.

In addition, there was an open invitation to other conference participants to attend the session, and overall there were 45 people from a large variety of European countries, Thailand and Australia participating in the 90 min. long session.

The program was as presented below:

- To inform about InFo-TED (10 min.)
- To learn about the profession of teacher educators in various contexts (group discussions). (30 min.)
- To present the conceptual model and the work of InFo-TED (10 min.)
- To present the European survey on the professional needs of teacher educators (10 min.)
- To discuss possibilities for bringing the role of teacher educators to the attention of national and European policy makers- panel discussion. (30 min.)

The questions presented for the discussions appeared to be of high interest among the participants. The discussions were lively and it became quite clear that teacher educators in Europe and beyond work in diverse contexts and come from diverse backgrounds. In some

countries the majority of teacher educators come from school, whereas in other countries teacher educators are recruited from the academy. There was agreement that all involved with educating teachers are teacher educators. As regards formal requirements, in some contexts a doctorate is required, whereas in other countries school experience is more important. Most of the participants said that in their countries there is no association or professional groups for teacher educators, however the Dutch colleagues informed about Velon and the Belgium associations. In some countries first steps to start an association are taken. What seemed to be common in all context, was that there is little or no systematic induction of new teacher educators, and it seemed to be a general request to establish a formal induction system for teacher educators. Policy makers as well as teacher education institutions are strongly recommended to address this issue.

Another issue that came up in the discussions was the unclarity of what the professional knowledge of teacher educators' should be, in addition to their disciplinary knowledge. A teacher educator's professional knowledge has to be wide, knowing the subject, the context and the students, knowledge about how children and adults learn, about teaching and having a critical stance to own practice. To understand teacher educators' professional knowledge, there is a need to be more accurate in defining the roles and the practices of teacher educators. The InFo-TED's conceptual model was well received as a starting point for further individual, institutional, national and European development.

A point was raised as regards school-based teacher educators and the importance of including them in the definition of teacher educators. There was an expressed wish to include them in conferences about teacher educators, to learn more about their practices as teacher educators and to involve them in research on teaching, teacher education and teacher educators.

In the panel discussion with Marco Snoek from the Netherlands, Maria Flores from Portugal and Brian Jones from UK, the following points were raised: teacher educators as a group should work out recommendations for policy makers and not leave it to them to make decisions which are often not sufficiently related to the reality of teacher education. To do so, we need more research on teacher educators, their practice, their roles and their responsibilities. Teacher

educators as a group need to develop a collective and strong voice, to build a stronger professional community to engage in dialogues with policy makers. However, we also need to have a shared message we want to bring to the policy makers, and as for now, it seems that this is missing. Finally, a comment was made that teacher education is political, and we need to play the political game. It is our responsibility to support our message and argumentation with evidence from our teacher educators' research.

The conclusion was that teacher educators as a group need to create a stronger voice for themselves and engage in dialogue with policy makers, not as an opponent, but as partners with a shared goal, improving education at all levels.

In conclusion, the session provided a space for teacher educators and policy makers to meet, and InFo-TED should continue creating meeting places for dialogues and critical discussions.

As can be seen in the below photos, engagement was high by all participants:







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