



THE FOOTT PRINTTS ERASMUS+ PROJECT: METHODOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS IN TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

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Abstract. Drawing on contemporary theories of teacher learning and European policy priorities, the project conceptualizes professional growth as a socially situated, cognitive, and reflective process. The methodology, structured around five interlinked work packages, combines literature analysis, empirical inquiry, framework design, and pilot implementation, culminating in practical guidelines and digital tools for teacher educators. Preliminary findings highlight the need for stronger alignment between institutional and policy-level CPD strategies, greater integration of research evidence into teaching practice, and sustainable peer-learning networks. The project's Expected Impact Model demonstrates a clear pathway from inputs and activities to outcomes and impacts, showing how structured collaboration produces measurable improvements in teaching quality and institutional capacity. By bridging the divide between research and practice, FOOTT PRINTTS contributes to the advancement of European educational research through methodological innovation, participatory design, and transnational cooperation. It offers an adaptable model for building professional learning cultures that promote teacher agency, reflective practice, and evidence-informed policy.

Keywords: continuous professional development, teacher education, international project, European cooperation, professional learning

Introduction.

The Erasmus+ project FOOTT PRINTTS (Focus on Teacher Training – Practical Guidelines for In-Service Teacher Trainers) aims to strengthen the quality and coherence of teacher professional development (TPD) across Europe. The initiative unites seven partner institutions from Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece,



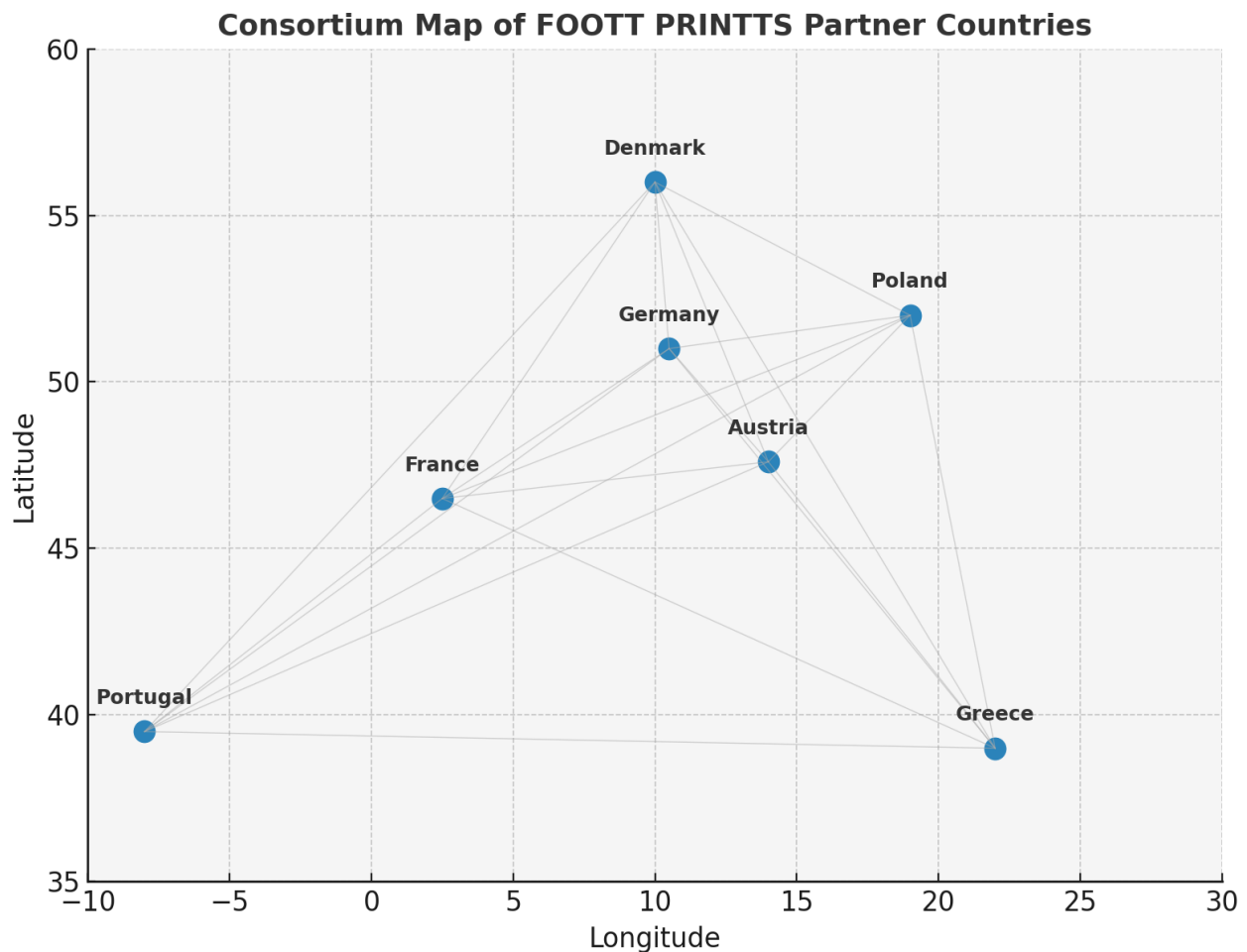
Poland, and Portugal to develop a holistic, evidence-based framework for continuous professional development (CPD). Using mixed methods and participatory design, the project identifies elements of effective CPD at the micro (teacher), meso (institutional), and macro (policy) levels. This article outlines the project's rationale, methodology, and theoretical grounding, situating FOOTT PRINTTS within current debates on teacher learning and policy reform in the European education area. The FOOTT PRINTTS Erasmus+ project explores innovative methodological approaches to enhancing teacher professional development (TPD) across Europe through a multidimensional, evidence-based, and participatory research design. Addressing the persistent gap between educational theory and classroom practice, the project integrates mixed methods, comparative case analysis, and co-creation processes to design a coherent framework for Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

Teacher professional development is widely acknowledged as a critical factor in educational improvement and equity (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Effective CPD not only enhances teachers' knowledge and classroom practices but also supports student achievement and school transformation. Yet European education systems continue to face challenges stemming from technological innovation, inclusion, and curriculum reform (European Commission, 2017). The Erasmus+ project FOOTT PRINTTS (2023–2026) responds to these challenges through a transnational collaboration that integrates research, practice, and policy. Coordinated by the District Government of Arnsberg (Germany) and co-funded by the European Union, the project seeks to construct a shared framework for CPD that is adaptable to diverse contexts while grounded in common European values of quality, inclusion, and lifelong learning.

The FOOTT PRINTTS project is implemented through a transnational consortium of higher education institutions and research organizations representing diverse educational systems across Europe. This collaborative structure ensures the exchange of expertise, comparative analysis of teacher professional development models, and the co-creation of innovative practices that reflect both regional specificity and European coherence. The consortium's composition embodies the project's



commitment to inclusivity, interdisciplinary, and shared responsibility for advancing the quality of teacher education across the continent.



The consortium map illustrates the geographic distribution of the FOOTT PRINTTS partner institutions across seven European countries: Germany, Austria, Poland, France, Portugal, Greece, and Denmark. This spatial representation underscores the project's European scope and collaborative diversity, reflecting a balanced partnership that integrates varied educational systems, policy contexts, and institutional perspectives. The geographic spread of the consortium enhances cross-national exchange, fosters comparative insight, and ensures that the project's outcomes are both contextually informed and broadly applicable across Europe's teacher education landscape.

Project Objectives and Rationale. The overarching aim of FOOTT PRINTTS is



to enhance the quality, relevance, and transferability of teacher training programmes. The project operates across three interrelated levels: micro (teacher learning), meso (institutional support), and macro (policy). These levels are aligned with the European Commission's view that teaching constitutes a lifelong professional journey requiring continuous renewal (European Commission, 2017).

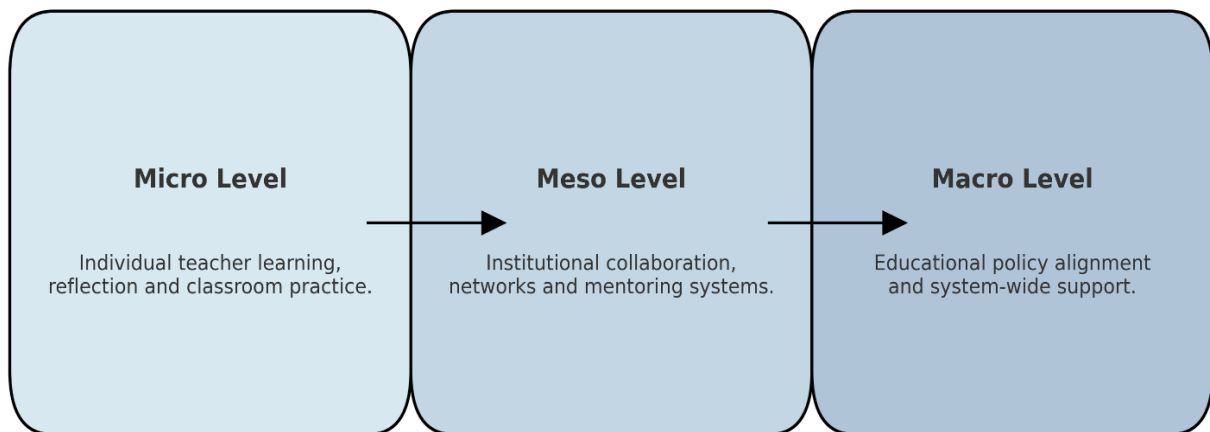


Figure 1 – Project Framework: Micro-Meso-Macro Levels

The diagram conceptualizes the three interrelated levels that constitute the structural framework of the FOOTT PRINTTS project. At the micro level, the focus is placed on the processes of individual teacher learning, reflective practice, and classroom implementation. The meso level encompasses the institutional dimension of teacher education, including organizational contexts, professional learning communities, and inter-institutional collaboration. The macro level represents the broader systemic layer, addressing education policy, national standards, and mechanisms of quality assurance. Collectively, these levels form an integrated and holistic model of teacher professional development designed to ensure coherence between individual, institutional, and policy dimensions across the European educational landscape.

Methodology and Work Packages. The FOOTT PRINTTS project applies a mixed-methods, multi-layered research design that integrates both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to explore teacher professional development in a



transnational context. This approach ensures methodological triangulation, allowing for the validation of findings through multiple data sources and analytical lenses. The research design reflects the project's central goal – to bridge theoretical understanding with practical implementation in the field of teacher education.

The methodology is structured into five interconnected and sequential Work Packages (WPs), each addressing a specific dimension of the project's objectives, yet contributing to the overall coherence of the FOOTT PRINTTS framework.

WP1 – Literature Review and Conceptual Mapping. The initial phase establishes the project's theoretical and empirical foundations through a systematic review of European and international literature on continuous professional development (CPD) in education. This mapping identifies key concepts, recurring challenges, and innovative practices across contexts. Additionally, policy analyses are conducted to align the emerging framework with EU strategic priorities, particularly in relation to quality assurance, inclusivity, and digital transition in education.

WP2 – Data Collection and Contextual Analysis. WP2 involves a multi-country data collection process that integrates quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews and focus groups. These activities capture diverse perspectives from teachers, school leaders, and policymakers across partner countries. The data reveal both convergences and differences in national approaches to professional learning, highlighting context-sensitive factors that influence teacher motivation, institutional culture, and policy support mechanisms.

WP3 – Framework Development. Building upon the analytical insights from WP2, this stage focuses on designing a multi-level professional development framework that links the micro (individual teacher), meso (institutional), and macro (policy) dimensions. The framework serves as a conceptual bridge, translating empirical findings into a structured model that supports sustainable teacher learning. Iterative validation is achieved through expert consultations, peer feedback, and pilot testing across institutional partners.

WP4 – Practical Guidelines and Implementation. This work package represents the applied and transformative core of the project. WP4 operationalizes the theoretical



framework into practical guidelines and implementation strategies that can be readily adopted by teacher training institutions and educational authorities. The guidelines provide actionable recommendations on designing, delivering, and evaluating CPD programs that are evidence-based and adaptable to national contexts.

The implementation phase under WP4 involves co-creation workshops with educators, mentors, and institutional leaders. Through these collaborative sessions, the project develops modular training resources, including digital toolkits, reflective instruments, and case-based learning materials. Each component is piloted within partner institutions to test its relevance and adaptability. Emphasis is placed on promoting transferability, ensuring that outcomes can be scaled and integrated into existing teacher education systems.

Furthermore, WP4 adopts an iterative evaluation model, using feedback from participants and stakeholders to refine both the content and methodology of the guidelines. This process not only enhances the usability of project outputs but also models the reflective and adaptive nature of professional learning that the project advocates.

WP5 – Dissemination, Peer Learning, and Sustainability. The final stage focuses on ensuring long-term impact and institutional integration of project results. WP5 includes dissemination through international conferences, publications, and webinars, fostering a European dialogue on teacher professionalism. Peer-learning events enable partners to exchange experiences, evaluate outcomes, and build capacity for continued innovation. The creation of an open-access digital repository consolidates project outputs and promotes sustainable use of the FOOTT PRINTTS framework beyond the project's lifespan. So, the integrated methodology of FOOTT PRINTTS ensures that research, innovation, and practice are mutually reinforcing.

Figure 2 presents the methodological structure of the FOOTT PRINTTS project, illustrating the sequential relationship among five interconnected work packages (WPs). The process begins with WP1, which establishes the theoretical foundation through literature review and conceptual mapping, and WP2, which gathers empirical evidence from partner contexts. WP3 transforms these insights into a comprehensive

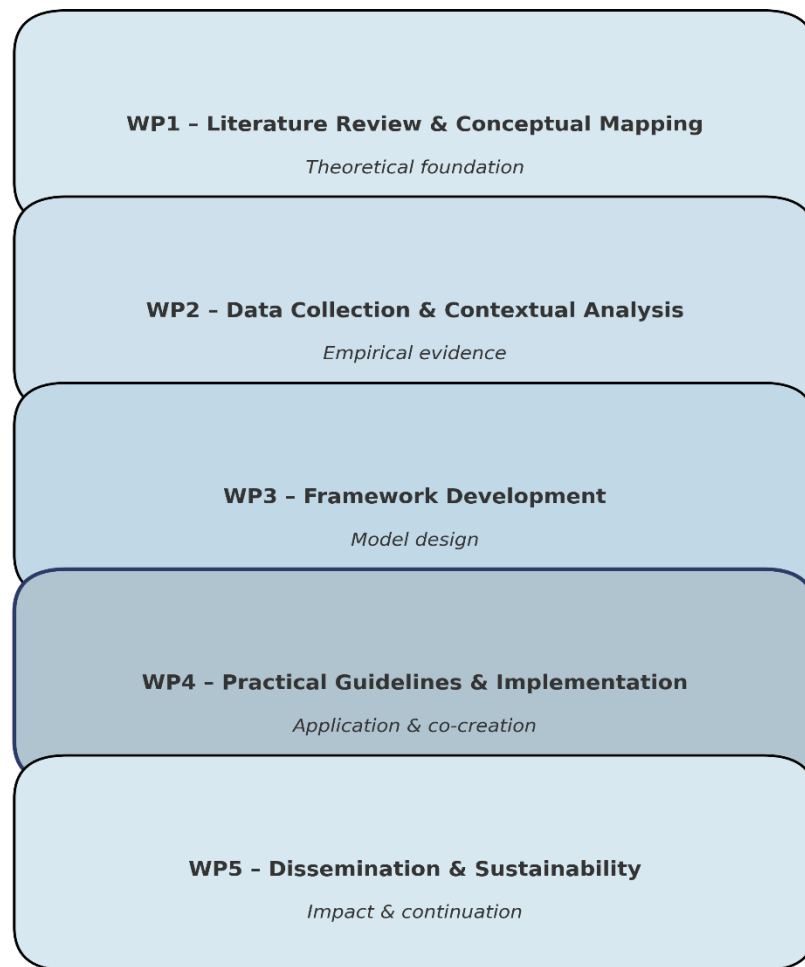


Figure 2 – Methodological Framework and Sequential Work Packages of FOOTT PRINTTS

professional development framework that bridges research and practice. WP4, the project's applied core, translates the framework into practical guidelines, modular resources, and co-creation activities with educators. Finally, WP5 ensures dissemination, peer learning, and long-term sustainability.

Together, the five WPs demonstrate a coherent methodological flow that integrates theoretical understanding, empirical analysis, and applied innovation – forming a continuous cycle of development and impact in teacher education across Europe.

Theoretical Framework. The FOOTT PRINTTS project is grounded in contemporary theories of teacher professional development (TPD) and continuous



professional development (CPD), conceptualized as ongoing, socially situated, and transformative learning processes. Research defines teacher learning as a socially embedded, cognitive, and affective phenomenon, shaped by interaction, reflection, and collaboration within professional communities (Avalos, 2011; Opfer & Pedder, 2011). From this perspective, professional development extends beyond isolated training events to encompass the continuous construction of professional identity through shared inquiry and practical engagement.

According to Avalos (2011), effective teacher learning requires active participation, collaboration, and reflection, enabling educators to integrate new knowledge into their professional practice. In line with sociocultural theories, FOOTT PRINTTS views CPD as an interactive and context-sensitive process, where learning occurs through dialogue, peer mentoring, and institutional cooperation. Teachers are seen not as passive recipients of prescribed methods but as co-constructors of pedagogical knowledge, contributing to school improvement and system innovation.

Within the European context, CPD is recognized as a key driver for improving teaching quality, learner outcomes, and educational equity (European Commission, 2017). It is also central to the vision of lifelong learning promoted by the European Education Area and the Council of the European Union. As the FOOTT PRINTTS consortium highlights, CPD should be continuous, collaborative, and evidence-informed, responding to teachers' evolving needs, technological advancements, and societal challenges. The project therefore aligns with European recommendations that stress the importance of coherence between teacher education, school development, and policy frameworks.

Building on Daryai-Hansen and Henriksen (2017), the theoretical framework acknowledges that CPD must also be cognitively transformative, challenging teachers to question assumptions and reframe existing mental models. Deep professional learning occurs when educators engage in critical reflection, dialogue, and guided inquiry. This process supports innovation and professional autonomy – two elements essential for sustainable school improvement.

Montero-Mesa et al. (2020) further emphasize the role of teacher research as a



form of professional learning. Reflecting this principle, FOOTT PRINTTS integrates action research and co-creation methodologies, encouraging teachers to investigate their own practices and contribute to collective knowledge-building. This participatory approach embodies the project's commitment to teacher agency, empowerment, and evidence-based change.

In summary, the FOOTT PRINTTS theoretical framework situates CPD as a multidimensional, lifelong process encompassing the micro (teacher), meso (institutional), and macro (policy) levels. It bridges sociocultural, cognitive, and reflective paradigms to establish a model in which teachers are both learners and innovators, actively shaping educational quality and transformation across Europe.

Preliminary Findings and Expected Impact. Preliminary findings from the FOOTT PRINTTS project provide early evidence of its potential to strengthen teacher professional development (TPD) and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) across European educational systems. Emerging results from the literature review, stakeholder consultations, and initial data analysis indicate that while many institutions have implemented CPD strategies, significant gaps remain in aligning these initiatives with national and European policy frameworks. The findings further highlight the need to establish stronger connections between research evidence and classroom practice, as well as to build sustainable networks of peer learning and institutional collaboration that promote long-term professional growth.

These insights have informed the project's strategic design and the development of its Expected Impact Model, which captures the logical and functional relationships between the project's key components – inputs, activities, outputs, and impacts – within a continuous improvement framework. Inputs such as research evidence, institutional partnerships, and European funding form the foundation for project activities including professional training sessions, co-creation workshops, and multi-country data collection. These, in turn, generate outputs such as the European CPD Framework, evidence-based guidelines, digital tools for teacher educators, and a cross-national peer-learning network. Collectively, these deliverables are expected to contribute to enhanced teaching quality, institutional innovation, and a sustainable



culture of professional learning across Europe.

As a result of these coordinated activities, the project generates tangible outputs, including the development of a comprehensive professional development framework, modular training tools, and practical guidelines for teacher educators. Collectively, these outputs contribute to the realization of broader impacts, notably the enhancement of teaching quality, increased professional competence, and the establishment of a sustainable culture of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) across European education systems. Overall, the model captures the project's theory of change, demonstrating how structured collaboration and evidence-based innovation translate into measurable educational and institutional benefits.

The Expected Impact Model demonstrates how the FOOTT PRINTTS project transforms research and collaboration into measurable educational outcomes. By linking inputs, activities, outputs, and impacts, the model highlights a coherent process through which evidence-based initiatives lead to improved teaching quality, institutional innovation, and a sustainable culture of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) across Europe.

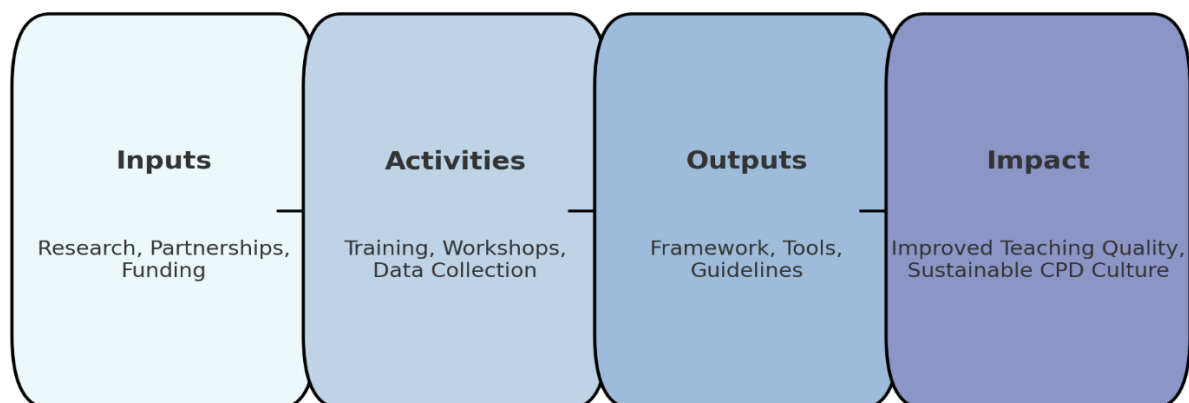


Figure 3 – Expected Impact Model of FOOTT PRINTTS

The FOOTT PRINTTS project demonstrates the transformative capacity of cross-border collaboration in strengthening teacher education systems and fostering sustainable professional development cultures across Europe. By integrating theory, research, and practice, the project operationalizes European educational values –



quality, inclusivity, and innovation – into a coherent framework for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) that is adaptable to national and institutional contexts.

Findings from the project's preliminary stages emphasize that effective teacher professional development (TPD) requires alignment between institutional strategies and policy frameworks, supported by a robust evidence base and active practitioner involvement. The project's methodological design, grounded in a mixed-methods approach, ensures that data collection, framework design, and guideline development are context-sensitive and empirically validated. Through its five interlinked work packages, FOOTT PRINTTS has begun to generate concrete outcomes – such as modular training resources, co-creation workshops, and digital tools – that empower teacher educators and enhance professional autonomy.

Importantly, FOOTT PRINTTS moves beyond theoretical discourse by modeling practical mechanisms for policy transfer and institutional innovation. Its Expected Impact Model articulates a clear pathway from research inputs and collaborative activities to tangible educational outcomes, thereby bridging the persistent gap between knowledge and practice in teacher education. The emphasis on co-creation and peer learning exemplifies a bottom-up approach to reform, where teachers act not only as beneficiaries but also as agents of educational change.

In practical terms, the project contributes to the development of a European CPD framework that supports systemic capacity-building and long-term sustainability. It offers a replicable model for institutions seeking to enhance professional learning through evidence-based practice, participatory methodologies, and digital innovation. Moreover, its outputs align with the European Commission's 2023 priorities on teacher well-being, digital readiness, and inclusive excellence, positioning FOOTT PRINTTS as a relevant and scalable contribution to European education policy.

In conclusion, FOOTT PRINTTS underscores that empowering teacher trainers is central to improving teaching quality and, ultimately, learner outcomes. By uniting research, policy, and practice within a shared European framework, the project not only strengthens professional learning ecosystems but also reaffirms the role of teachers as



lifelong learners and catalysts for educational transformation. The FOOTT PRINTTS Erasmus+ project exemplifies methodological innovation in teacher professional development research, combining empirical rigor with participatory practice to advance the European agenda for high quality and sustainable CPD. Its mixed-methods design – integrating literature synthesis, stakeholder engagement, and co-creation workshops – illustrates how multidimensional inquiry can generate actionable knowledge for both researchers and practitioners.

A key contribution of FOOTT PRINTTS lies in demonstrating that effective teacher learning systems must be simultaneously evidence-based, context-sensitive, and collaborative. By incorporating teachers as co-researchers and reflective practitioners, the project fosters a culture of shared ownership and professional autonomy. This participatory orientation not only validates local knowledge but also enhances the practical relevance of academic research.

The Expected Impact Model developed through the project translates complex research processes into a clear logic of change, linking inputs and activities with tangible outcomes such as improved teaching quality, institutional innovation, and sustained peer-learning structures. This model serves as a replicable instrument for other higher education institutions and policy actors seeking to design integrated CPD systems.

In a broader sense, FOOTT PRINTTS advances the methodological landscape of teacher education research by positioning innovation not only as a conceptual ideal but also as a research practice embedded in collaboration and reflection. It underscores that the future of teacher professional development depends on transnational cooperation, evidence-informed practice, and the strategic fusion of research, policy, and pedagogy.

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