

Erasmus+ Training of Restorative Practices Trainers Project 2024

Final Report

Introduction

This project had its origins in a previous Erasmus+ project that the Childhood Development Initiative (CDI) was partner to between 2018 and 2021. That project involved us partnering with six organisations based in Malta, Spain, Bulgaria and Germany to develop and pilot an online course in Restorative Practices that was accredited at Level 5 on the European Qualifications Framework. The course was called TREP, and CDI was responsible for developing the course content and providing Tutors for online tutorials. 18 participants from across Europe completed the course in 2021 and were awarded a professional Certificate in Restorative Practices by the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology.

Three participants on the TREP course worked for the Malta Anti-Bullying Service (MABS), and in June 2021, Marianna Sultana of MABS contacted CDI to enquire about further RP training or education opportunities. A number of Zoom meetings to discuss options took place over the following months, and in 2023, CDI made an application for Erasmus+ funding to train a group of MABS staff and Tallaght-based teachers as Restorative Practices Trainers. The funding was approved in January 2024 and our Erasmus+ Training of Restorative Practices Trainers (RPToT) project got underway in February.

Project Description

Planning was undertaken in February 2024 and two members of CDI travelled to Malta in March to start the first phase of the training. A group of 16 people drawn from MABS and Malta schools undertook our Getting Started With Restorative Practices and Restorative Practices Facilitation Skills courses and the CDI staff visited Maltese schools to learn about how MABS undertakes anti-bullying interventions.

In June 2024, six members of MABS came to Dublin and joined six teachers in Tallaght to begin training as RP Trainers. Between June and the end of November, the group undertook 7 days training (5 in person at CDI and 2 online), read the course-related materials and research, and, in pairs, co-delivered CDI's Getting Started With Restorative Practices course to their colleagues in schools in Tallaght and Malta. As they were delivering their first course, they were all observed and supported by one of CDI's RP Quality Specialists to ensure that they were delivering the course to a high standard (which they all did!).

In November 2024, MABS conducted a Dissemination Event in Malta which consisted of a Seminar on Restorative Practices and was attended by school principals, teachers, Guidance Counsellors, Department of Education staff and the Minister of Education.

Throughout the project, CDI and MABS met regularly online and both organisations routinely shared news of the progress being made on social media channels.

In December 2024, the Irish group travelled to Malta for their Graduation as RP Trainers. MABS organised a beautiful venue for the Graduation and ensured that it was a thoroughly enjoyable and memorable event which was the perfect ending for a highly successful project.

Project Evaluation

CDI conducted anonymous surveys of all training participants during this project, and results from those surveys included the following.

Getting Started With RP Course (Malta 2024):

- 90% of participants were satisfied or very satisfied with the training
- 86% of participants said they were confident about using the skills they had been trained in

RP Facilitation Skills Course (Malta 2024)

- 100% of participants were satisfied or very satisfied with the training
- 83% of participants said they were confident about using the skills they had been trained in

Getting Started With RP Courses (6 courses, August – November 2024)

The courses were delivered to a total of 71 participants and the evaluation surveys revealed that:

- 98% of participants were satisfied or very satisfied with the training
- 91% of participants said they were confident about using the skills they had been trained in

Training of RP Trainers Course (June – November 2024)

- 100% of participants said they were confident about delivering restorative practices training

The qualitative evaluation feedback from participants on the Training of RP Trainers Course was as follows:

What went well?

- Working in a team with lots of collaboration was very successful. The course was well organised.
- Course was well organised and paced well. Trainers had great knowledge in the area. The resources were well shared.
- I really enjoyed the group set up with the Maltese and the Irish participants, we gained lots of insights into each other's culture and practices. I enjoyed Claire and Andy's facilitation style. I felt they really complimented each other and made the training more engaging. I liked the check in and closing circles which made connections more meaningful. I like the pace of the training and enjoyed the supplementary learning such as the Anger tree and the compass of shame and learning theories from Rosenberg and Vaandering
- The training was well organised and keeping to the timeframe. Hands-on workshops are very beneficial and great learning experiences. Very well explained, good trainers!!

- Listening, sharing experiences and disseminating RP approaches
- The course material was delivered in an engaging and interactive way, making it easier to stay focused and absorb the key principles of restorative practices. It was very practical with role-plays and group activities which helped in building confidence in training RP to others.
- The course was well planned, informative, engaging and satisfactory in instilling confidence in me as a trainee to be a trainer. Everything I learned was put into practise with great support (materials and CDI professional inspecting). I'd plenty of help and guidance when challenges arose in my own practise and activities within the training, e.g. role plays etc.
- I really liked the sense of feeling welcomed and working as a group. The material was explained very clearly and we got constant support along the way
- I feel that the fact that we were a mixed group of people from different schools and nationalities helped to share ideas and perspectives on how to address certain ways of dealing with issues that arise. I also see how the support that was given by our trainers along the way was helpful in giving us the encouragement to address even the most complex parts of the training. I also particularly found the feedforward helpful in allowing me the space to reflect in a positive way about what I have been learning and how to help others in a positive way
- Having a little more time to practice in our groups just to get a bit more confidence, however, I am quite satisfied just the same
- It was a very interesting course, with varied teaching strategies which we can easily adopt when delivering the training. The material provided was also very helpful.
- Restorative Practice has been part of the fabric of our school over a number of years. Over the years, staff have moved on, retired and new staff members have joined. This trainers course came at a perfect time to reignite our RP journey. This course has given me the confidence to promote and teach RP among our staff. It is now on the agenda for teachers, parents and pupils. The practical element of the course I found really beneficial, case studies, role plays and ice breaker games etc. I look forward to sharing these ideas with my staff.

What would have been even better?

- It would have been better for me personally if the trip to Malta was during the week days for child care reasons.
- At times I feel the days could be more condensed, the two online days could be done over 1 but run longer (hope that makes sense) Just for logistics in schools it can be difficult.
- Nothing I can think of at the moment
- Some of the Trainer Handbook needs to be revised, so that it's more to the point. I would include some class observations, to make the training more rounded.
- Perhaps shorter sessions and having more handy examples re-educational issues (for RP conversation) prior to delivering the training sessions.
- Maybe more in-depth exploration of challenging cases, perhaps by inviting experienced trainers to share their experiences.
- Everything was suited to my learning and need for support. Perhaps more scripted examples of restorative conversations to enhance confidence in role plays in own practise.
- The last two days of online sessions would have been more fruitful if they were carried out in person.
- Some of the instructions in the training booklet are not very clear, but other than that it was great.

- Course was fantastic. The week in June is hectic in schools, if possible doing it a month earlier, the zoom meetings were great to reconnect with the group.

Have you any other feedback for us?

- I really enjoyed the sessions, thank you very much.
- I really enjoyed the course. I would like to observe other trainers delivering the course to keep my knowledge fresh.
- Thanks again for a wonderful experience, I feel that RP is going to be part of my work practice going forward and it has really enhanced my personal
- Development
- I feel that I have grown in my RP thinking, and I am better equipped to giving this training, as well as to using RP skills and tools in my professional and personal life. Well done to both Claire and Andy!!
- N/A
- Perhaps a refresher session/virtual meet-up after a few months would help for continued practice and support.
- This was the most valuable course I have ever engaged with. I learned so much and the self-directed learning was so well-matched. The facilitation was not only excellent in delivery but so supportive which really gave me confidence in my own practise. I felt supported throughout which is important for me as a learner. The content and delivery were perfect!
- Keep up the good work. Thanks
- I'm very satisfied with the course and would love to take this opportunity to thank you all at CDI for having us and would love to collaborate further.
- It was a really interesting course, and really well organised.
- A lot of teachers in our school are now interested in doing this course, would be great to have more teachers trained