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# INTEReD

**Interdisciplinary approaches  
for Innovative Education**

## **A2.3 Roundtable Discussions**



Organized By:



**CITIZENS  
IN POWER**

&



**UNIVERSITY  
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**Introduction:**

In order to fulfil the requirements of WP2 of the A2.3, two roundtable discussions were convened with the objective of extracting the results and utilising them to develop more accurate content, which will subsequently be incorporated into the A2.5 Compendium.

The 1st roundtable discussion was co-organised between University of Nicosia and Citizens in Power. The discussion was attended by four academics, educational experts and postgraduate students in education. The attendees are working in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in secondary education. In addition, some of them are responsible for training secondary education teachers to enhance the effectiveness of their classes.



### **First Roundtable Discussion:**

The presenters proceeded to elucidate the current state of affairs with regard to interdisciplinarity, elucidating the manner in which it is approached in the context of Cyprus. One of the participants identified the primary obstacle as the "wall" of the official secondary education curriculum, which lacks the character of interdisciplinarity and is subject to considerable time constraints. Additionally, they explained how some topics can be approached through interdisciplinarity such as "Photosynthesis". Furthermore, a proposal was made that the transition to an interdisciplinary approach in secondary educational institutions should be both bottom-up (teachers/educators to public officials) and top-down (directly through policy change). A representative of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute and a STEM educator posited that a significant proportion of terms can be found in multiple disciplines. Consequently, the school curricula should be based on an interdisciplinary approach, with examples including "calculus" and "speed". These can be analysed within a mathematical, physics or Modern Greek scope. Furthermore, the discussion highlighted the potential of certain programmes to provide teachers with opportunities for professional development. For instance, one of the roundtable attendees participated as a trainer in an educators' training programme that Greek and Cypriot secondary educators took part in. The Greek educators received ECTs that they could utilise in their future endeavours, such as seeking a promotion. Furthermore, the initiative attracted the voluntary participation of Cypriot teachers. The aforementioned opportunity can be realised in a multitude of projects and initiatives that promote interdisciplinarity. This can prove beneficial for their training, thereby enhancing their interest in participating in such training programmes, particularly outside of normal working hours.



## **Second Roundtable Discussion:**

The second roundtable discussion was convened by Citizens In Power, and seven secondary educators participated in the discussion from Akaki Gymnasium, which they also partner in the aforementioned project. Many of those educators were in the field of STEAM while others were English Literature educators. They began analysing the current situation in terms of interdisciplinarity in Secondary Schools and the underlined from the very beginning that one of the main challenges in adopting such approaches to education is the lack of time. One biology educator has highlighted that the new curricula of their classes are incorporating interdisciplinary scenarios to a certain extent. However, there is still much to be done. The Music and Modern Greek/History class provides a compelling illustration of an interdisciplinary approach. One such example is the creation of traditional Cypriot folk poems. However, the main challenge to this approach is the time constraints inherent in the curriculum, as some disciplines must cover all the material in order for students to be examined at the end of each school season. Consequently, some disciplines are perceived as more significant than others, and the school curriculum is divided de facto into primary and secondary disciplines. The primary concern that emerged from their deliberations was the time constraints imposed by the official curricula on teachers and, consequently, on students. They concluded that interdisciplinary approaches, particularly as exemplified by the Cypriot Folk Poems assessment, would facilitate more profound learning outcomes. However, it was emphasized that there should be a unified framework for assessing and approaching student learning, ensuring that all disciplines contribute equally to the learning process.



## Overall Findings:

The two roundtable discussions, one co-organised by the University of Nicosia and Citizens in Power, and the other convened by Citizens In Power with educators from Akaki Gymnasium, share several similarities in their analysis of interdisciplinarity in secondary education in Cyprus.

Firstly, both discussions identified the lack of interdisciplinarity in the official secondary education curriculum as a significant obstacle. The participants in both roundtables highlighted the "wall" of the curriculum, which is subject to considerable time constraints, as a primary challenge. This issue was raised by academics, educational experts, and postgraduate students in the first discussion, and by secondary educators in the second discussion. They all agreed that the current curriculum lacks the character of interdisciplinarity and needs to be revised to incorporate more interdisciplinary approaches.

Secondly, both discussions emphasised the importance of a bottom-up and top-down approach to transition to an interdisciplinary curriculum. The first discussion proposed that the change should come from both teachers/educators to public officials and directly through policy change. Similarly, the second discussion suggested that a unified framework for assessing and approaching student learning is needed, ensuring that all disciplines contribute equally to the learning process.



Lastly, both discussions highlighted the potential of certain programmes to provide teachers with opportunities for professional development. The first discussion mentioned a training programme for Greek and Cypriot secondary educators, while the second discussion pointed out the potential of interdisciplinary approaches, such as the Cypriot Folk Poems assessment, to facilitate more profound learning outcomes. Both discussions agreed that these opportunities could prove beneficial for teacher training and enhance their interest in participating in such training programmes, particularly outside of normal working hours.

In conclusion, both roundtable discussions underscored the need for a shift towards interdisciplinarity in secondary education in Cyprus, the challenges posed by the current curriculum and time constraints, and the potential of professional development programmes to support this transition. These shared perspectives highlight the consensus among different stakeholders on the direction of secondary education reform in Cyprus.





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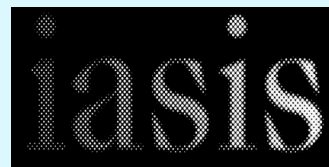
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