



## CARE

### Visual art education in new times: Connecting Art with REal life issues

#### INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 1– COUNTRY REPORT

<b>Project reference:</b>	2019-1-CY01-KA203-058258
<b>Objective:</b>	<b>01 Country Report_ Greece</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>8/05/2020</b>
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<b>Version of the document</b>	1.0



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## 1. Policy documents

### 1.1. [Visual Art Education \[VAE\]](#)

#### 1.1.1. VAE: Summary of current curriculum policy - and the extent to which this is nationally or locally decided

The current curriculum, which is meant to work in a cross-thematic (interdisciplinary) framework, is decided nationally by the *Institute of Educational Policy* (IEP), a state agency attached to the Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. According to the official description: “The general aim of teaching Visual Arts in compulsory education is to provide pupils with opportunities to become familiar with and develop their understanding and appreciation of art through activities that get them involved in investigation and artwork, providing them with the necessary skills in order to enjoy art and artworks both as artists and as viewers.

More specifically, through the teaching of Visual Arts, students will be given opportunities to:

- develop their creative imagination, produce their own works of art and participate in activities involving visual arts and artwork;
- become familiar with and experiment with a range of materials, media, tools and re-sources in the various forms of visual art;
- respond to, appreciate, understand, analyse and evaluate artworks and art in general;
- relate art to its cultural context and realize its contribution to civilization through time.”

The national curriculum for VAE describes analytically the purposes, techniques and expectations for all grades of Primary and Secondary School. For the realisation of its concept, it combines printed books for students and the teacher, who can follow the guidelines but also allows the freedom to develop the chapters and engage in activities in the best way the teacher finds more constructive for the students. Furthermore, the website of the IPE offers links as well as online material and interdisciplinary suggestions of usage.

*Cross-Curricular/Thematic Framework* for art consists of: (i) general teaching/learning aims for the subject (ii) detailed guiding principles that determine the content of lessons (iii) detailed general goals referring to skills, knowledge, attitudes and values that should be achieved by pupils (iv) indicative fundamental cross-thematic concepts e.g. ‘material’, ‘colour’, ‘balance’, ‘culture’, ‘tradition’, ‘space’, ‘similarity’/‘difference’, etc. Additionally, there is the *Individual Subject Curricula* for each school subject that in the case of visual arts education consists of: (i) cognitive, affective and psychokinetic objectives that constitute the guidelines for planning the content of lessons and assessment of student achievement; (ii) detailed teaching units, the content of which is arranged in a spiral way in order to avoid overlapping and repetition from each grade level to the next. These include examples like plasticine, art forms, local art, contemporary art, comics, illustration, digital photography, etc; (iii) indicative learning activities classified as either subject-oriented or cross-thematic activities; and (iv)



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supplementary cross-thematic projects that contain broader thematic units, such as 'Illustrating a traditional fairy-tale' (Grade 2). The Curricula for art are quite formalistic.

Web link/s:

- [http://www.pi-schools.gr/content/index.php?lesson\\_id=20](http://www.pi-schools.gr/content/index.php?lesson_id=20)
- <http://photodentro.edu.gr/lor/simple-search?locale=en&newQuery=yes#q1=/q2=/q3=2/q4=/q5=/sb=0/rd=ASC/rp=10/st=/rq=/rqc=/q6=/q7=/q8=/q11=/q9=/q10=/q12=>
- <http://iep.edu.gr/en/arts>

### 1.1.2. VAE: Summary of schools' common practices in delivering primary VAE

Within the Greek cross-thematic national curriculum, visual arts and the relevant skills are meant to play a critical role in primary school culture and pedagogy. However, in practice, for decades till recently (National Curriculum changed in 2003) the generalist teachers had to organise and deliver the art lessons, often misinterpreting these hours as a 'play' activity. The lack of special knowledge and confidence, as well as the lack of structure and consistency in art curricula led many Greek generalist teachers to concentrate mainly on two-dimensional practical work (drawing, painting, collage, constructions with paper and wood). In that context, the official "Teacher's Guidebook for Aesthetic Education" (1985), which was in use until 2003, recommended practical activities and provided practical guidelines for using media and techniques, while it neglected art /cultural history, art appreciation and aesthetics.

In the current national curriculum everyday practice has shown that *Individual Subject Curriculum* (ISC) expands on the *Cross-Curricular/Thematic Framework's* (CCTF) aims: Emphasis on art appreciation, skills development, creativity, familiarity with media, materials and techniques, analysis and interpretation of art works, along with art's relationship to culture. Objectives and thematic units are in a detailed way described especially in ISC. CCTF/ISC does not encourage teachers to plan their own art lessons as it provides 'easy' answers and recipes. However, art teachers or the generalist teachers, wherever the first ones are available, accentuate nowadays equal importance to creative expression and performance, art perception, appreciation as well as to learning about the historical and cultural contexts of artworks. With the aid of CCTF/ISC many also seek to extend the range of subject matter, to include more diverse forms of arts (e.g. comics, photography, and digital imagery), to expand the role of art in real-life issues (everyday life, community, environment) and to enhance art lessons by using students' life experiences and knowledge from the perspective of other disciplines.

Unfortunately, cultural learning is still limited to learning mainly about Greek arts and culture. Modernist, formalist approaches to art education predominate in the student textbooks for art for Grades 1-2, 3-4 and 5-6, while art interpretation and appreciation as well as aesthetics are neglected. Art history is recommended only for Grades 5-6, and most artists mentioned are the well-known ones from Europe, Greece and the USA. The content focuses on 'high' art and Western art movements. Brief references are made to everyday forms of cultural production like commercial art, comics, and graphic design, or to art from other (less dominant) cultures. Student books ask them to engage in



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practical activities like drawing, painting, collage, paper and wood construction, clay-making, printing and mask-making and provide them with how-to-do guidelines. They also include examples of children's works. These often lead students to copy ideas or works presented in the books and produce unimaginative, homogeneous outcomes.

Due to the impact of the recent socio-economic crisis as well as the uncontrollable environmental changes, primary generalist teachers may feel more comfortable in getting students to criticise social relations, institutions and traditions that contribute to the production of visual culture and maintenance of cultural values, beliefs, norms, and models than they used to do.

Web link/s: [http://www.pi-schools.gr/programs/depps/index\\_eng.php](http://www.pi-schools.gr/programs/depps/index_eng.php)

## 1.2. Synergies between VAE & ESD

One of the general aims of teaching Visual Arts in the national art curricula is the opportunity given to students "to relate art to its cultural context and realize its contribution to civilization through time". Furthermore in the general goals for each grade of the elementary school teachers are guided to assist students -among other things- to "develop an awareness of the fact that works of art express views, values and ideas of their culture and of other cultures" (Grades 3-4); to develop the ability to use their knowledge of visual arts to solve problems related to other curriculum subjects (Grades 5-6). Additionally, 6<sup>th</sup> graders are expected to "develop an awareness and understanding of how art is related to its historical context; develop an awareness of the diversity of viewpoints and suggested solutions regarding artistic issues; develop an awareness of the role and importance of art in different cultures;"

To give an example: in course material for Grade 4-5, in the thematic unit under the title "my room" the guidelines suggest: "Pupils express emotions, explore and are concerned about issues related both to the place of their own residence as well as that of their fellow beings. Through the viewing of photographic material by artists and professional photographers, they enrich their experiences and create with recyclable materials or digitally various types of rooms. Throughout the unit an attempt is made to raise their awareness in issues of acceptance and respect for fellow beings of other cultures and living conditions."

Further down in the description of the unit goals clearly associated with sustainability are listed:

"Goals for Sustainability

- 8) refine their judgment about people's living spaces through artistic research and action
- 9) observe and creatively/artistically use the room and the school environment space
- 10) transform artistically the schoolyard and their own room, seeking to improve the quality of their lives
- 11) cultivate teamwork and problem solving through creativity partnerships and actions
- 12) understand the purposes and messages of the images, objects and their connection to the environment and real-life issues



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- 13) cultivate respect for fellow beings of other cultures and their living conditions
- 14) grow further their environmental consciousness”

Web link: <https://docplayer.gr/4482347-Enotita-stis-eikastikes-tehnes.html>

### 1.3. Education for Sustainable Development [ESD]

#### 1.3.1. ESD: Summary of current curriculum policy - and the extent to which this is nationally or locally decided

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is considered the successor of Environmental Education (EE), which has been for almost thirty years the main vehicle for raising the environmental awareness of students, seeking to change their attitudes and behaviours in relation to the environment.

According to the official report from the Ministry of Education “the UNESCO Global Action Plan on ESD (GAP) provides the overall framework for ESD implementation in Greece, linking policies and activities with the UNECE strategy for ESD as well as the Mediterranean Strategy on ESD. The Hellenic Ministry of Education Research and Religious Affairs promotes policies and measures at all education levels, for their integration of the basic principles of sustainable development, in line with the overall national education policy, and implements interventions at all levels of education.

A new legislative framework for ESD has been designed, which integrates all related thematic areas (Environmental Education, Health Education and Cultural Issues) into a common sustainable whole-school approach (Law 4547/18). A new Directorate has been established, in 2018, responsible for the “Support of School Programs and Education for Sustainability”, with the aim to better coordinate related activities at all levels and support further the notion of ESD in Greece. An Inter-ministerial Working Group on Education of Sustainable Development has been formulated initially on an ad hoc basis but is planned to be officially formalized to operate and convene regularly as a horizontal coordination platform.

Inclusive education programmes are also implemented in Primary and Secondary Special Education Schools, in which the objectives and themes of ESD are integrated in the educational programmes as in general schools: *promoting equality, social cohesion, respect of people diversity, human rights and human dignity.*”

Web link/s: an example of programmes offered by private and public sectors toward this direction  
<http://www.medies.net/articles.asp?cid=8>

#### 1.3.2. ESD: Summary of schools’ common practices in delivering primary ESD

Despite official declarations and intentions, ESD is not yet a separate course in Greek primary schools, neither are the principles, characteristics of sustainability in all their aspects clear. In the learning material as well as on the web site of IPE or other official educational institutions, general guidelines



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and ideas on how teachers can implement ESD in order to enrich the content and scopes of other school subjects of the national curriculum are offered, along with advice on how to engage pupils effectively in relevant discussions, actions and practices. The Institute of Education Policy has not adopted yet fully and compulsory the ideals and objectives of ESD, but through a variety of subjects it attempts to shape this approach in order to use education and learning as tools of change towards sustainability (mainly environmental issues).

The generalist teachers as well as art teachers have a vague idea of the various parameters of ESD. We are still acting on symptoms or depend on the individual's willingness to challenge the way students in a primary school think.

To add our personal view, we are critical on whether it would function better if it was a separate subject. It would be preferable if the principles and practices of ESD permeated the curriculum.

Web link/s:

- <http://cretaadulteduc.gr/blog/?p=1057>
- <http://en.ellet.gr/>

#### 1.4. Initial teacher education [ITE]

##### 1.4.1. ITE: Summary of current policy - and the extent to which this is nationally or locally decided

The Central Directorates for Primary and Secondary Education Personnel within the Ministry of Education are responsible for the selection and employment of teachers at all national primary and secondary schools. Initial Teacher Training for elementary school teachers is compulsory nationally at the various Pedagogical Departments found across Greece. All national teacher programmes conform to standards provided by the Greek Ministry of Education and all teacher candidates follow the same strict national curriculum and go through the same process in achieving their accreditation. Training for secondary school teachers is provided by the respective university departments, i.e., classical studies, physics, mathematic, history, literature, foreign languages, philology or theology department. Although nationally organised, each University Department or Educational Institution decides locally on the structure, hours, credits etc. In addition to core courses in the disciplines sought to teach, teacher candidates also complete courses in teacher instruction or teaching methods courses. Participation in internships, that is, attending and teaching in schools, in all four years of study, is mandatory for obtaining the degree. Once placed in schools, candidates are expected to follow the *Guidelines for the Curriculum and Instruction for Teaching Elementary and High School*, prepared by the Greek Ministry of Education.

In that context, for example, the Faculty of Education, School of Primary Education of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki gives considerable importance to the practical training of students, in their preparation for their future roles as primary education teachers and therefore dedicates five compulsory courses in the field of Pedagogy and Social Exclusion: one in the first year, one in the second, one in the third and two in the fourth year offering 6 ECTS each. At the same time, the Optional Practical Courses offered in the final year of studies give an option to every student for further specialization in two subject areas of their interest, through internships in schools, museums and more. Each Compulsory Practical Optional Course is credited with 5 ECTS.



In the first three years, the practical courses are integrated into the introduction to the subjects, concepts, methods and basic questions of Pedagogy. At the same time, students are taught basic educational theories and their applications in teaching and familiarize themselves with the operation of schools through in situ observation and short tuitions they prepare, starting from a week up to a month during which the students acquire actual practical skills. In the final year of study, a six-month practicum is held within the compulsory courses "Preparation, Conduct and Assessment of Teaching: Student Assessment and Practical Exercises" and "Preparation, Conduct, and Assessment of Teaching: Pedagogical Theories and Practices". In these courses, students are taught the positions (in terms of purpose, content, methods, forms and means of teaching) of five modes of pedagogical thinking and aspects of the assessment issue (theoretical starting points, pedagogical function, criteria, forms, techniques, results), while teaching for 8 days for two weeks and then for another 6 weeks (4 days a week) in schools.

#### 1.4.2. Extent to which VAE is required/ included in ITE - and whether this is nationally or locally decided

Visual Arts Education is not included in the Initial Teacher Education (generalist teachers). In recent years, the Ministry of Education has received several demands for the imposition of compulsory internships for Fine Arts graduates and for all those wishing to acquire teaching qualifications to be appointed to schools.

In Pedagogy departments pre-service generalist teachers use the visual arts as a means of enriching the teaching scenarios and practical applications they prepare for the various syllabus lessons. To be more specific, at the School of Primary Education (AUTH) students in the final year of their studies, along with their practicum, attend the course: *Learning through the Visual Arts and Museum Education. Workshops and practice in schools, museums and galleries.*

Furthermore, new courses have been introduced this year concerning art and sustainability, the multimodal use of the visual arts etc., with the aim of highlighting the importance of VAE and generally of the arts and culture and enhancing its holistic use in education.

#### 1.4.3. Extent to which ESD is required/ included in ITE - and whether this is nationally or locally decided

Education for Sustainable Development is not included compulsorily and nationally in the Initial Teacher Education. In the new analytical curriculum, more and more issues of sustainability are integrated into various school subjects.

In Pedagogy departments pre-service generalist teachers focus on sustainability either in environmental education or as a means of enriching the teaching scenarios and practical applications they prepare for several other subjects. Additionally, new courses have been introduced this year concerning art and sustainability, environmental sustainability both in graduate and postgraduate





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level. In general, the concept of Sustainable Development in terms of culture and language, social and school behaviour, inclusion and human relations is evident throughout the programme of studies and crosses almost all disciplines.

## 1.5. Continuing Teacher Professional Development [CTPD]

### 1.5.1. CTPD: Summary of current policy - and the extent to which this is nationally or locally decided

Currently in-service training is delivered through PEKES (Regional Centers of Educational Planning) which is made up of school advisors of primary and secondary level, with one of them playing the role of Organizational Coordinator. The latter are required to research the expressed needs of teachers and undertake the role of responding to those needs and supporting teachers through visits in schools and workshops.

For primary school teachers the directives allow 2 whole day seminars a year for the whole school, one seminar a year for specific grades and as many seminars a year are deemed necessary in after school hours. For the secondary level, the directives allow seminars for specific specialties (i.e., mathematicians, philologists) between 12.00-14.00 and in after school hours.

Part of the teacher training is provided by KESY (Centres of Educational and Advisory Support) which operate under the supervision of PEKES and are staffed by specialist teachers with additional post graduate degrees or training mostly in special education. Their role is to guarantee the inclusion of students considered at risk for failure in school. They are responsible for the diagnosis of students with disabilities, the design of intervention programmes and the support of teachers regarding at risk students (with disabilities, refugees, etc.).

KEA (Centres of Education for Sustainability) have been announced but have been inactive so far.

Web link/s:

- <http://www.opengov.gr/ypepth/?p=3869>
- <http://iep.edu.gr/en/teacher-training>
- <https://www.esos.gr/arthra/53613/perifereiaka-kentra-ekpaideytikoy-shediasmoy-kentra-ekpaideytikis-symvoyleytikis>

### 1.5.2. To your knowledge, extent to which VAE course are available within CTPD - and whether this is nationally or locally decided

Visual Arts are often nowadays the subject of continuing teacher professional development. Apart from programmes addressing specialist issues for art teachers, training programmes for appreciating and understanding the value of the arts and their multimodal use in education and school life are offered for the generalist teachers as well. Regional Centers of Educational Planning as well as other institutions, such as the universities, museums and cultural organizations are responsible for organising such events and for offering certification. At the same time, more and more European programmes tend to include teachers or schools in their research and training activities.



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Web link/s:

- <https://www.esos.gr/katigories/synedria-ekdhlvseis>
- <https://www.art-teachers.com/>

### 1.5.3. To your knowledge, extent to which ESD courses are available within CTPD - and whether this is nationally or locally decided

Sustainable Development is often the subject of continuing teacher professional development. Environmental education centres and relevant institutions organise events, conferences and training programmes for teachers. The ecological footprint, recycling, issues about climate change, inclusion, refugees and migration etc. are raised in training programmes offering specialist knowledge as well as guidelines on how to implement such issues in all subjects of primary education. Regional Centers of Educational Planning as well as other institutions, such as the university departments, are responsible for organising such events and for certifying attendance. At the same time, more and more European programmes tend to include teachers or schools in their research and training activities.

Web link/s:

- <https://www.esos.gr/katigories/synedria-ekdhlvseis>
- <http://dipe.ima.sch.gr/gray/?cat=12>
- <https://www.semifind.gr/seminaria/view/Seminario/6010/E-Learning-ekpaideysi-gia-tin-aeiforo-anaptyxi>

### 1.6. Other policies of possible relevance to this project - e.g., cultural education, creativity etc. -and the extent to which these are nationally or locally decided

In terms of non-formal education, the exploitation of the arts, but also of sustainability is often the aim and object, directly or indirectly, of a variety of educational programs and events in museums and cultural organizations.

Web link/s:

- <https://www.piop.gr/en/>
- <https://www.snfcc.org/en>



## 2. General facts on Sample and Methodology

The main research method employed was semi-structured interviews, conducted with 16 participants. One additional research method was employed: 109 questionnaires in total (see Questionnaires' analysis). All of those gathered a wide range of data, which were analysed in order to provide answers to a variety of the programmes' aspects under investigation (VAE & ESD). We followed the model of thematic analysis<sup>1</sup> (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield, 2015) which allows greater theoretical flexibility, while observing the epistemological framework. However, in order to draw the final conclusions, a combination of inductive and productive analysis was also employed<sup>2</sup> (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

Participants were selected based on 'purposive sampling'<sup>3</sup> (Bryman, 2008' Krathwohl, 1998' Mason, 2002), based on the relevance of individuals with SD diffusion through VAE. Therefore, participants included a) 4 Stakeholders: individuals who formulate or influence policy making in visual arts education (e.g. art inspectors, art advisors, academics), b) 6 In-service primary school teachers and c) 6 Pre-service teachers. The interviews were based on a protocol - interview guide, which included a structured list of questions, allowing ample flexibility and structured questions based on research in the following sections: 1) Views about visual arts teaching, 2) Views about ESD elements within VAE, 3) In-service training. An open question at the end offered the chance to participants to share any additional information relevant to the subject they felt might be contributing to our research on policies, strategies, needs etc. regarding VAE and ESD in our country.

In particular, the interview focused on participants' views and beliefs regarding VAE, ESD and their association if bridged within the framework of sustainability, as well as on the factors influencing their decision to select and make use of the specific educational action.

The meetings with the participants took place outside the school, in non-working time during the period from 21/2 2020 till 6/3/2020. Prior to the interview, participants were informed of the University's Code of Ethics and agreed to contribute to the research. All interviews were recorded followed by their written transcript, so that recorded data could be available for detailed analysis. On average, each interview lasted about an hour; at the end of each interview, we kept reflective notes with data concerning the conduct of the interview, the general feeling etc.

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<sup>1</sup> Clarke, V., Braun, V., & Hayfield, N. (2015). Thematic analysis. In J. Smith (Ed.), *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods*, 222-248. Sage Publications Ltd.

<sup>2</sup> Fereday, J., & Muir-Cochrane, E. (2006). Demonstrating rigor using thematic analysis: A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(1), Article xx. Retrieved [20/3/2020] from [http://www.ualberta.ca/~iiqm/backissues/5\\_1/pdf/fereday.pdf](http://www.ualberta.ca/~iiqm/backissues/5_1/pdf/fereday.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods*. 4th edition. New York: Oxford University Press. / Krathwohl, D. R. (1998). *Methods of educational and social science research: An integrated approach* (2nd. ed.). New York: Longman. / Mason, J. (2002) *Qualitative Researching*. 2nd Edition, Sage Publications, London.



### 3. Stakeholders' views

#### 3.1 Sample

Greece has a centralized educational system. 4 Stakeholders, three women and one man, were interviewed; they were all in one way or another involved in formulating the policy in art education. All of them were public officers of the Ministry of Education, 1 art inspector from the Institute of Educational Policy (IEP), 1 art advisor in public primary education and 2 academics.

Average age: 55 years

Education: Doctoral or Post-doctoral degrees

Years in Education/ teaching: more than 25 years

#### 3.2 Summary of Views

##### 3.2.1. Views on policy

The first couple of questions of the interview schedule inquired participants' views on the national visual arts curriculum and their contribution to its development.

All participants commented favorably on the tangible effort being made lately by administrators as well for the endorsement of VAE by the educational community for the more integral inclusion of VAE in the primary education curriculum. Their view was based on the recruitment of specialists-teachers who are well versed in the subject and can deliver adequately the offered material.

All participants put great emphasis on the limited time being devoted to the subject of VAE in the school programme, as well the inadequacy of proper substructures, equipment, material, etc. However, the Art inspector of the Ministry of Education expressed a more moderate criticism and appeared hopeful for the initiatives taken gradually for securing prominence of VAE in schools. They all agreed of the necessity to prolong the time of practice for pupils, as the nature of the subject demands (preparation stage, teaching process, free creative expression of children).

On the basis of the participants' experience and research, they reported that children express a great love for the arts and the subject of arts; the arts advisor as well as the academics confirmed that they receive relevant messages from teachers asking their contribution in order to change policies in the teaching practice, to increase teaching hours, to improve conditions, etc. Their data confirmed the significance of VAE in varied areas of children's development, their self-concentration and self-expression, their attraction to the school environment which, in their opinion, becomes a happier place for them. Their suggestion was 2-3 consecutive hours of implementation.

Evaluating the available material, the associates of the Ministry (school advisor and art inspector) and partly the academics agree that there is a wide spectrum of goals and aims pursued through the acquaintance of pupils with VAE, also opening routes for their association with other themes, such as sustainability. Participants commented on the relevant flexibility of the national curriculum and the ameliorations –the openings for cross-thematic orientations in the last few years. The Ministry's suggestions for revision of the arts education textbooks and in the webpage of the cross-thematic



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approach focus on humanitarian themes and reflections regarding the global community, thus attempting links with the goals of sustainability. The targets of the curriculum focus on the acquisition of theoretical knowledge about art and culture, however, as academics claim, without consistency and without pedagogical goals. Also, intention is expressed for the cultivation of practical skills and cross thematic reflection. As the arts inspector pointed out “suggestions for interrelations indicate an effort to facilitate pupils to associate what they are learning in arts education with their everyday life and topics of general interest, such as the environment, society, cultural heritage, language and popular art, health, wellness and nutrition, aesthetics in town, in school, at home, etc.”

In general, the curriculum was considered quite open to allow the specialist teacher to take initiatives and make the best of it: to select units, to fathom into some of them he/she feels more inclined to, alone or in collaboration with the generalist teacher, to expand on the basis of the available material or find and/or create his/her own. The school advisor stressed “the rich imagination and limitless creativity of the arts specialist teachers, who usually do not follow the textbook closely. On the contrary, they are keen on expanding the curriculum, creating their own additional material, making use of internet resources and being innovative. Even if the material is mainly orientated towards hands-on activities, unfortunately, the lack of appropriate space, material, equipment etc., restricts the adequate development of these activities. They constitute a group limited in numbers, teaching time and working space, nevertheless, dynamic, with remarkable work and excellent prospects, if properly supported by the state.”

A common comment of both the arts school advisor and the academics was the absence of a definite framework of collaboration between arts specialist and generalist teachers. This only depends on the personal/individual will, while co-teaching is not recommended, even if, as they all explained, co-teaching would be extremely helpful especially for younger children or for subjects that demand additional knowledge, such as sustainability. The school advisor additionally noted that through such processes, we could achieve experiential professional development and would set an excellent example of collaborative work for children.

### 3.2.2. Views on requirements for policy implementation

The Ministry associates and mostly the arts school advisor had the upper hand here. First, they described the current prevalent situation: “there are good and dynamic teams and a network has been formulated the results of which, even with the current difficulties of implementation, are very optimistic. There is coordination, professional development individually or in groups; it just needs to be more organized, official and cover a variety of topics.” It was particularly stressed that teachers’, specialist and generalist, participation in professional development meetings must be organized centrally by the Educational Authorities and not be left to individual volunteer participation. Recently, a three-day seminar has been organized for all art specialist teachers; additionally, some professional development days are organized, mostly in Athens and partly in Thessaloniki. At the same time, interdisciplinary professional development has been attempted grouped according to place and level of education, while school advisors have suggested interdisciplinary collaborations in the schools of their jurisdiction. The school advisor believes that “much better work could be done, if the professional development framework was organized so that it would allow the teacher to participate



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without professional restrictions. The professional development plan should be based on long-term planning that would include both a large number of teachers and a significant and challenging thematic variety directly linked to contemporary social and global issues.” The academics expressed similar views stressing the significance of experiential programmes/seminars/meetings with the collaboration of all stakeholders and the participation of specialist and generalist teachers, so that a circle of on-going, harmonious collaboration might be established

The Ministry associates stressed the crucial role teachers can play to the success of their professional development if they contribute with ideas and suggestions to planning training programmes, so that they better accommodate their needs. Most comments attribute negative connotations to the extensive use of distance learning, mostly due to the character of VAE that demands experiential procedures. Guidance and training in theoretical aspects of the subject, such as Art History, or reflections on pedagogical practices, assessment, etc. might be covered with frequent online meetings. However, everyone put a lot of emphasis on shared and experiential training.

Finally, both academics and the arts school advisor insisted on the essential and continuous link between the school and the university, as well as with cultural institutions, museums, etc., so that the provided support, inspiration and “cross-thematic openings” acquire stability in the lives of teachers and pupils. In addition, the academics expressed their regret because they had made numerous attempts to make such initiatives more systematic, but they encountered resistance on the part of colleagues of other levels who understood their role as “interfering”. They explained that “such a partnership would create many chances of improvement for everyone involved, would increase the potential for assessment of research and praxis and would constitute a very crucial approach to science through everyday issues, an opening to society.”

### 3.2.3. Views on the link between VAE and ESD

Several of the questions explored participants’ views concerning the connection between VAE with ESD. The views expressed concerning the importance of the two subjects in education concurred, characterizing them “two fields working as communicating vessels”. Participants partly agreed that directly or indirectly ESD has begun to be incorporated dynamically in the curriculum and the visual arts subject. However, most references, for example, in professional development meetings, in programmes, etc., put emphasis on environmental issues, which generated the question if finally, the pillars of sustainability are included in the curriculum or not. The reports mostly by the Ministry associates confirm that several programmes on the environment have been successfully completed through ministerial initiatives as well as through the old Centers of Environmental Education in the past. Gradually, many interesting small-scale, individual initiatives have been taken in school communities (yards, exhibitions, activities of the local community) which have included other aspects of sustainability, such as the ones triggered by the refugee and immigration predicament. In training meetings, some elements are incorporated, even if not systematically, as well as small acts of opening up to society are attempted (e.g., painting in public spaces by school children or land-art activities). The arts school advisor explained that “lately some cooperative activities have been attempted that involve school children and students of the School of Fine Arts so that children can change their schools. Yet the state organization, the funds and the substructures are missing. However, there are



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always principals and teachers who make touching efforts, take their own initiatives and accomplish excellent incorporation of the school into society and vice versa.”

They all justified the attachment to the environmental aspect of sustainability as a reasonable consequence of the programmes on environmental education that existed for many years and stressed the need to encompass all dimensions, with prominence to those of social justice and solidarity. Moreover, they agreed that school textbooks include a significant number of references to the environment, in general and problems/issues related to it, specifically. Most of these references appear in the textbooks Study of the Environment and Geography. Academics added a harsher comment that the examination of school textbooks reveals that there is no cohesion, crossing or horizontal, in the organization of the references.

Particularly, in the same textbook, references either belong to the same thematic axis, but without sequence or they refer to different thematic axes. The result is that certain issues or problems are not approached holistically. Moreover, important issues, directly related to student life that could contribute to the formulation of responsible stances and behaviours are scarcely mentioned or are mentioned indirectly in the school textbooks, while the roots and consequences of the problems are not adequately examined. Consequently, it is up to the teachers, in accordance to their experience and the degree of their training in Education for Sustainable Development, to compose or expand and make the best use of these references, by planning and then implementing relevant programmes. With reference to this point, the school advisor pointed out that many specialist teachers “take pains and make a lot of personal effort in order to incorporate sustainability issues, e.g., land-art, recycling, posters related to the refugee issue). They offer their personal space or/ and make use of the school or community (i.e., the Town Hall) space so that they can work with and inspire the children, trying at the same time to involve them in initiatives of the local or the wider community, as well as in projects, competitions, exhibitions, etc. All of these constitute individual initiatives and not official and consistently organized activities.”

Finally, the Ministry associate appeared more “optimistic for current initiatives/programmes that basically bridge the two parameters and take the first step so that the network spreads, if other areas also attempt it.” She referred extensively to the National Program “Greek Sustainable School” of the Hellenic Society of Environment and Culture. She explained that the Program is based on ESD’s framework of 8 pillars of operation and aims at undertaking training initiatives and networking of schools wishing to be transformed. The program also aims at creating original supportive educational materials and school certification bodies that meet the criteria of the transition.

Additionally, she provided current information on this issue: “The Local School Network “Sustainable schools in the A’ Directorate of Elementary Education of Athens” echoes an initiative from 3 Agencies of School Activities (Environmental Education, Health Education and Cultural Affairs Education). Joining their forces, the three Agencies put emphasis on the holistic school approach methodology and support 16 Primary Schools and 16 Kindergartens, which decided and committed themselves for at least two 2 years to aim towards their transformation into sustainable schools. This initiative is supported by a Scientific Committee and several partners who have put their expertise at the service of the Network. The Steering Group is trying to cope with the isolation of teachers and to create a



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learning community. This learning community is composed of Network Coordinators, School Principals and Coordinators of Schools, Educators who implement programs and Partners; it aims to explore the possibility of planning and implementing the “whole school approach” methodology that integrates unified teaching and learning in socio-organizational and technical-economic aspects of school practice. The creation of this learning community explores in a participatory way training needs, networking, records its strengths and supports each other by exchanging best practices. The learning community adopts the action research as a tool of observation and reflection and aims at lived community experience in order to be able to convey it to the reality of school and then to the local community. The learning community also searches for all possible synergies among education officials, universities, local governments and civil society aiming at strengthening the school’s decision to be transformed into a sustainable organization.”

#### 3.2.4. Views on assessment

Everyone started the discussion with negative comments for the lack of concrete official policy for assessment of both specialist teachers and pupils.

Referring to the current situation, a lot deliberation was observed concerning the way teachers are asked to assess their pupils in the VAE class; participants stressed that grading is a hard framework that does not correspond to experiential learning. Their suggestions focused on exploring alternative forms of assessment. According to the advisor and the academics “assessment is necessary, but grading is not.” The advisor suggested children’s self-assessment “in experiential artistic environments that will teach them how to construct knowledge and feel who they are and what they wish to accomplish –where they want to reach, as well as reflect independently.”

A common observation of all participants was that it is generally difficult for senior teachers to “overthrow” their outlooks vis-à-vis issues related to visual arts education, to the role of arts in general; it is difficult for them to change their teaching habits. As they noted, younger teachers are more susceptible to the adoption of alternative teaching methods, enriched study objects, as well as the cross-thematic material included in the Ministry website, as their basic education corresponds more to the demands of the VAE field.

#### 3.2.5. Other

Participants were asked to offer any additional information regarding the topics discussed or other topics related to VAE and ESD they considered important or even express their expectations about the contribution of a project such as CARE to the development of VAE. They all agreed on the usefulness of the project and expressed their interest in keeping them informed about the results of the study, as well as training or any other activity. They also stressed the need that training has an experiential form, is on-going and really contributes to the formulation of a network of continuous communication and collaboration among all stakeholders (the Ministry, the Institute of Educational Policy, the university and school units, --advisors, principal, teachers) that will continue to offer professional development as well as opportunities for action with clear openings to society. They remarked that it would be very useful if the educational material that CARE would produce became available online.





## 4. In- and Pre-Service teachers' views & Questionnaire results

### Sampling method/ data collection procedure

In this section, the In- & Pre-service teachers' questionnaire findings for the Greek case are presented. This section includes the description of the sample and the sampling method as well as the presentation of the results with a summary of the findings given at the end of the section.

As we were interested to reach participants who had a special interest in art education, two groups were approached. The majority were our pre-service final year undergraduate students as well as our post-graduate students, who are trained in art & museum education. The second group included generalist primary school teachers as well as specialist art educators in public schools, who collaborate with the Faculty of Education for the realization of the practicums in their classes. It is worth noting that the questionnaires were given in compliance with the Ethics Regulation and all participants volunteered both to complete the online questionnaire as well as to participate in interviews. We decided to offer only the online version of the questionnaire as during our preliminary research this form seemed to be preferred by all participants. We managed to collect 108 completed questionnaires in one week. Most of our participants expressed the wish to be kept in the loop and be informed about the CARE project as well as about the training course.

### 4.1. In-service teachers' Questionnaire analysis

#### 4.1.1. Sample

18 primary school teachers, working in Thessaloniki and Central Makedonia, completed the online questionnaire. 12 (67%) women, 4 (22%) men and 2 (11%) were individuals who preferred not to define their genre. The mean age of participants was 48,7 years (28 to 56 years old) and all but one worked in public schools. This was expected, as there is a small number of private primary schools in Thessaloniki, Greece.<sup>4</sup>

Although most of the participants had experience in art teaching, the majority (16 out of 18, 89%) were class/generalist teachers and only 2 (11%) taught exclusively art as qualified art educators. Especially, during the current school year that the study took place, 11 out of the 18 participants (61%) taught art, 9 as generalist teachers and 2 as special art educators.

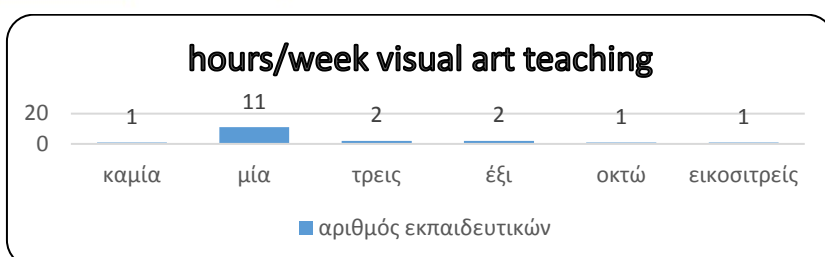
In terms of school hours per week in general, most of them (11, i.e., 61%) taught visual arts one hour per week, 2 engaged in visual art teaching 6 hours/a week and the other 2 taught 3 hours/a week. There were only 2 educators who taught 8 & 23 hours/a week correspondingly. Finally, there was 1 teacher who taught no art classes at the time.

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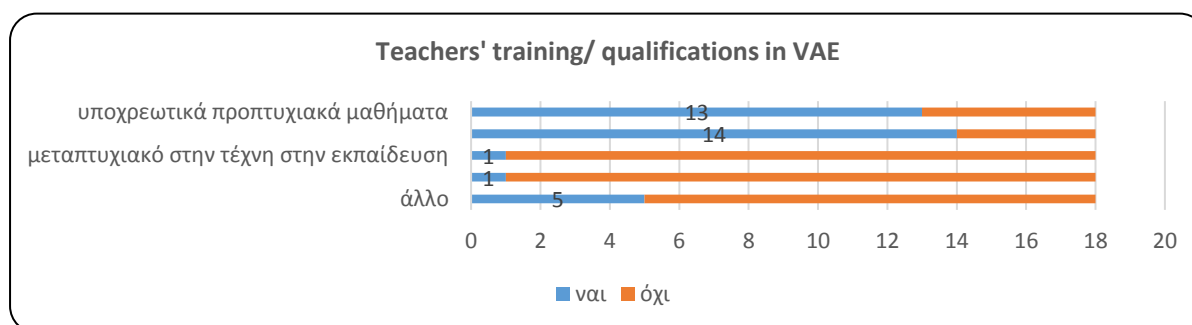
<sup>4</sup> According to Hellenic Statistical Authority there are 737 Public and 24 Private Primary Schools in Central Macedonia <https://www.statistics.gr/el/statistics/-/publication/SED12/2014>



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Regarding training in VAE, 13 out of 18 participants (72%) had followed compulsory courses during their undergraduate studies and 14 out of 18 participants (78%) attended elective art education courses during their undergraduate studies. Five participants (28%) had a postgraduate degree in cultural studies and education and 1 participant had also an MA and a PhD in Art Education. Further, 2 participants followed art teaching courses (History of Art and Education through the Arts) during their post-graduate 2-year teacher training course, 1 followed a painting course in a 2 years programme organized by the Municipality and another one followed classes in a programme organized for school teachers (undefined).



#### 4.1.2. Results

The analysis of the Greek teachers' responses to the questionnaire examined here and their subsequent comparison with the results drawn from our partner countries will be cross-checked to yield a solid basis for the design and implementation of a training programme attuned to practitioners' expressed needs.

The first question of the questionnaire was a warm-up question aiming to understand teachers' views about the potential of art education's role in schools. All nine tasks/items of Question 1 were considered very important for the majority of participants (see Table 1). All items received a mean score above 3.10 in a scale ranging from '0' for "not at all" important to '4' for "very important", indicating that they were all considered as very important tasks of visual art education.

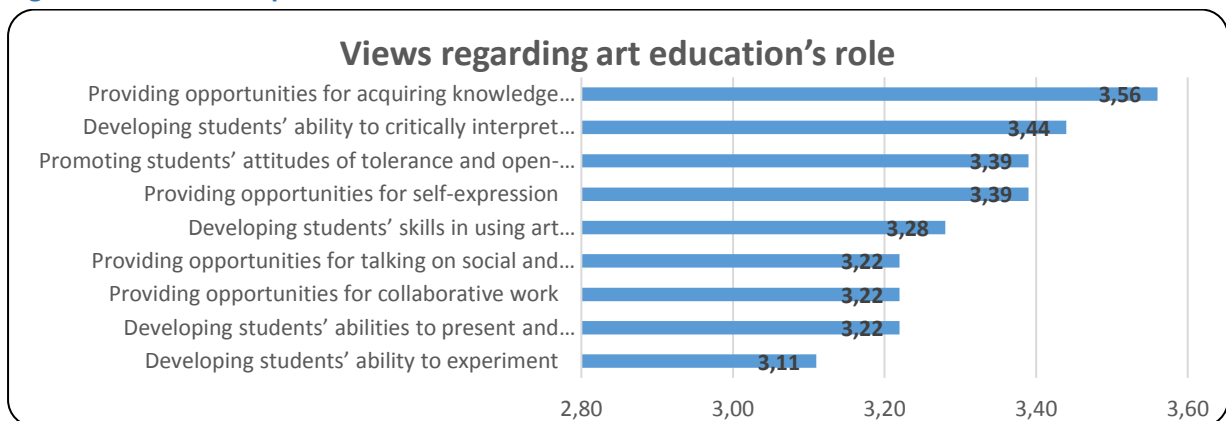
The most important task for the participants was 'providing opportunities for acquiring knowledge regarding art & culture' (Q1.2, mean 3.56), followed by 'developing students' ability to critically interpret images/artworks' (Q1.4, mean 3.44). The last item in teachers' views (although still very important, i.e., with a high mean score 3.11) was the task of 'developing students' ability to experiment' (Q1.5) (see Figure 1), which implies that teachers saw all areas of development through visual arts of utmost importance.



**Table 1: Views regarding art education’s role**

Q1: What are your views regarding the importance of the following tasks of art education in your ideal school curriculum?	not at all	slightly important	moderately important	very important	extremely important	M
	0	1	2	3	4	
	%	%	%	%	%	
1. Providing opportunities for self-expression	11			17	72	3.39
2. Providing opportunities for acquiring knowledge regarding art & culture	6	6		6	83	3.56
3. Developing students’ abilities to present and communicate their ideas	11		6	22	61	3.22
4. Developing students’ ability to critically interpret images/artworks	6	6		17	72	3.44
5. Developing students’ ability to experiment	6	6	17	17	56	3.11
6. Developing students’ skills in using art techniques/tools/materials	11			28	61	3.28
7. Promoting students’ attitudes of tolerance and open-mindedness	6	6		22	67	3.39
8. Providing opportunities for collaborative work	11		11	11	67	3.22
9. Providing opportunities for talking on social and environmental issues	11		6	22	61	3.22

**Figure 1: The most important art education’s roles**



Q1 dealt with participants’ views in an imaginary situation, whereas in Q2 participants were asked to state their priorities in practice. Table 2 records participants’ responses in each item of Q2, stating percentages as well as means for each response. Figure 2 ranks the items based on their mean score, starting with the item that received that highest mean score and ending with the item that received the lowest mean score.

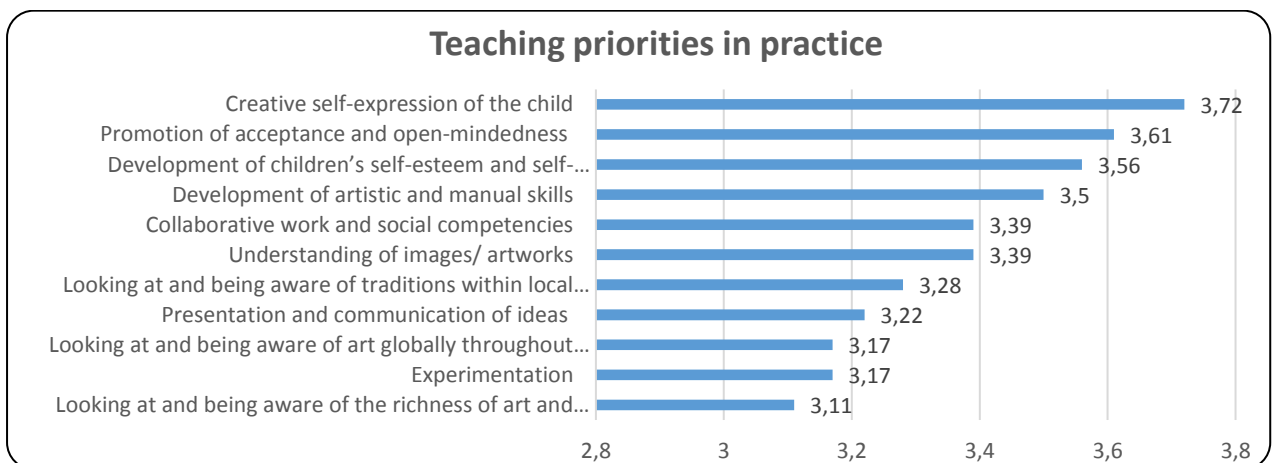


All items of Q2 received a mean score above 3.10. The most important priorities in participants' visual art teaching were the 'creative self-expression of the child' (mean 3.72), the 'promotion of acceptance and open-mindedness' (mean 3.61) and the 'development of children's self-esteem and self-sufficiency' (mean 3.56). Last, but certainly not least, in their priorities were activities related to looking at and being aware of the richness of art and culture(s) (mean 3.11).

**Table 2: Priorities in art teaching**

Q2: In practice, to what extent, if any, the following are priorities of your teaching during art classes.	not at all	slightly	moderately	important	very important	M
	0	1	2	3	4	
	%	%	%	%	%	
11. Collaborative work and social competencies			22	17	61	3.39
10. Promotion of acceptance and open-mindedness		6		22	72	3.61
9. Development of children's self-esteem and self-sufficiency		6	6	17	72	3.56
8. Development of artistic and manual skills			6	39	56	3.50
7. Experimentation		6	28	11	56	3.17
6. Understanding of images/ artworks			11	39	50	3.39
5. Presentation and communication of ideas		11	11	22	56	3.22
4. Looking at and being aware of art globally throughout art history		11	11	28	50	3.17
3. Looking at and being aware of traditions within local culture(s)			17	39	44	3.28
2. Looking at and being aware of the richness of art and culture(s)		6	11	50	33	3.11
1. Creative self-expression of the child			6	17	78	3.72

**Figure 2: Priorities in art teaching**



Q3 deals with estimations of self-efficacy regarding different aspects/issues of VAE. The participants were asked to state the extent to which they felt competent in dealing effectively with a variety of issues.



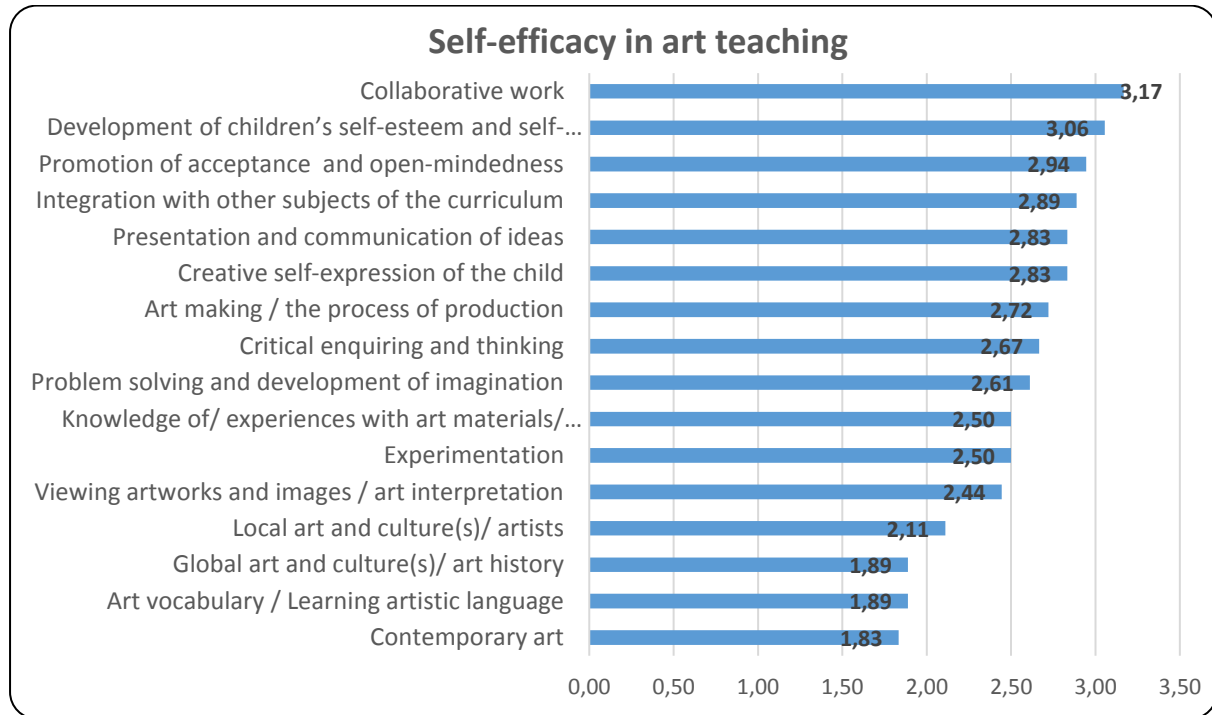
Teachers stated that they felt ‘very’ to ‘extremely’ confident in strategies related to general teaching issues, such as ‘collaborative work’, ‘development of children’s self-esteem and self-efficiency’ and ‘promotion of acceptance and open-mindedness’. At the bottom of the ranking, indicating that teachers were ‘moderately’ or ‘less confident’, are issues related specifically with understanding art works, such as the issues of ‘local art and culture(s)/ artists’, ‘global art and culture(s)/ art history’, ‘art vocabulary/learning artistic language’ and ‘contemporary art’ (see [Figure 3](#)). Teachers in general seemed less confident of dealing with issues related to visual art understanding and teaching, which implies a need for support to empower them in this aspect of their practice.

**Table 3: Estimations of self-efficacy in visual art teaching**

Q3: To what extent do you feel you are in a position to deal effectively with the following issues in your art lessons?	not at all	slightly	moderately	important	very important	M
	0	1	2	3	4	
	%	%	%	%	%	
1. Creative self-expression of the child		5.56	38.89	22.22	33.33	2.83
2. Art vocabulary / Learning artistic language	5.56	33.33	38.89	11.11	11.11	1.89
3. Local art and culture(s)/ artists		38.89	27.78	16.67	16.67	2.11
4. Global art and culture(s)/ art history		44.44	33.33	11.11	11.11	1.89
5. Contemporary art	5.56	33.33	38.89	16.67	5.556	1.83
6. Presentation and communication of ideas		11.11	22.22	38.89	27.78	2.83
7. Viewing artworks and images / art interpretation	5.56	5.56	50.00	16.67	22.22	2.44
8. Experimentation		16.67	38.89	22.22	22.22	2.5
9. Art making / the process of production		11.11	33.33	27.78	27.78	2.72
10. Knowledge of/ experiences with art materials/ techniques		22.22	27.78	27.78	22.22	2.5
11. Problem solving and development of imagination		11.11	38.89	27.78	22.22	2.61
12. Critical enquiring and thinking		16.67	27.78	27.78	27.78	2.67
13. Development of children’s self-esteem and self-efficiency		5.556	22.22	33.33	38.89	3.06
14. Integration with other subjects of the curriculum		11.11	27.78	22.22	38.89	2.89
15. Promotion of acceptance and open-mindedness		5.56	33.33	22.22	38.89	2.94
16. Collaborative work		5.56	22.22	22.22	50.00	3.17



**Figure 3: Estimations of self-efficacy in VAE**



Q4, one of the most crucial of the questionnaire, required participants to state the areas in which they felt they needed further professional development.

Quite expectedly, participants indicated that they needed professional development in some areas more than others; nine items received a mean score of “2” and above (2 = moderate need). The two out of the 16 items that received the highest mean scores were items 11 and 12 (2.66 and 2.50 respectively), which indicates participants’ urgent need for professional development in teaching SN students and students of linguistic and cultural minorities, in other words, managing mixed ability classes or tutoring students with special educational needs in special classes. The nine areas as indicated in the ranking of [Figure 4](#) are the following:

- ‘Teaching students with special needs’ (Q4.11)
- ‘Teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting’ (Q4.12)
- ‘Knowledge and understanding of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)’ (Q4.4)
- ‘Knowledge and understanding of art materials/ techniques’ (Q4.3)
- ‘ICT (information & communication technology) skills for teaching VAE’ (Q4.8)
- ‘Knowledge and understanding of art (local art, global art, contemporary art, material culture(s), etc.) (Q4.1)
- ‘Student assessment practices in VAE’ (Q4.7)
- ‘Knowledge and understanding of visual competence (partial visual competencies include describe, analyse, interpret, experiment, create, present)’ (Q4.2)
- ‘Analysis and use of student assessments’ (Q4.15)

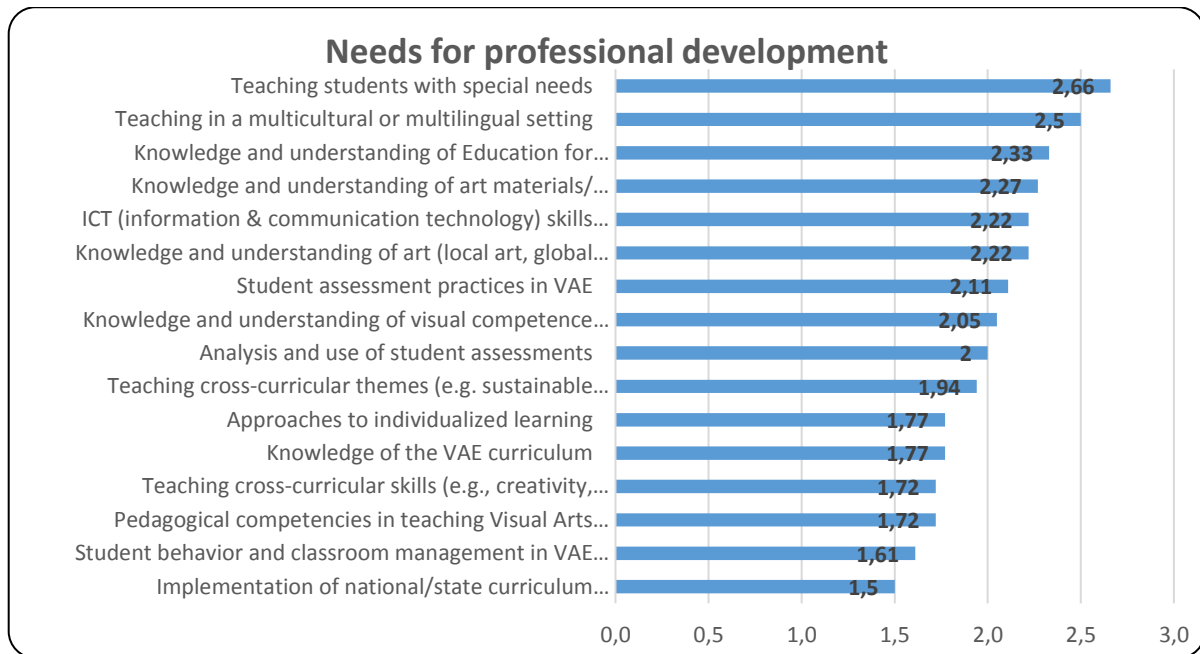
**Table 4: Needs for professional development**



Q4: For each of the areas listed below, please indicate the extent to which you currently need professional development.	not at all	slightly	moderately	very	extremely	M
	0	1	2	3	4	
	%	%	%	%	%	
1. Knowledge and understanding of art (local art, global art, contemporary art, material culture(s), etc.)		27.78	27.78	38.89	5.556	2.22
2. Knowledge and understanding of visual competence (partial visual competencies include describe, analyse, interpret, experiment, create, present)	5.556	22.22	33.33	38.89		2.06
3. Knowledge and understanding of art materials/ techniques	5.556	22.22	27.78	27.78	16.67	2.28
4. Knowledge and understanding of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)		33.33	16.67	33.33	16.67	2.33
5. Pedagogical competencies in teaching Visual Arts Education (VAE)	16.67	33.33	22.22	16.67	11.11	1.72
6. Knowledge of the VAE curriculum	22.22	11.11	38.89	22.22	5.556	1.78
7. Student assessment practices in VAE		22.22	55.56	11.11	11.11	2.11
8. ICT (information & communication technology) skills for teaching VAE	11.11	11.11	33.33	33.33	11.11	2.22
9. Student behaviour and classroom management in VAE classes	11.11	33.33	38.89	16.67		1.61
10. Approaches to individualized learning	5.556	33.33	44.44	11.11	5.556	1.78
11. Teaching students with special needs	5.556	16.67	16.67	27.78	33.33	2.66
12. Teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting		22.22	33.33	16.67	27.78	2.5
13. Teaching cross-curricular skills (e.g., creativity, critical thinking, problem solving)	16.67	22.22	38.89	16.67	5.556	1.72
14. Teaching cross-curricular themes (e.g. sustainable development issues)	5.556	38.89	27.78	11.11	16.67	1.94
15. Analysis and use of student assessments	11.11	16.67	50.00	5.556	16.67	2
16. Implementation of national/state curriculum standards or Common Core standards	33.33	22.22	16.67	16.67	11.11	1.5



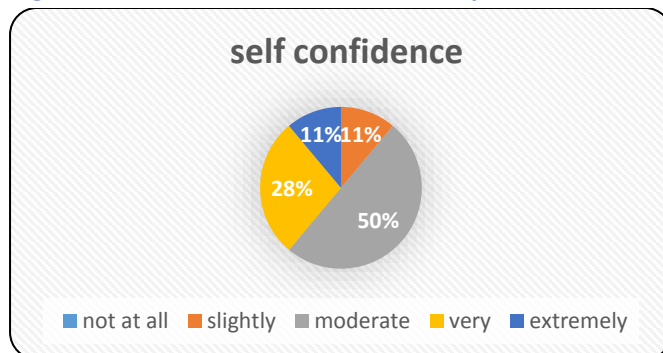
Figure 4: Needs for professional development



Questions 5 to 10 addressed various issues regarding Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

Specifically, Q5 was a warm up question. It was a single question asking participants to declare how confident they felt to include aspects of ESD in their teaching. Teachers appeared to be moderately confident (mean = 2.39). In particular, 11% responded ‘slightly’, 50% noted ‘moderately’, 28% noted ‘very’ and a small percentage, 11%, noted ‘extremely’ confident.

Figure 5: Self-confidence to include aspects of ESP in teaching



Q6 inquired teachers’ estimations of their competence, taking in consideration the four different aspects of SD in their teaching.

Overall, the participants were ‘moderately’ confident and above. They felt most confident to address the social dimension (mean 3.01) and the dimension of culture (mean 2.99). These two items, receiving a mean score approaching number “3”, demonstrate that participants felt “very” confident to address these issues in their teaching. Then came the environmental dimension (mean 2.74) and finally the economic dimension of SD (mean 2.16). Participants appeared less confident to address the economic dimension (see Table 5).





**Table 5: Confidence in addressing dimensions of SD**

Q6: How confident do you feel to address issues from the following dimensions of sustainable development in your teaching?	not at all	slightly	moderate	very	extremely	M
	0	1	2	3	4	
	%	%	%	%	%	
1. Environmental dimension (e.g. biodiversity, climate change, pollution)		16.67	16.67	45	22.22	2.74
2. Economic dimension (e.g. decent work and economic growth, sustainable production and consumption)		27.78	38.89	22	11.11	2.16
3. Social dimension (e.g. inequalities, poverty)		11	11	45	33.33	3.01
4. Cultural dimension (e.g. local culture, heritage)		11	22.22	22	44.44	2.99

Q7a: Definition of the term 'sustainable development issues'

In their effort to define and explain the term "sustainable development issues", participants in Q7 refer to a total of 42 elements [we kept the participants wording] that can be grouped into 5 general categories that largely correspond to the following dimensions:

Environmental dimension (17 references /40%)

1. Development with respect to the environment
2. Development by protecting the environment
3. Environmental awareness
4. Ecological sustainability [sub issues: Natural resource management so that future generations will inherit our planet at least at the same level, if not better. / Not over-exploitation of natural resources / Reduction of problems that have already been created and concern the depletion of natural resources and all that this entails for humanity (social inequality, poverty, epidemics, migration, etc.)
5. Ecology
6. Organic farming
7. Return to traditional methods
8. A school that respects the environment
9. Design & implementation of programmes related to environmental protection
10. Opportunities to learn, create, act, choose with the aim of defending the environment & the right to live in conditions of environmental sustainability
11. Critical approach to issues aimed at raising awareness & educating people. A holistic adoption of behaviours that provide citizens with ecological sustainability awareness.

Social dimension (12 references/ 28%)

1. Mutual respect
2. How we will work collectively and coexist in this world
3. How we will walk and coexist in this world with mutual understanding



4. Critical approach to issues aimed at raising awareness and educating people. A holistic adoption of behaviours that provide citizens with awareness of social, personal sustainability
5. Issues that concern the societies of the world: both the local communities and the whole planet, the holistic management of which concerns all of us and the future of all of us depends on it
6. How to manage human resources so that future generations can find the world at least at the same level, if not better
7. Issues concerning society and promoting its development as a whole
8. Topics that touch on the eternal change of knowledge and learning
9. A happy school
10. A school promoting values such as justice
11. Integration of children in the new complex social structures
12. Opportunities to learn, create, act, choose with the aim of defending the right to live in conditions of social sustainability

Economic dimension (4 references /10%)

1. Critical approach to issues aimed at raising awareness and educating people. A holistic adoption of behaviours that provide citizens with economic sustainability
2. The economic approach to SD presupposes economic development and acquisition of financial resources and goods without degrading the environment
3. Renewable energy sources
4. Opportunities to learn, create, act, choose with the aim of defending the right to live in conditions of economic sustainability

Cultural dimension (4 references/ 10%)

1. Approach culture in respect of the environment
2. Critical approach to issues aimed at raising awareness and educating people. A holistic adoption of behaviours that provide citizens with cultural sustainability
3. A way of managing cultural heritage so that future generations can find the world at least at the same level, if not better
4. Opportunities to learn, create, act, choose with the aim of defending the right to live in conditions of cultural sustainability

General references to the element of sustainability (5 references/ 12%)

1. Practices that aim to meet current needs, while considering the needs (protection of resources) of future generations, in an attempt to reduce the problems that have already been created
2. SD supports me first as a teacher and then my students to get the right attitude and values

From the above thematic analysis of the various definitions of sustainable development issues, it appears that the participants emphasize primarily the environmental and secondarily the social dimension. After all, sustainable development is an evolution of environmental, which may account for participants' emphasis on the environmental dimension. On the other hand, based on the number



of relevant responses, participants also stressed the cultural and economic dimension of sustainable development issues interconnecting them with general references to the sustainability element that characterizes these issues.

#### Q7b: Sustainable development issues

In their attempt to name 3 issues that they consider crucial for sustainable development, participants refer to a total of 48 issues, which can be grouped into 5 general categories, largely corresponding to the same dimensions encountered in the previous section, Q7a.

#### Environmental dimension (21 references /44%)

1. Environment (management / respect)
2. Ecology & ecological consciousness
3. Natural resources (exploitation / rescue / prudence in use)
4. Climate change
5. Pollution (prevention / reduction)
6. Biodiversity
7. Organic crops
8. Survival of tropical forests
9. Waste management
10. Uncontrollable use of fertilizers & pesticides

#### Social dimension (9 references/19%)

1. Respect the different from self
2. Awareness & substantial help in the inclusion of sensitive social groups
3. Maintaining dignity
4. Social behaviour
5. Social inequalities
6. Human rights
7. A just society
8. Equal opportunities

#### Economic dimension (7 references/15%)

1. Proper management of energy sources
2. Balanced development
3. Production in harmony with consumption
4. Overconsumption
5. Reduction of fictitious needs
6. Recycle of materials
7. Renewable energy sources

#### Cultural dimension (6 references/12%)

1. Cultural heritage management
2. Preserving culture



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3. Cultural diversity
4. Destruction of unknown cultural elements of indigenous cultures around the world
5. Multiculturalism
6. Interculturalism

General references (5, 10%) are related either to general issues of SD, such as globalization and sustainability ("sustainability with the best socio-economic & environmental outcome") or suggest a slogan ("Sustainability no indifference!"). Furthermore, one participant suggests that "sustainable development issues should be included in education", while another considers it useful to record the purposes of the relevant Curriculum (" • The main purpose of the Study Program of Environmental Education / Training for Sustainable Development is the formation of a sustainable school, that is a school which is a model of an organization that promotes sustainability and adopts it in school life. It seeks to create in the school a long-term and gradual environmental culture & a sustainability-oriented ethos. The main aim is to make the school a learning context in which all those who participate will be able to learn, create, act, and choose based on values such as the protection of the environment & the right of all of us to live in conditions of economic, cultural, social and environmental growth.").

To sum up, in defining issues that they consider belonging in SD, participants focus primarily on those related to the environmental and, secondarily, to the social dimension of SD. The economic and cultural dimensions of SD issues appear last in participants' relevant responses, an element that agrees with the findings on the analysis of Q7a.

Q8 inquired the use of specific approaches participants might adopt regarding the way SD issues might be addressed in accordance with their responses in Q7. All items of question 8 received a mean score above 2.60 in a scale ranging from '0' (not at all important) to '4' (extremely important), indicating that all were accepted as very important approaches for addressing SD issues in teaching. The most important approach for the participants was 'integrate SD issues in their teaching (Q8.1, mean 3.17), immediately followed by their willingness to 'use whole school approaches for addressing SD issues in school' (Q8.3, mean 3) and equally followed by 'collaborate with local stakeholders/actors/parents for addressing Sustainable Development issues in school (Q8.5, mean 3). The majority felt that strategies like collaborating 'with local stakeholders/actors/parents for addressing SD issues in the community with your students' (Q8.4, mean 2.94) and 'addressing SD conflict issues' (Q8.2, mean 2.61) (see Table 6) were slightly less important (although still very important, mean 2.94 and above) (see Table 6). The approach that received a comparatively lower mean (2.61) is the one that requires their dealing with SD conflict issues; however, the fact that it still moved between the moderate and very important categories of answers probably indicates the teachers' inexperience of such issues.



**Table 6: Approaches for addressing SD issues**

Q8: Answer the questions below, in light of the definition you gave in the previous question:						M
How important is it for you as an educator to ...	not at all	slightly	moderately	very important	extremely important	
	0	1	2	3	4	
	%	%	%	%	%	
1. Integrate Sustainable Development issues in your teaching			27.78	27.78	44.44	3.17
2. Address Sustainable Development conflict issues		11.11	33.33	38.89	16.67	2.61
3. Use whole school approaches for addressing Sustainable Development issues in school		5.56	27.78	27.78	38.89	3
4. Collaborate with local stakeholders / actors / parents for addressing Sustainable Development issues in the community with your students			27.78	50.00	22.22	2.94
5. Collaborate with local stakeholders / actors / parents for addressing Sustainable Development issues in school		5.56	27.78	27.78	38.89	3

Q9 (see Table 7) explored participants’ perceptions of the connection of ESD and VAE. Participants felt very strongly that the statement “VAE and ESD have no common goals” did not apply at all (mean 0). Consequently, they strongly supported the statement that ‘VAE can support the achievement of ESD goals’ (mean 3.44). Interestingly, even though they highly supported that the opposite is feasible too – that is, ESD could support the achievement of VAE goals – they appeared somewhat less persuaded (mean 3.20) of the positive impact of ESD on VAE.

**Table 7: Perceptions on connection of ESD and VAE**

Q9: To what extent do you think that the following statements apply?						M
	not at all	slightly	moderately	very	extremely	
	0	1	2	3	4	
	%	%	%	%	%	
1. Visual Arts Education and Education for Sustainable Development have no common goals	55.56	38.89		0	5.56	0
2. Education for Sustainable Development can support the achievement of Visual Arts Education goals			22.22	33.33	44.00	3.20
3. Visual Arts Education can support the achievement of Education for Sustainable Development goals			16.67	22.22	61.11	3.44

Q10 aimed to identify barriers that might prevent teachers from participating in professional development activities. Table 8 reports their perceptions on this issue. Figure 6 presents the ranking of the statements of question 10, starting with the one that received the highest endorsement (mean score). High endorsement was noted in the following items (all of them related to external factors):

- there is a lack of employer support (mean 3.61)

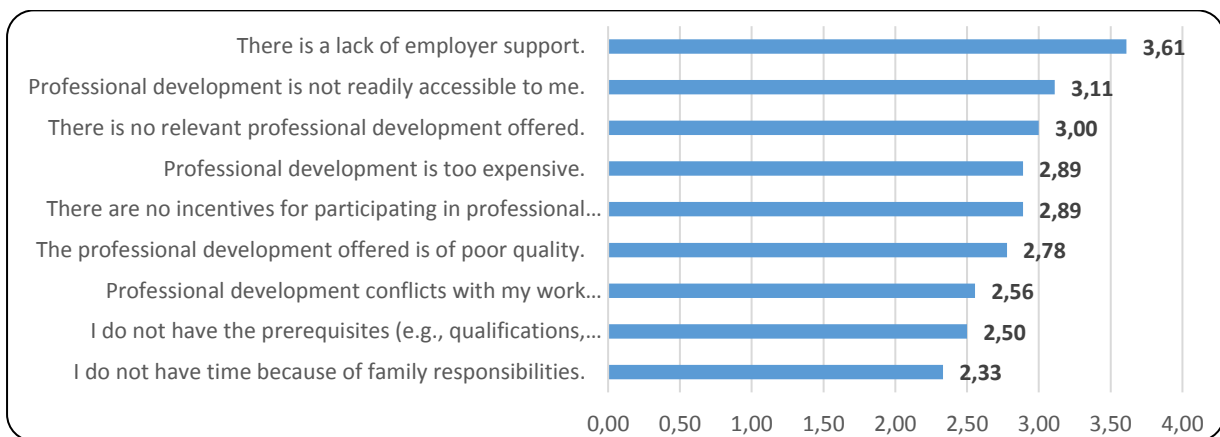


- professional development is not readily accessible to me (mean 3.11)
- there is no relevant professional development offered (mean 3)

**Table 8: Barriers for participation in professional development**

Q10: How strongly do you agree or disagree that the following present barriers to your participation in Visual Arts Education professional development?	totally disagree	disagree	not sure	agree	strongly agree	M
	1	2	3	4	5	
	%	%	%	%	%	
1. I do not have the prerequisites (e.g., qualifications, experience, seniority)	22.22	33.33	22.22	16.67	5.56	2.5
2. Professional development is too expensive		44.44	22.22	33.33		2.89
3. There is a lack of employer support		11.11	27.78	50.00	11.11	3.61
4. Professional development conflicts with my work schedule	5.56	50.00	27.78	16.67		2.56
5. I do not have time because of family responsibilities	16.67	38.89	38.89	5.56		2.33
6. There is no relevant professional development offered	5.56	38.89	11.11	38.89	5.56	3
7. There are no incentives for participating in professional development	11.11	33.33	11.11	44.44		2.89
8. The professional development offered is of poor quality		38.89	44.44	16.67		2.78
9. Professional development is not readily accessible to me	11.11	16.67	33.33	27.78	11.11	3.11

**Figure 6: Barriers for participation in professional development**



Q11 inquired participants' preferences on professional development activities. Percentages and mean scores are reported in Table 9. Figure 7 presents the mean scores of the statements of Q11. Participants showed their highest preference in the activity 'reading professional literature' (mean 3.17), followed equally by the activities 'participation in a network of teachers formed specifically for the professional development of teachers' (mean 3.11), and 'courses/seminars attended in person' and a lower degree of preference to the activity of participating in 'education conferences where

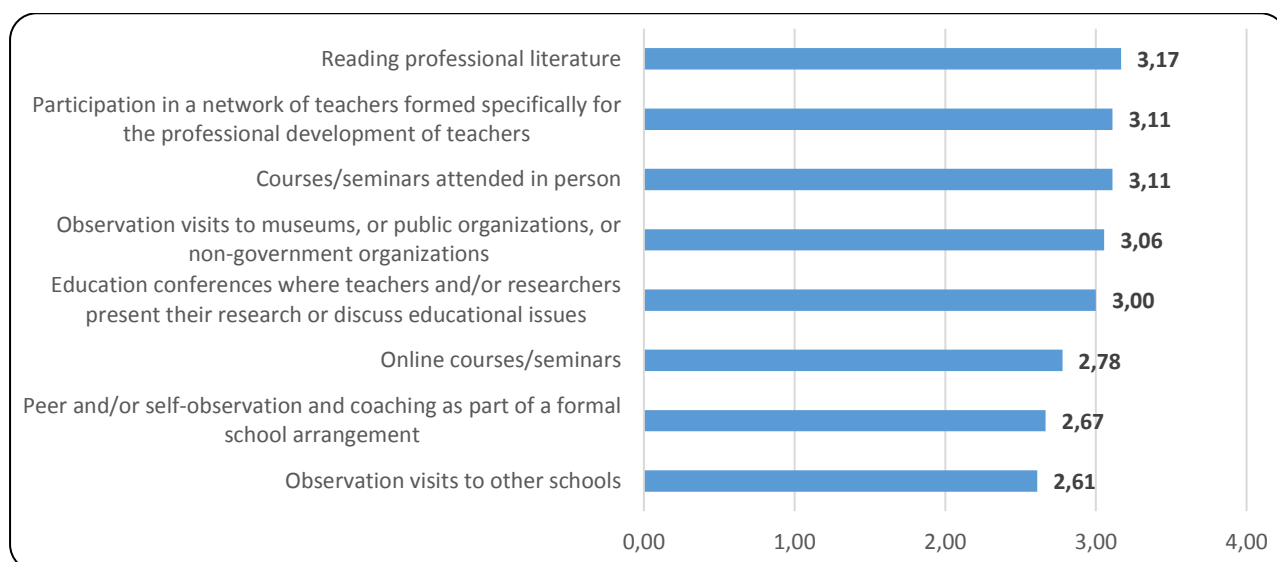


teachers and/or researchers present their research or discuss educational issues' (mean 3.00) (see Figure 7).

**Table 9: Preferences on professional development activities**

Q11: To what extent do you consider the following professional development activities useful?	not at all	slightly	moderately	very	extremely	M
	0	1	2	3	4	
	%	%	%	%	%	
1. Courses/seminars attended in person			27.78	33.33	38.89	3.11
2. Online courses/seminars	5.56	5.56	22.22	38.89	27.78	2.78
3. Education conferences where teachers and/or researchers present their research or discuss educational issues		5.56	22.22	38.89	33.33	3.00
4. Observation visits to other schools	5.56	11.11	22.22	38.89	22.22	2.61
5. Observation visits to museums, or public organizations, or non-government organizations			33.33	27.78	38.89	3.06
6. Peer and/or self-observation and coaching as part of a formal school arrangement		11.11	27.78	44.44	16.67	2.67
7. Participation in a network of teachers formed specifically for the professional development of teachers		5.56	11.11	50	33.33	3.11
8. Reading professional literature			16.67	50	33.33	3.17

**Figure 7: Preferences on professional development activities**





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#### 4.1.3. Summary / concluding remarks

Overall, the questionnaire fulfilled its purpose as a needs' assessment tool, providing important findings related to participants' views on visual arts education, education for sustainable development, their connections, barriers for professional development and their preferences of professional development activities.

The findings indicate that the participants acknowledged the many different roles that visual arts education can have in the school curriculum (Q1). They especially valued the links that the visual arts offered in 'providing opportunities for acquiring knowledge regarding art & culture', as well as in 'developing students' ability to critically interpret images/artworks' and 'promoting students' attitudes of tolerance and open-mindedness'.

The data related to actual practice revealed that teachers put different weight on the diverse roles that visual arts could play in their everyday practice (Q2). As it appears the four tasks constituting the top priorities in their teaching were: 'creative self-expression of the child', 'promotion of acceptance and open-mindedness', 'development of children's self-esteem and self-sufficiency', and 'development of artistic and manual skills'. Of these four priorities the last one only is directly related with the art component of visual arts education. It is rather striking that none of the 11 priorities listed in Q2 scored under 3.11, which means that teachers attributed a great value to visual arts for accomplishing some of the most important goals of education.

Participants reported high levels of self-efficacy for issues related to their general teaching strategies for accomplishing goals, such as 'collaborative work', 'development of children's self-esteem and self-sufficiency', 'promotion of acceptance and open mindedness' (Q3). On the other hand, they appeared moderately confident (below mean 2=moderate) with aspects directly related with their ability to deal with the visual arts education component in their teaching (global art and culture(s)/ art history, art vocabulary/learning artistic language and contemporary art). Participants' responses reflect the general low level of readiness educators seem to have in delivering visual arts classes.<sup>5</sup>

The professional needs, expressed in Q4, were also related to general aspects of teaching, such as 'teaching students with special needs' and 'teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting'. Then the participants stated that they needed professional development in aspects of their practice related to 'knowledge and understanding of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)' and 'knowledge and understanding of art materials/ techniques'. The latter echo the findings in Q3. Overall, participants' expressed needs all have to do with pressing aspects of their practice, which, however, have been supported by professional development courses the last few decades, especially the ones they list as top priorities, i.e., teaching in classrooms with diverse student abilities. The fact that teachers feel insufficiently prepared in these areas, might warn us against the prominent types of in-service training having been offered to them.

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<sup>5</sup> McKean, B. (2000). Arts every day: Classroom teachers' orientation toward arts education. *Arts and Learning Research*, 16, 177-194. / Sotiropoulou – Zormpala, M. (2012). Aesthetic teaching: Seeking a balance between teaching arts and teaching through the arts. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 113, 123-128.





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Regarding ESD, the participants appeared moderately confident in including aspects of ESD in their teaching (Q5). What is interesting here is the fact that participants stated they felt more confident in including the social and cultural dimension, rather than the economical dimension of SD in their teaching (Q6). This may be due to the little emphasis placed on these aspects of SD in in-service training programmes.

A critical cross-check of the results of subsections, a & b, of Q7 in conjunction with the results of Q6 revealed a very interesting point. Despite the fact that most participants (66%) state that they are able to include in their teaching a large variety of topics concerning the cultural dimension of SD (see Q6, graph), it seems that the majority perceive SD in its environmental and social dimension, and less in the cultural and economic aspect. Does this indirectly point out to the need for teacher training and empowerment so that both aspects of sustainable development can be incorporated into their teaching practice as well?

Participants appeared prepared to incorporate SD issues in their teaching. In addition, they seemed to feel ready to implement “whole school approaches for addressing SD issues” and eager to “collaborate with local stakeholders/actors/parents for addressing Sustainable Development issues”. The fact that all these tactics are at the heart of SD educational strategies imply a high level of sensitization and alertness on the part of participants.

Participants felt confident that visual arts education could support the achievement of ESD goals and vice versa even though they gave a slight precedence to the impact of VAE on ESD rather than the opposite. A possible explanation of this is that the arts constitute a more obvious vehicle of approaching any school subject. (Q9).

Participants identified three main barriers that might prevent them from participating in professional development activities (Q10); lack of employer support, limited access to professional development and no availability of relevant professional development. All three constitute external barriers, participants choices do not demonstrate reflection on their own practice failures.

Finally, participants did not decline any of the suggested forms of professional development activities (scores begin at 2.61) (Q11). The three most preferred professional development forms are reading professional literature, participation in a network of teachers and face-to-face training. Apart from the first two that are not common practices among practitioners and denote an active stance to continuous learning, face to face training is the most traditional way of delivering training, that teachers seem unable to part with.



## 4.2. Pre-service teachers - Questionnaire analysis

### 4.2.1. Sample

90 primary pre-service teachers at the Faculty of Education, School of Primary Education of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, completed the questionnaire: 79 women and 11 men, aged 18 to 50 years old (mean age=22.5 years). Regarding their familiarity with VAE, 76 participants (84.4%) attended an undergraduate course (BA), while only 13 (14.4%) attended a postgraduate course (MA) and 1 (1.1%) followed a PhD course.

88 participants completed successfully their general practicum in public schools (97.8%) and 2 (2.2%) in private schools. 68 participants had no experience in VAE (75.6%) and 22 (24.4%) declared knowledge and experience in VAE.

Regarding specific training in VAE, 72 (80%) participants had at least one compulsory course during their undergraduate studies and 31 (34.4%) participants had at least one elective art education course during their undergraduate studies. 4 participants had received an MA in Art Education and one participant had a PhD in Art Education.

### 4.2.2. Results

In this subsection the results of each of the eleven questions of the pre-service teachers' questionnaire are presented in an orderly manner.

Q1 was a warm-up question aiming at understanding pre-service teachers' views about the potential of VAE's role in schools. Participants considered all 9 tasks of Q1 as important (mean score above 2.80), in a scale ranging from '0' for not at all important to '4' for extremely important (see Table 1). It is worth noting that 'providing opportunities for self-expression' was chosen as the most important task (Q1.1, mean 3.31), followed by 'developing students' abilities to present and communicate their ideas' (Q1.3, mean 3.19) and by 'providing opportunities for collaborative work' (Q1.8, mean 3.12). All those were related to general teaching tasks. Last in their choices (although still important) were the tasks of 'developing students' ability to critically interpret images/ artworks' (Q1.4, mean 2.92) and 'developing students' skills in using art techniques/tools/materials (Q1.6, mean 2.84), both related specifically to visual art teaching (see Figure 1).

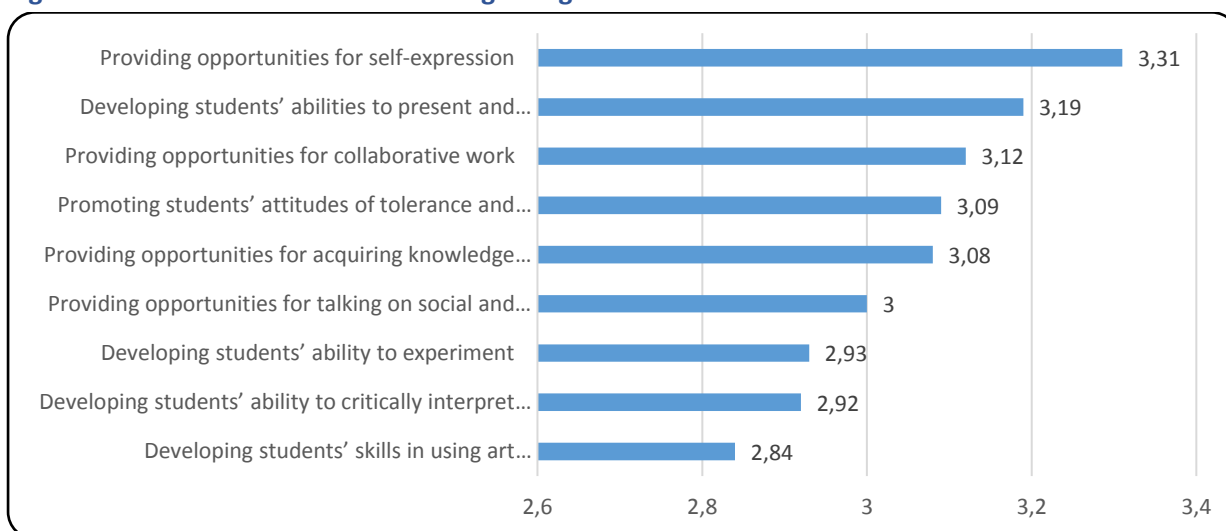
**Table 1: Pre-service teachers' views regarding art education's role**

Q1: What are your views regarding the importance of the following tasks of art education in your ideal school curriculum?	not at all	slightly	moderately	very important	extremely important	M
	0	1	2	3	4	
	%	%	%	%	%	
1. Providing opportunities for self-expression		1.11	1.11	26.67	71.11	3.31
2. Providing opportunities for acquiring knowledge regarding art & culture		1.11	4.44	46.67	47.78	3.08
3. Developing students' abilities to present and communicate their ideas		1.11	2.22	38.89	57.78	3.19



4. Developing students' ability to critically interpret images/artworks		3.33	13.33	42.22	41.11	2.92
5. Developing students' ability to experiment		4.44	6.67	50	38.89	2.93
6. Developing students' skills in using art techniques/tools/materials		3.33	13.33	51.11	32.22	2.84
7. Promoting students' attitudes of tolerance and open-mindedness		2.22	11.11	30	56.67	3.09
8. Providing opportunities for collaborative work	2.22	1.11	6.67	28.89	61.11	3.12
9. Providing opportunities for talking on social and environmental issues	1.11	5.56	6.67	34.44	52.22	3

**Figure 1: Pre-service teachers' views regarding art education's role**



Q1 dealt with participants' views in an imaginary situation, whereas in Q2 participants were asked to state their priorities in practice. [Table 2](#) records participants' responses in each item of Q2, stating percentages as well as means for each response. [Figure 2](#) ranks the items based on their mean score, starting with the item that received the highest mean score and ending with the item that received the lowest mean score.

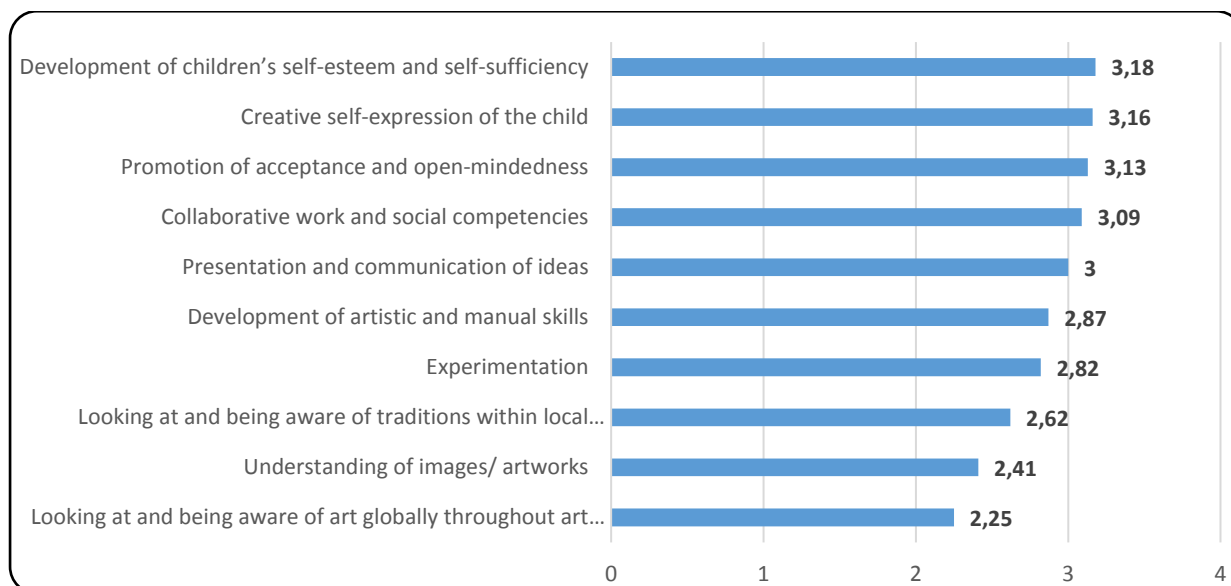
All items of Q2 received a mean score above 2.20. The most important priorities in pre-service teachers' visual art teaching were the 'development of children's self-esteem and self-sufficiency' (mean 3.18), the 'creative self-expression of the child' (mean 3.16) and the 'promotion of acceptance and open-mindedness' (mean 3.13). Last, but certainly not least, in their priorities were activities related to 'understanding of images/ artworks' (mean 2.41) and to 'looking at and being aware of art globally throughout art history' (mean 2.25). Generally, it appears that pre-service teachers' priorities in VAE pertain to general teaching priorities and are less closely related to specific visual art teaching priorities. This matches their general views as well regarding VAE' role, indicated in Q1 ([Table1](#)).



**Table 2: Pre-service teachers’ priorities in visual art teaching**

Q2: If asked to teach art, to what extent, if any, the following would be priorities of your teaching?	not at all	slightly	moderately	very	extremely	M
	0	1	2	3	4	
	%	%	%	%	%	
1. Creative self-expression of the child			12.22	24.44	63.33	3.16
2. Looking at and being aware of traditions within local culture(s)		6.67	24.44	40	28.89	2.62
3. Looking at and being aware of art globally throughout art history	1.11	13.33	36.67	32.22	16.67	2.25
4. Presentation and communication of ideas		1.11	13.33	36.67	48.89	3
5. Understanding of images/ artworks		11.11	33.33	32.22	23.33	2.41
6. Experimentation		4.44	12.22	48.89	34.44	2.82
7. Development of artistic and manual skills		3.33	14.44	42.22	40	2.87
8. Development of children’s self-esteem and self-sufficiency		3.33	6.67	23.33	66.67	3.18
9. Promotion of acceptance and open-mindedness		2.22	6.67	32.22	58.89	3.13
10. Collaborative work and social competencies	1.11	3.33	7.78	26.67	61.11	3.09

**Figure 2: Pre-service teachers’ priorities in visual art teaching**



Q3 deals with estimations of self-efficacy regarding different aspects/ issues of VAE. The participants were asked to state the extent to which they felt competent in dealing effectively with 15 issues. [Table 3](#) records participants’ responses in each item of Q3, stating percentages as well as means for each response. [Figure 3](#) ranks items based on their mean score, starting with the item that received the



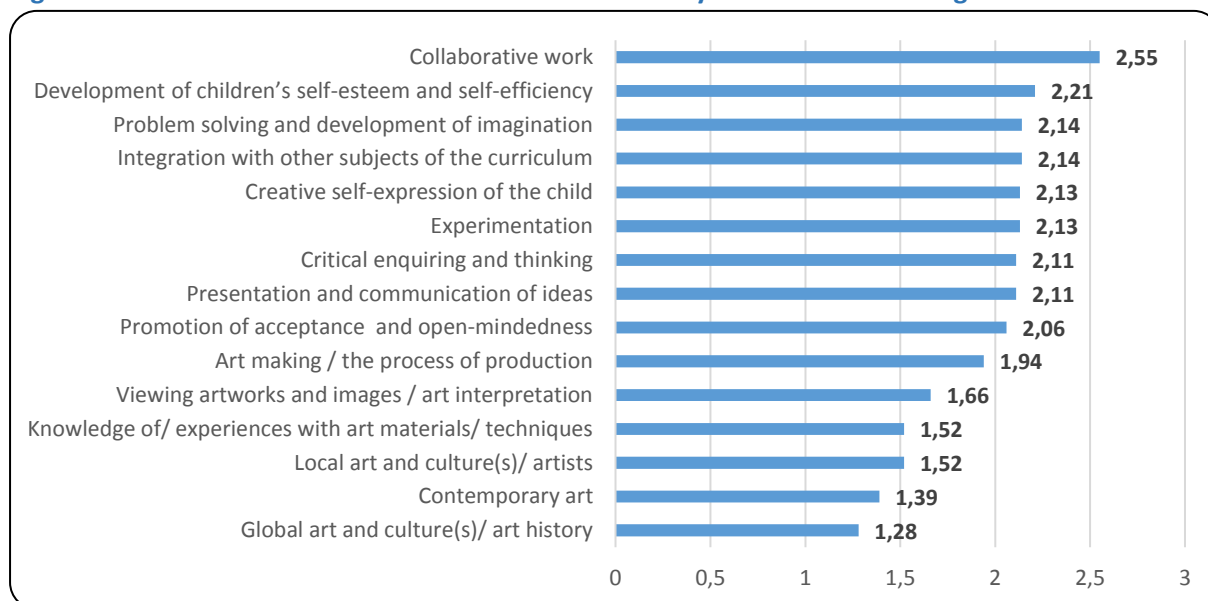
highest mean score and ending with the item that received the lowest mean score. High mean score indicates high self-reported efficacy and low mean score indicates low self-reported efficacy. Pre-service teachers stated that they felt ‘moderately’ confident in general teaching issues, such as ‘collaborative work’ (mean 2.55), and ‘development of children’s self-esteem and self-efficiency’ (mean 2.21). At the bottom of the ranking, indicating that pre-service teachers were ‘moderately’ confident, are issues related specifically with visual art teaching, such as the issues of ‘contemporary art’ (mean 1.39) and ‘global art and culture(s)/art history’ (mean 1.28) (see [Figure 3](#)). In conclusion, pre-service teachers in general seem hesitant and ill-prepared on issues closely related to specific visual art teaching.

**Table 3: Pre-service teachers’ estimations of self-efficacy in art teaching**

Q3: To what extent do you feel you are able to deal effectively with the following issues in teaching art lessons?	not at all	slightly	moderately	very	extremely	M
	0	1	2	3	4	
	%	%	%	%	%	
1. Creative self-expression of the child	1.11	13.33	43.33	32.22	10	2.13
2. Global art & culture(s)/ art history	11.11	47.78	31.11	7.78	2.22	1.28
3. Local art and culture(s)/ artists	7.78	37.78	36.67	13.33	4.44	1.52
4. Contemporary art	14.44	38.89	28.89	13.33	4.44	1.39
5. Presentation and communication of ideas	5.56	12.22	35.56	35.56	11.11	2.11
6. Viewing artworks and images / art interpretation	7.78	31.11	35.56	20	5.56	1.66
7. Experimentation	5.56	11.11	33.33	41.11	8.89	2.13
8. Art making / the process of production	3.33	25.56	34.44	25.56	11.11	1.94
9. Knowledge of/ experiences with art materials/ techniques	7.78	35.56	38.89	15.56	2.22	1.52
10. Problem solving and development of imagination	2.22	18.89	30	36.67	12.22	2.14
11. Critical enquiring and thinking	4.44	16.67	34.44	28.89	15.56	2.11
12. Development of children’s self-esteem and self-efficiency	2.22	13.33	36.67	32.22	15.56	2.21
13. Integration with other subjects of the curriculum	4.44	22.22	22.22	33.33	17.78	2.14
14. Promotion of acceptance and open-mindedness	4.44	18.89	35.56	25.56	15.56	2.06
15. Collaborative work	1.11	6.667	27.78	36.67	27.78	2.55



**Figure 3: Pre-service teachers' estimations of self-efficacy in visual art teaching**



Q4, one of the most crucial of the questionnaire, required participants to state the areas in which they felt they needed further professional development.

Quite expectedly, participants indicated that they needed professional development in all the areas; all items received a mean score of "2" and above (2 = moderate need). However, there is more need in some areas. Three areas received a mean score larger than 2.51 (thus approaching number "3" which represents participants' urgent need for professional development in them. These three areas as indicated in the ranking of [Figure 4](#) are the following:

- 'Teaching students with special needs' (Q4.11, mean 2.89)
- 'Teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting' (Q4.12, mean 2.65)
- 'ICT skills for teaching VAE' (Q4.8, mean 2.52)

**Table 4: Teacher students' needs for professional development**

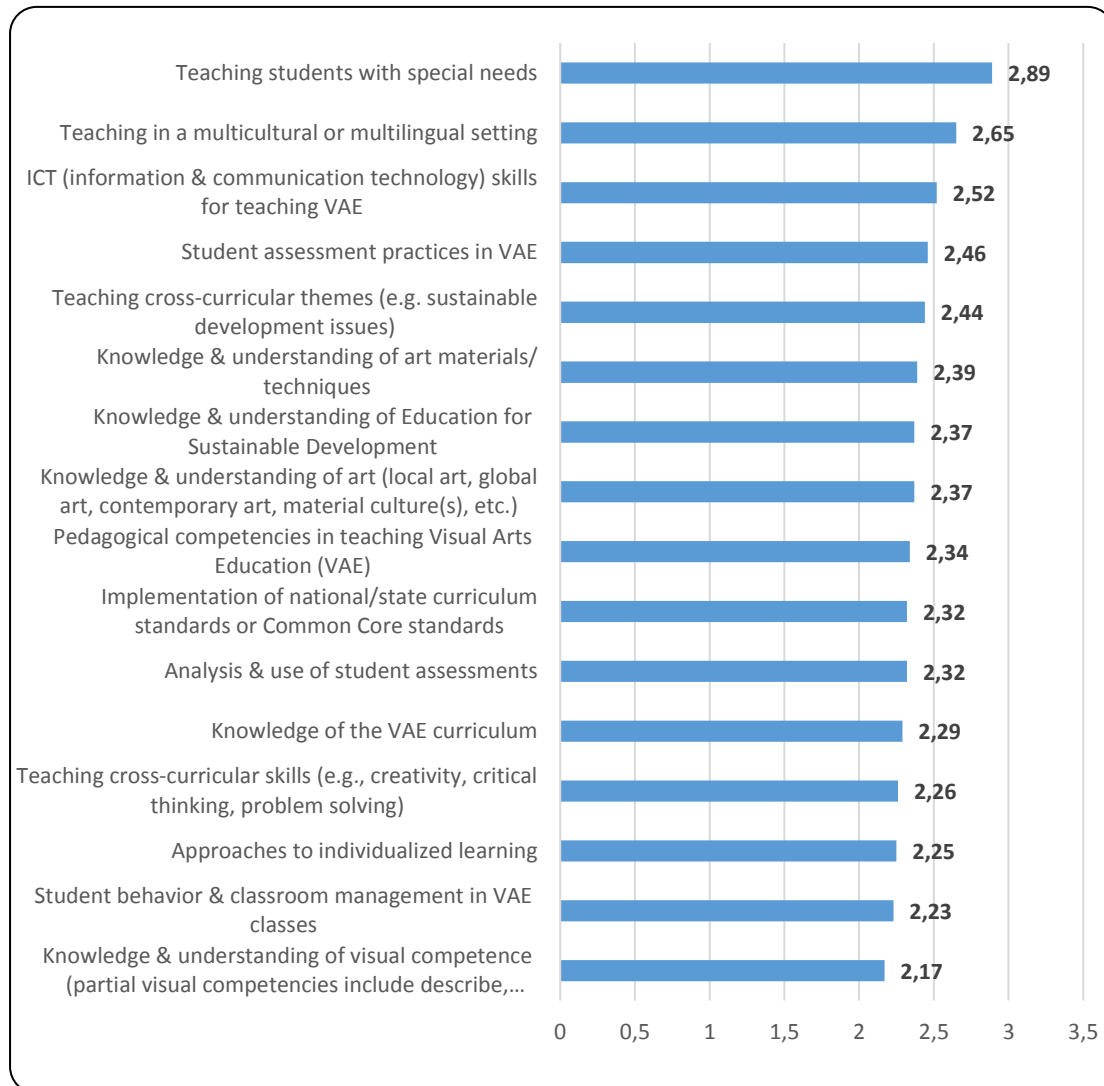
Q4: For each of the areas listed below, please indicate the extent to which you currently need professional development.	not at all	slightly	moderately	very	extremely	M
	0	1	2	3	4	
	%	%	%	%	%	
1. Knowledge & understanding of art (local art, global art, contemporary art, material culture(s), etc.)	1.11	10	32.22	37.78	18.89	2.37
2. Knowledge & understanding of visual competence (partial visual competencies include describe, analyse, interpret, experiment, create, present)	2.22	14.44	34.44	37.78	11.11	2.17



3. Knowledge & understanding of art materials/ techniques		14.44	28.89	33.33	23.33	2.39
4. Knowledge & understanding of Education for Sustainable Development	2.22	13.33	28.89	30	25.56	2.37
5. Pedagogical competencies in teaching Visual Arts Education (VAE)	2.22	8.89	33.33	37.78	17.78	2.34
6. Knowledge of the VAE curriculum	5.56	14.44	21.11	37.78	21.11	2.29
7. Student assessment practices in VAE	2.22	10	24.44	38.89	24.44	2.46
8. ICT (information & communication technology) skills for teaching VAE	2.22	13.33	20	31.11	33.33	2.52
9. Student behaviour & classroom management in VAE classes	2.22	16.67	30	33.33	17.78	2.23
10. Approaches to individualized learning	1.11	14.44	35.56	31.11	17.78	2.25
11. Teaching students with special needs		7.78	13.33	28.89	50	2.89
12. Teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting		14.44	15.56	31.11	38.89	2.65
13. Teaching cross-curricular skills (e.g., creativity, critical thinking, problem solving)	2.22	12.22	35.56	32.22	17.78	2.26
14. Teaching cross-curricular themes (e.g. sustainable development issues)		11.11	32.22	31.11	25.56	2.44
15. Analysis & use of student assessments	2.22	15.56	26.67	33.33	22.22	2.32
16. Implementation of national/state curriculum standards or Common Core standards	5.56	12.22	24.44	34.44	23.33	2.32



**Figure 4: Pre-service teachers' needs for professional development**



Questions 5-10 addressed various issues regarding Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

Specifically, Q5 was a warm up question. It was a single question asking participants to declare how confident they felt to include aspects of ESD in their teaching. Pre-service teachers appeared hesitant, they were certainly less confident (mean=1.74) than in-service teachers. In particular, there was a percentage of 3.33% who felt completely unprepared to face the challenge, 26.7% responded 'slightly', 46.67% noted 'moderately', 20% noted 'very' and a small percentage (3.33 %) noted 'extremely' confident in including ESD in their general practice.

Q6 inquired pre-service teachers' estimations of their competence, taking in consideration the four different aspects of SD in their teaching. Overall, the participants were 'moderately' confident (see Table 5). They felt most confident to address the social dimension (mean 2.36), followed by the cultural (mean 2.13) and finally by the environmental dimension (mean 1.99). Participants appeared rather insecure to address the economic dimension (mean 1.70) (see Figure 5).

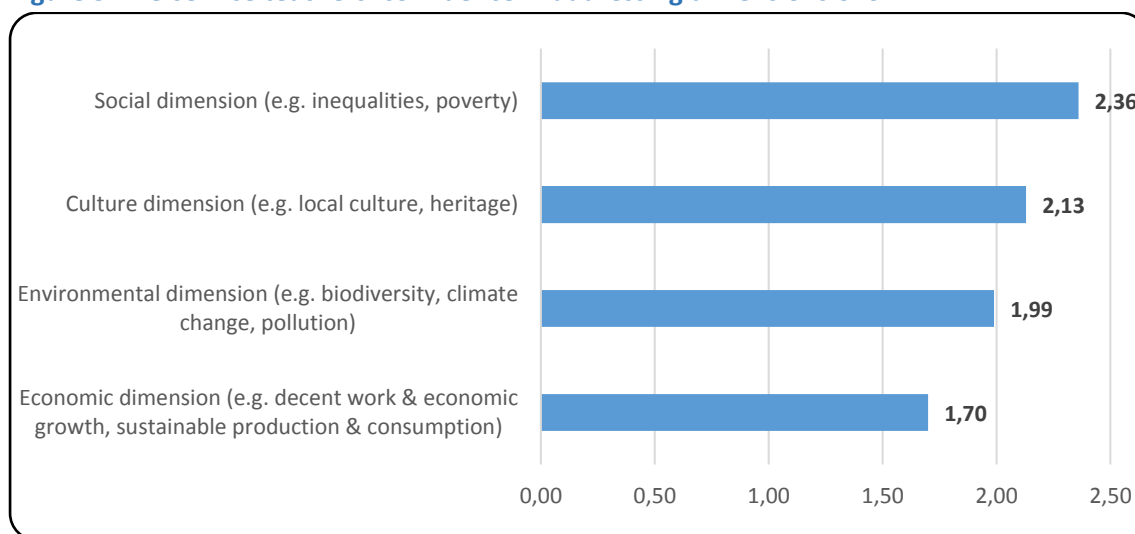




**Table 5: Pre-service teachers' confidence in addressing dimensions of SD**

Q6: How confident do you feel to address issues from the following dimensions of sustainable development in your teaching?	not at all	slightly	moderately	very	extremely	M
	0	1	2	3	4	
	%	%	%	%	%	
1. Environmental dimension (e.g. biodiversity, climate change, pollution)	2.22	18.89	43.33	26.67	8.89	1.99
2. Economic dimension (e.g. decent work and economic growth, sustainable production and consumption)	4.44	27.78	48.89	12.22	6.67	1.70
3. Social dimension (e.g. inequalities, poverty)	2.22	8.89	36.67	28.89	23.33	2.36
4. Cultural dimension (e.g. local culture, heritage)	2.22	17.78	38.89	23.33	17.78	2.13

**Figure 5: Pre-service teachers' confidence in addressing dimensions of SD**



Q7

**Q7a: Definition of the term 'sustainable development issues'**

In their effort to define and explain the term "sustainable development issues", 4 participants (4%) declared they did not know how to answer and 86 answered by referring to a total of 99 elements that can be grouped into 5 general categories that largely correspond to the following dimensions:

Environmental dimension (49 references /49%) (sample)

1. Environmental protection ("... to become a way of our daily life")
2. Awareness of our way of life and our environment
3. Ecological sustainability ("issues that help our environment be preserved for future generations")



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4. Pollution
5. Our ecological footprint
6. Environmental education "with the aim of understanding environmental problems and of searching for a solution"

#### Social dimension (10 references/ 10%) (sample)

1. "Anything that expresses the development & continuous progress of society and of all mankind in general"
2. "Social issues that need to be studied, interpreted and resolved in order to have empathy for the way people live. A state policy aiming at the continuous development of these issues"
3. "Fair sharing of resources"

#### Economic dimension (23 references /23%) (sample)

1. Economic development, "which takes into account environmental issues and a balanced relationship between the production of goods and raw materials"
2. Energy sources ("inexhaustible-alternatives", "development of renewable energy sources")
3. Primary production sector

#### Cultural dimension (1 reference/ 1%)

"to preserve cultural heritage and inherit it to future generations"

#### General references to the element of sustainability (16 references/ 17%). They focused mainly on:

1. The element of sustainability ("development that meets the present needs, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs")
2. The element of "improving the quality of life" and "the balance that is good to exist between society, economy & environment".

From the above thematic analysis of the various definitions of sustainable development issues, it appears that the participants emphasize primarily the environmental and secondarily the economic and the social dimension. Only one reference was made to issues concerning cultural sustainability, whereas quite a few general responses suggested issues concerned with the improvement of life and human activity in a sustainable manner.

#### **Q7b: Sustainable development issues**

In their attempt to name 3 issues that they consider crucial for sustainable development, 85 participants (94%) answered by referring to a total of 333 issues. These can be grouped into 5 general categories, largely corresponding to the same dimensions encountered in the previous section, Q7a. A small number of participants (5/ 6%) declared unable to specify.

#### Environmental dimension (199 references /60%)

1. Environmental issues, disasters, exploitation / degradation / environment / protection, ecological problems / natural resources and their management (150)
2. Flora, with an emphasis on forests and their extinction (6)



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3. Climate change / greenhouse effect / global warming / melting ice (19)
4. Pollution-contamination (18)
5. Overfishing (1)
6. Water / water consumption (5)
7. Ozone hole (6)
8. Parks and green spots in the city (2)
9. Ecological footprint (2)
10. biodiversity (1)
11. air (1)

#### Social dimension (37 references/11%)

1. Social issues / social development / crisis of institutions and values, creation of values (10)
2. Social justice (2)
3. Education, better quality with new technologies, better curriculum, course organization, sustainability training programs, equal opportunities in education (9)
4. Personal health and how it depends on the environment (1)
5. Migration (1)
6. Strengthening the participation of wider groups (1)
7. Racism towards any kind of minority (1)
8. Poverty elimination (2)
9. Social inequalities (3)
10. Social solidarity (2)
11. Ecological consciousness, environmental behaviour / environmental ethics (5)

#### Economic dimension (76 references/23%)

1. Economic issues / economy / development / economic crises / resource adequacy / economic interests / industry / businesses (22)
2. Recycling (11)
3. Production of consumer goods with respect for the environment / overconsumption (4)
4. Energy / economy / oil sufficiency / mineral reserves for combustion / renewable energy sources (photovoltaics, wind turbines, home heating) (16)
5. Technological development, biotechnology (3)
6. Working conditions (1)
7. Waste, waste treatment (6)
8. Food chain / nutrition, adequacy (4)
9. Clothing (1)
10. Use of plastics (1)
11. Transportation ("energy clean" forms of transportation, car fuel) (5)
12. Tourism (2)

#### Cultural dimension (10 references/3%)

1. Cultural issues (4)
2. Cultural heritage (2)



3. Contemporary art (1)
4. Cultural pluralism (1)
5. History (1)
6. Intercultural education (1)

General references (11, 3%) are related either to general issues of SD or make vague assumptions such as "skills development" and "quality of life".

To sum up, in defining issues that they consider belonging to SD, participants focus primarily on those related to the environmental and, secondarily, to the economic and social dimensions of SD. The cultural dimension appears last in participants' relevant responses (3%), an element that agrees with the findings of the analysis of Q7a.

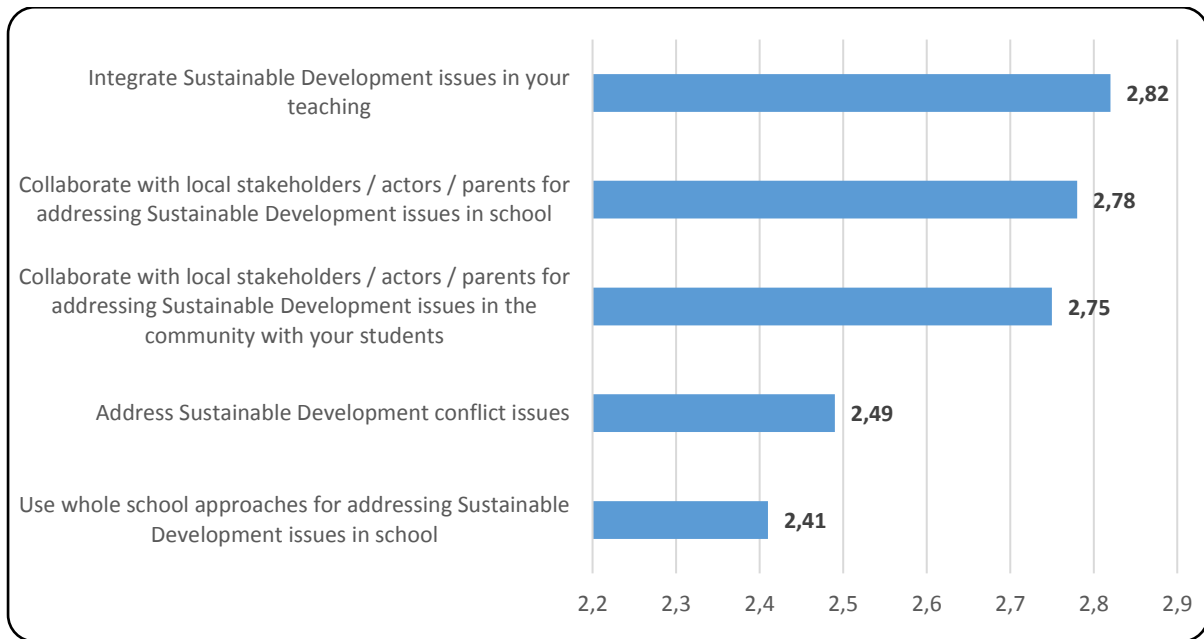
Q8 (see [Table 6](#)) inquired the use of specific approaches participants might adopt regarding the way SD issues might be addressed in accordance with their responses in Q7. The most important approach for the participants was to 'integrate SD issues in their teaching (mean 2.82), immediately followed by their willingness to 'collaborate with local stakeholders/actors/parents for addressing SD issues in school' (mean 2.78). The majority felt that strategies like collaborating 'with local stakeholders/actors/parents for addressing SD issues in the community with your students' (mean 2.75) was almost equally important. The approaches that received a comparatively lower mean (2.61) are the ones that requires their 'dealing with SD conflict issues' (mean 2.49) and the use of 'whole school approaches for addressing SD issues in school' (mean 2.41) (see [Figure 6](#)).

**Table 6: Pre-service teachers' approaches for addressing SD issues**

Q8: Answer the questions below, in light of the definition you gave in the previous question:	not at all	slightly	moderately	very important	extremely important	M
How important is it for you as an educator to...						
	0	1	2	3	4	
	%	%	%	%	%	
1. Integrate Sustainable Development issues in your teaching	1.11	3.33	24.44	23.33	47.78	2.82
2. Address Sustainable Development conflict issues	2.22	10.00	28.89	26.67	32.22	2.49
3. Use whole school approaches for addressing Sustainable Development issues in school	2.22	12.22	25.56	35.56	24.44	2.41
4. Collaborate with local stakeholders / actors / parents for addressing Sustainable Development issues in the community with your students	2.22	4.44	22.22	27.78	43.33	2.75
5. Collaborate with local stakeholders / actors / parents for addressing Sustainable Development issues in school	2.22	3.33	22.22	27.78	44.44	2.78



**Figure 6: Pre-service teachers' approaches for addressing SD issues**



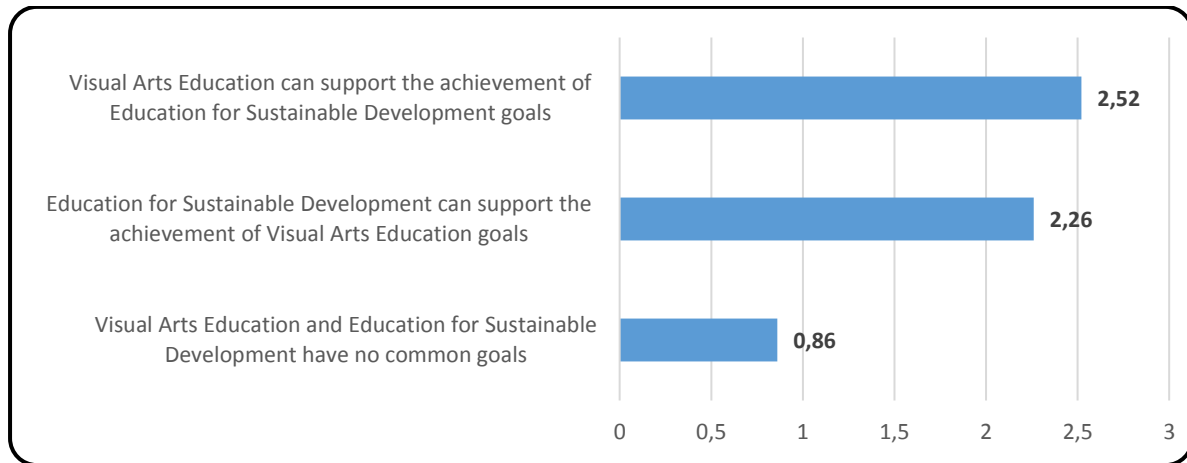
Q9 (see Table 7) explored participants' perceptions of the connection of ESD and VAE. Participants strongly supported the statement that 'VAE can support the achievement of the ESD goals' (mean 2.52). Even if they quite strongly supported that the opposite is feasible too, i.e., that 'ESD can support the achievement of VAE goals', they were slightly less persuaded (mean 2.26) of the positive impact of ESD on VAE. Finally, they felt that the statement 'VAE and ESD had no common goals' applied less (mean 0.86) (see Figure 7).

**Table 7: Pre-service teachers' perceptions on connection of ESD and VAE**

Q9: To what extent do you think that the following statements apply?	not at all	slightly	moderately	very	extremely	M
	0	1	2	3	4	
	%	%	%	%	%	
1. Visual Arts Education and Education for Sustainable Development have no common goals	44.44	31.11	14.44	4.44	5.56	0.86
2. Education for Sustainable Development can support the achievement of Visual Arts Education goals	2.22	7.78	36.67	43.33	10.00	2.26
3. Visual Arts Education can support the achievement of Education for Sustainable Development goals		6.67	30.00	40.00	23.33	2.52



**Figure 7: Pre-service teachers' perceptions on connection of ESD and VAE**



Q10 aimed to identify pre-service teachers' preferences on professional development activities. Percentages and mean scores are reported in Table 8. Figure 8 presents the mean scores of the statements of question 10 in a ranking order, starting with the one that received the highest mean score. High endorsement was noted in the following items:

- 'observation visits to museums/organizations' (mean 2.98)
- 'observation visits to other schools' (mean 2.88)
- 'participation in a network of teachers formed specifically for the professional development of teachers' (mean 2.83)

'Attendance of online courses/seminars' came last in their preferences (mean 2.10) (see Figure 8).

**Table 8: Pre-service teachers' preferences on professional development activities**

Q10: To what extent do you consider the following professional development activities useful?	not at all	slightly	moderately	very	extremely	M
	0	1	2	3	4	
	%	%	%	%	%	
1. Courses/seminars attended in person		4.44	30.00	31.11	34.44	2.66
2. Online courses/seminars	4.44	16.67	34.44	30.00	14.44	2.10
3. Education conferences where teachers and/or researchers present their research or discuss educational issues		3.33	26.67	38.89	31.11	2.68
4. Observation visits to other schools		2.22	21.11	31.11	45.56	2.88
5. Observation visits to museums, or public organizations, or non-government organizations		1.11	18.89	27.78	52.22	2.98
6. Peer and/or self-observation and coaching as part of a formal school arrangement	1.11	6.67	27.78	38.89	25.56	2.53



7. Participation in a network of teachers formed specifically for the professional development of teachers	1.11	3.33	17.78	35.56	42.22	2.83
8. Reading professional literature	3.33	12.22	32.22	42.22	10.00	2.19

**Figure 8: Pre-service teachers' preferences on professional development activities**



Q11 was an open-ended optional question, answered by 22 out of 90 (24%) pre-service teachers in total. It aimed to identify the ways in which participants expected to be supported by a training seminar in shaping their future teaching approaches for the successful combination of VAE and ESD in class. All participants, who completed Q11, emphasized the importance of creating 'authentic' learning opportunities, based on real-life experience. Their suggestions for the content of such a training included:

- "Practice in real conditions, so that what is said in theory would be applied by ourselves"
- "Co-operation with scientists and in-service teachers who already apply the visual arts in an interesting way to formal and informal education of children, adults and minorities"
- "Open discussions -Exchange of ideas and experiences"
- "Participation in conferences"
- "Provision of useful educational material along with practical advice (applicable ideas on how to include in the teaching the wider social environment (family, municipalities, etc.)"
- "Specific examples and teaching suggestions"
- "Acquisition of the basic theoretical principles and a relevant bibliography on both of the topics (what exactly they stand for /various teaching methods, etc.)"
- "The critical study of the analytical programme in Greece and other countries on the basis of VAE & ESD"
- "Ways to implement VAE & ESD through ICT"



#### 4.2.3. Summary /concluding remarks

Overall, the questionnaire fulfilled its purpose as a needs' assessment tool, providing important findings related to participants' views on visual arts education, education for sustainable development, their connections, barriers for professional development and their preferences of professional development activities.

The findings indicate that the participants acknowledged the many different roles VAE can play in the school curriculum (Q1). They especially valued the opportunities that visual arts offered for self-expression, for development of personal abilities, for presenting and communicating ideas, as well as for collaborative work. The data related to actual practice revealed that pre-service teachers put different weight on the diverse roles that visual arts could play in their everyday practice (Q2). As it appears the three tasks constituting the top priorities in their future teaching were: 'children's self-esteem', 'self-sufficiency and self-expression', along with 'the promotion of acceptance and open-mindedness'. In general, tasks related directly with the art component of visual arts education rated last in their priorities.

Participants reported moderate levels of self-efficacy on issues related to general teaching issues, such as 'collaborative work' and 'development of children's self-esteem and self-efficiency' (Q3). On the other hand, they appeared below moderately confident with aspects directly related with their ability to deal with the visual arts education component in their teaching (global art and culture(s)/ art history/ contemporary art). Participants' responses reflect the general low level of readiness they seem to have in delivering visual arts classes and this is further indicated in the expression of their need for professional development in all the areas stated in Q4. An extra emphasis on their inadequacies is made when referring to teaching SN students, working in a multicultural and/or a multilingual setting and applying ICT skills when teaching VAE, concerns also expressed by experienced practitioners (in Q4 of their responses). Overall, pre-service teachers expressed their apprehension in dealing with their future praxis most probably due to their inexperience. It appears that student teaching that could test future teachers' theoretical knowledge and could give them confidence in their professional life is rather insufficient.

Regarding ESD, pre-service teachers appeared to be not very confident in including aspects of ESD in their teaching (Q5). Again, as in the case of in-service teachers, participants stated they felt more confident in including the dimension of social, followed by cultural and then by the environmental dimension rather than the economical dimension of SD in their teaching (Q6). This may be due to the limited attention given on these aspects of SD in pre-service educational programmes.

A critical cross-check of the results of subsections, a & b, of Q7 in conjunction with the results of Q6 revealed an interesting point also found in the teachers' results: Most pre-service teachers (80%) stated that they would be able to include in their teaching topics concerning the cultural dimension of SD (see Q6, graph) to a moderate or higher degree; however, it seems that the majority apprehend SD in its environmental rather than its cultural aspect. One may assume that this indirectly highlights the need for the inclusion of this aspect of SD in their preservice education and/or ongoing teacher training so that these aspects of SD can be incorporated into their teaching practice as well. In addition, most of the participants' comments are limited to general concepts (e.g. environment,





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society, economy), which may indicate a vague perception rather than a more thorough, theoretical and practical insight into SD issues.

Pre-service teachers appeared more confident in implementing SD issues in their future teaching (Q8), with a preference in 'integration and collaboration with local stakeholders/actors/parents' over "whole school approaches for addressing SD issues". Participants largely felt strong that VAE could support the achievement of the ESD goals. But they were not that strong supporters of the view that ESD could enrich the achievement of VAE goals (Q9). When asked to choose from the suggested forms of professional development activities, participants showed a high preference for more innovative forms of training, such as observation visits to museums/cultural organizations and schools and energetic participation in a relative network of teachers. Of course, they put face-to-face training rather high in their choices, considering its traditional nature. Last in their preferences came the attendance of online courses/seminars. Very interesting suggestions were made in the final Q11 where participants tried to suggest issues that would empower and make a training course on VAE & ESD successful and helpful. Most of them preferred experiential training, as this would aid them to "understand better the partnership between the two subjects (VAE & ESD) and feel more competent to apply this knowledge in their future work." Coupled with their answers in Q3, student teachers expressed their concern for inadequate practicum time in their pre-service years.



## 5. In- & Pre-service teachers' views – Interview results

### 5.1 In-service teachers' views

#### 5.1.1. Sample

Six in service teachers were interviewed, 3 men and 3 women. Apart from one who works in the private sector, all others work in public primary education schools of Thessaloniki, Greece.

- 4 generalist and 2 art specialist teachers
- Experienced (10 years and above, mean 17.8 years)
- Generalist teachers all graduated from a Teachers' College or a School of Primary Education, one is an MA holder and is also a PhD candidate and one is currently attending a post graduate programme.
- Art specialist teachers are graduates of a School of Fine Arts; one of them has earned an MA degree.

#### 5.1.2. Summary of views

This section offers a summary of the participants views on the issues discussed during the interviews.

##### 5.1.2.1. Teaching VAE: Views and experiences

The first theme of questions of the interview schedule inquired in-service teachers' views and experiences of teaching VAE (QA1-4).

All participants considered VAE "particularly useful in every respect" and that it "has a lot to offer to the school."

All generalist teachers expressed very positive views about teaching visual arts classes; they had experiences of VA teaching either because their teaching obligations required it or because they wanted it themselves. Therefore, they had extensively used VAE teaching strategies, but without a specific VAE teaching goal, because they recognized they neither have the required cognitive level, nor the relevant experience. As one of them admitted, "I have often devoted the teaching hour to another subject, but I promised myself I will never do it again, this is another important subject that I have to teach."

The two arts specialist teachers maintained that VAE constitutes "a collective experience in that we inspire children to express themselves on a subject in their own way, we invite them to collaborate and produce a beautiful result from which they can draw pleasure." Children draw pleasure and happiness from VAE. A basic factor for this is the fact that teachers serve at the same school for many years, so "this continuity creates a very good basis, it has established a very good communication and a reciprocal relationship with both colleagues and children."

Considering the advantages of VAE (QA3), teachers reported:

- Its wide outlook that makes it "not quite a lesson but it can simultaneously be all subjects together, ... you can talk about everything through the arts."
- Creativity ("it is beyond our thinking ..." "a new discovery each day.")



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- The involvement of all children's senses, the stimulation of their imagination and personality, the development of cooperation among them.
- The empowerment of children "who do not have typical intelligence," pupils with learning difficulties or "different" children. VAE for these children constitute "the big key" in order to approach and communicate with their classmates. Through the visual arts, these pupils have the chance "to be empowered, their self-esteem is raised..." (experiences about a refugee child and a child with autism are shared here)

Generalist teachers recognized that "the visual arts class permeates every school subject," "is associated with every subject", and its cross-thematic nature "is very good for the children," while it also signals their own transformation "from a teacher-centered programme to one that allows our students a lot of self-motivation" (QA2).

Contrary to the stakeholders' outlook and especially the school advisor's view, generalist in-service teachers reported that they often cooperated with their school's art educators especially during the so-called *flexible zone* and in grades 1-4. Art educators confirmed this collaboration, marking that "it is difficult in its execution. When it happens, however, it is very functional and helpful." They stressed, however, that there is a constant search for extra time outside the school programme and they proposed "extra hours should be given so that we can communicate with teachers, when they need our support in a subject."

Considering the challenges faced during VAE teaching (QA4a), they mainly focused on the lack of substructures and materials. All teachers agreed that with proper classrooms their work becomes easier, while on the contrary, "you feel very restricted ...in fact you suffocate and you keep pressing the limits, you cannot act, and neither can children." VAE teachers noted that the existence of an appropriate space allows for "continuity in what we do" and leads to "more emphasis on the laboratory part, children come more motivated, complete their work, sometimes we move to other material, we expand in space..."

On the contrary, the lack of an arts room causes difficulties in space management, because in a 45-minute teaching session, its arrangement needs to change, "you have to carry colours, temperas, there is no running water so that children can wash." The situation is further complicated by the fact that according to the teaching schedule, the time allocated for VAE in primary school is a two-hour session for the first two grades, while for the rest 4 grades only one hour, which "is very little time."

Moreover, "the materials also pose problems" because they "...keep being reduced and in the end, I can only show them on the computer..." and "we are limited to the use of cardboard, glue, scissors, maybe some plasticine." The scarcity of funds for schools directly affects the provision of materials for the arts classes, so teachers "do very little, since we have no resources, we have no options."

The situation worsens because there are children "who cannot afford to bring their own materials", "the parents have difficulty in contributing...". To ameliorate the problem, teachers explained, they intensify their collaboration with other teachers and "save any material that we lay our hands on, whatever can be saved, even small pieces; when a sixth grader leaves school, we never discard the



materials he/she left behind.” They make every effort and if they cannot come up with materials, they make up for the lack “with all kinds of tricks,” which can inhibit the pupils’ creativity.

In view of the pupils’ behaviour in the visual arts lesson (QA4b), all teachers agreed that it is one “of their favourite lessons,” “they like it a lot,” “they like it very, very much,” “they simply cannot wait for the visual arts class,” “they are happy, they want it, they eagerly expect it,” because they draw pleasure from this class, “they are liberated through the arts,” “they come in touch with something totally different and creative, while they see immediate results of their work.”

#### 5.1.2.2. Attitudes about the link of ESD and VAE

A couple of questions inquired participants’ attitudes towards the link of ESD and VAE. All participants seemed to deal with the issue of sustainability “only in a positive way,” “something that leads us to better paths” and “must become an experience across the curriculum.” They understand ESD as a broader concept, they seem to believe it may saturate their educational activity beyond the scope of the curriculum, mostly in the framework of Flexible Zone, which relates to issues of nutrition, the environment, traffic education and wise use of school libraries and local cultural institutions. However, comparable to stakeholders, in-service teachers also shared the view that “sustainability is more involved with the prudent management of materials, energy saving, environmental problems rather than ideas.”

All in-service teachers appeared convinced that ESD may reinforce VAE and they thought possible and equally, if not “more interesting” the reverse. However, they expressed the reservation as to “how they can achieve this in the one teaching hour a week allocated to ESD.” (QB1).

All teachers had experiences/involvement with programmes/projects that bridged goals of ESD with VAE, either individually or in collaboration with other teachers of the school (QB2). Of course, most of these programmes dealt with the environmental aspect of ESD (e.g., recycling). However, they also referred to programmes related to the social dimension (refugees, human rights, social justice, diversity), as well as to cultural aspects such as literature and visual arts, cultural identity of the Jews in Thessaloniki).

#### 5.1.2.3. In service training

In terms of professional development in VAE (QD1), 3 of the generalist teachers, had participated in relevant seminars and appreciated them greatly (“in Didaskaleio<sup>6</sup> I attended all relevant to the arts courses; this was a unique experience for me, because they opened a new, unknown world to me.”). The other 3 teachers, despite their expressed interest in the topic, had not managed to attend any relevant courses, either in their basic studies (“at the university I had never taken any arts courses, they were not compulsory, they were elective”), nor later in their professional life did they have a chance to attend relevant training (“...I was never involved nor did I ever have any training in visual

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<sup>6</sup> Didaskaleio of Primary Education was set up in Faculties of Education with the aim of further educating Greek primary in-service generalist teachers (2-year training). Unfortunately, they were closed in 2012.



arts alone”). One of the reasons of this lack of training was, as they claimed, the limited relevant in-service training programmes, which were addressed only to VAE primary teachers

The two VAE educators in the study participated in visual arts training, which however, included exclusively the environmental aspect of ESD, with which, as one of the teachers recognized, “the concept of sustainability has been identified.” Finally, all teachers claimed they had not attended any special instruction in ESD (QD3).

Concerning the teachers’ expectations from a training programme on ESD and VAE (QD4-5), teachers showed preference:

As to the form

- Distance learning, as “it can be done at a time and place convenient for everyone”
- The need for practical/experiential part (“to live it, to be involved in it...words are good, but I want to see how what we say may be implemented in realistic conditions. In other words, I want to see someone teach, to see the difficulties, not an artificial lesson”)
- The possibility of generalist teachers’ participation

As to the content

- Topics (“about culture in general and the arts of other people and how this is related to the teaching of classes”)
- The combination of VAE with other subjects (cross-thematic, interdisciplinary approaches)
- The study of terms and associations between visual arts and sustainability, because “we do not exactly comprehend the concepts or their dimension, we simply go towards one side [...] Because they are concepts, we have not discovered yet...”

#### 5.1.2.4. Other

Regarding the support teachers expect to have from a programme like CARE (QD6), expectations focus on:

- Feedback, communication with a network of teachers “where problems they encounter in practice are discussed” (“It is crucial to have communication as a follow up, we can upload material, other schools can also upload material to a site or a blog”).
- Dissemination of knowledge and experience to the wider community/involvement of pupils and their families (“Surely parents’ involvement can have nothing but positive impact,” “...Thus it will be more efficient.”).



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## 5.2. Pre-service teachers' views

### 5.2.1. Sample

Six pre-service teachers were interviewed all of them women: 3 are currently attending an MA course at the Faculty of Education, School of Primary Education and 3 are undergraduate student teachers in the final semester of their studies. All of them have successfully finished their general practicum and 2 of the postgraduate student teachers work as tutors in the private sector.

### 5.2.2. Summary of views

This section offers a summary of the participants views on the issues discussed during the interviews. By and large, pre-service teachers had a difficulty in focusing at the core of each question but were very descriptive and unexpectedly (very positive feeling) critical in their views and suggestions.

#### 5.2.2.1. Teaching VAE: Views and experiences

The first theme of questions of the interview schedule inquired pre-service teachers' views and experiences of teaching VAE (QA1-4).

All participants, without exception, delved into the value of art in human life and the multiple roles it plays in children's development. Referring specifically to the art classes and drawing primarily from their experience as schoolgirls and later as student teachers, they explained how crucial the impact of this subject has been on their personal development and how important they consider it in expanding their pedagogical perspective (e.g. "it helps me explore my potential and evolve elements of myself").

Looking forward to their future role as in-service teachers, they all aimed to help students "gain knowledge and experience through the arts about life and its 'phenomena', but also to break away from stereotypes, which are usually supported by school, family and society at large." Most saw the success of the art class as a prerequisite for creating a positive participatory environment, where "students will be active protagonists and the teacher will not hold the position of 'judge' imposing his/her views, tactics and perceptions".

Interestingly enough, almost all of them came up with a common conclusion from their internship at public schools. They argued that in relation to generalist teachers, whom in some cases they described as "rigid" and "cautious", specialist art teachers "seize the opportunity to come closer to children in order to track their interests, preferences and needs.

Art teachers show respect to individual learning rhythms." The interviewed in-service specialist art teachers implied something similar, but they did not dare to touch it directly, as the pre-service ones did. In fact, the observation of the latter was supplemented by the negative remark that several times they regretted the lack of cooperation between the generalist and the specialist art teacher of the school. Pre-service teachers recognised the common field of action the two of them had and the value of their cooperation. Comparably to the specialist art teachers' opinion on this matter, pre-service teachers agreed that "the generalist teacher is the 'key' person to implement the art lesson in his/her



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class -although he/she clearly lacks specialized visual knowledge. Children's response is great, and this course specifically is offered for interdisciplinary connections and extensions with other courses." In addition, undergraduate participants had misinterpreted a small number of "older" generalist teachers' hesitation as prejudice against artists ability in pedagogical issues. "They are reluctant regarding the cooperation with specialist art teachers and reproduce stereotypes of the type 'how to be a proper painting' or highlight the needs of the 'main' courses". "They give the impression that they only use art to serve their educational goals and not to cultivate their students, develop their skills, self-expression, etc., although they agree on the positive effects of children's contact with art".

When asked if they felt competent to teach VAE, they all were positive in teaching the subject if there would be no specialist art teacher available, although the lack of specialized knowledge required by the course generated feelings of insecurity and uncertainty. Ideally, they "wish to work along with specialist art teachers and to open up interdisciplinary windows in various subject matters so that children ~~and~~ can enjoy learning and we can continue to find our role and profession interesting and challenging for many years to come."

An equally important issue raised was the cost of implementing what the syllabus / textbook suggests. There has been intense concern in some (through observations during the internship) of the danger posed by the inexperienced in VAE generalist teachers who "in an effort to get by can misuse the material leading to stereotypical reproductions, especially in some activities that guide the child step by step in each action and do not leave much room for free expression". However, while most generalist teachers admitted lack of knowledge and of sufficient time to study in detail VAE's material and prepare an activity every day, pre-service teachers described the VAE's textbooks and the indicative instructions on the Ministry's portal as useful tools and a source of ideas for the teacher, mainly because they promote interdisciplinarity in teaching. "We needed something in order to teach this lesson sufficiently". "The book offers a 'common strategy' for teachers and aids sequence in the implementation of the course". "It's easier to teach the book, as it has rich material and offers a lot of ideas to the teacher. However, it is important for the generalist teacher to have the relevant foundation or training in order to meet the objectives of art lessons." Finally, influenced by their respective courses during their studies, they expressed the need to "link the material of VAE with as many courses of the analytical curriculum as possible, so that children can understand the constant presence of art in real-life throughout the centuries and not to consider VAE fragmentary and discontinuous."

Pre-service teachers commented as well on the use of photocopies (copies of art works or simple ready-made art exercises) as a means of "creative activity" or as a complacency of teachers' consciences that "they teach VAE." In the same vein, specialist art teachers have clearly emphasized their strong opposition to the use of photocopying, both in terms of a typical teaching tactic and in terms of the lack of a teaching goal and purpose.

Admittedly, all through their internship in schools, VAE classes were done occasionally and often aimed to strengthen and consolidate other subjects or school's extra activities (e.g. national



celebrations). Pre-service teachers suggested that VAE "presupposes the implementation of a unifying pedagogical attitude and the meeting of conditions that ensure children's unimpeded, experiential activity. Unfortunately, this is the case only in some schools and, therefore, VAE faces in general many difficulties in its implementation." The lack of general provision for cultural education and VAE affects the theoretical goals of its analytical curriculum that aspires to "leave room for flexibility so that each child can explore, experiment and test their skills, get to know the art world and get actively involved in the artistic process without stylized suggestions and patterns." All participants agreed to the great difficulties that arise in the proper implementation of VAE due mainly to the limited time offered in the school schedule as well as to the lack of resources (materials, equipment, suitable rooms). It becomes obvious through their answers that they directly connect the quality of VAE teaching to teachers' personal initiative.

#### 5.2.2.2. Attitudes about the link of ESD and VAE

Pre-service teachers were acquainted with ESD's main goals. However, when asked to give examples of participating in relevant programmes (educative, training etc.), their reports were mostly limited to environmental issues (e.g. recycling, natural resources, pollution, climate change). All participants appeared convinced that ESD may reinforce VAE and they thought the reverse very interesting. Additionally, they showed great interest in parameters that they had not thought of in the past, such as e.g. the quality of school-community cooperation for sustainable development through the arts, stating their need for further education, training and support in this field.

Everyone started the discussion with negative comments for the lack of concrete official policy. Referring to ESD in the current school reality, they focused on similar problems with the teaching of VAE (lack of time combined with the abundance of material, lack of knowledge on creative ways to connect the two subjects), a fact that justified in their opinion "teachers' wariness of whether they can respond." Participants stressed that the provision of resources and infrastructures is a necessary factor for the systematic approach of sustainability issues within the school. At the same time, a limited number of pre-service teachers commented that generalist-teachers aim at some personal benefit (their evaluation) when they choose similar participations in programmes / actions or even trainings.

In general, pre-service teachers agreed that, although they felt comfortable in discussing ESD issues, they didn't feel competent to bridge ESD & VAE in their teaching practice due to lack of experience and training during their studies.

#### 5.2.2.3. Training

For obvious reasons, answers in this section were brief and vague, due to lack of experience and relevant knowledge. Everyone believed that the in-service teachers' training is insufficient both in VAE as well as in ESD.

Particularly, participants commented that "the Ministry introduced the teaching of VAE's books without organising special training courses for generalist teachers who are unacquainted with the





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subject by and large". Additionally, they stressed the need for official, routine, substantial training courses offering opportunities for cooperation in between generalist and specialist art teachers. They wished they were permitted to follow such events at least in the final year of their studies or as graduates, even if not yet in-service.

Finally, they did not have a clear picture of workshops and conferences concerning VAE, but they expressed the wish to be informed and participate in such actions.

#### 5.2.2.4. Other

There was a warm expression of interest in the CARE program as a whole and more specifically in taking part in the teaching training courses. In fact, they declared how helpful it would prove for them if these courses adopted a highly experiential- workshop character. They even suggested that trainees could be organised in groups of three, that is a generalist in-service, a pre-service and a specialist art educator, who would directly collaborate during the workshops and transfer later all the experience and knowledge acquired together in school classes.



## 6. Closing remarks

All views, extracted by the analysed interviews and questionnaires, form a very interesting picture of the participants' attitude towards VAE and the possible synergies with ESD.

Conclusively, one needs to stand on the a very positive response from all teachers, generalists (in- and pre-service) and specialists, who hope and claim from the Ministry to address these issues with seriousness.

Participants' views are reported and discussed in the corresponding parts of this analysis so that they are not repeated here; in conclusion, however, the main views voiced by all participants are briefly highlighted here:

Generalist teachers (in- & pre-service) avoid teaching the VAE because the lack of specialized knowledge required creates feelings of insecurity and uncertainty. Teachers often feel 'left alone' to handle unfamiliar issues, without any substantial support in a field that requires specialized knowledge. The lack of appropriate spaces, equipment and materials in public schools, along with a hectic schedule based on curriculum that informally classifies the courses in "primary" and "secondary" orbit, does not facilitate the systematic, experiential and creative implementation of VAE. In fact, VAE occurs occasionally in school life and often aims to strengthen and support other subjects or school activities.

The official state has introduced specific material (books, online information etc.) without organising systematic, compulsory training for teachers (generalists and specialists). Teachers and Ministry officials declared that a rise in the employment of more specialist art-teachers, an increase in teaching hours along with the provision of materials and appropriate spaces would certainly strengthen the implementation of VAE. Equally important they considered the organising of frequent experiential training seminars for teachers on VAE and ESD, in order to offer educators, the necessary support to connect effectively in their practice visual arts with the goals of sustainability.

All participants understand the value of the two items, VAE & ESD, and consider their synergy necessary in school life as well as in connecting schools to real- life issues and to the community. Everyone expressed positive views on the relationship between SD and VAE, as well as on the relationship between sustainability and culture.

By and large, a wide discrepancy between the rhetoric and practice of VAE & ESD is easily detectable through data analysis, and this reflects the lack of political will to effectively recognize their multifunctional partnership and their substantial role in sustainability and holistic learning. Participants mentioned several conceptual (narrow perceptions, resistant stereotypes), as well as structural and practical factors that affect teachers' intention to bridge Education for Sustainability with Visual Art Education. This difficulty is also recorded in the international literature, where several researchers report the lack of time and abundance of material as obstacles for the development and



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promotion of similar actions<sup>7</sup> (Gough, 2005· Czippan, et. al., 2010· Liarakou et. al., 2014· Hands, 2010· Smith, 2015· Johns, et. al., 2000a).

It will be interesting to compare the Greek data analysis with the corresponding results in partner countries so that the professional development task of this project may be accurately mapped, and the offered training services can correspond directly to practitioners' real needs.

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<sup>7</sup> Gough, A. (2005). Sustainable schools: Renovating educational processes. *Applied Environmental Education and Communication*, 4(4), 339-351.

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