



Education to boost skills

Towards a reunited Cyprus

FOREWORD

Education is essential. Essential to open the door to high-quality jobs and satisfying careers. Essential to enable people to be creative and innovative lifelong learners. Essential for social inclusion, to ensure that everyone benefits from economic progress and no-one feels forgotten or left behind.

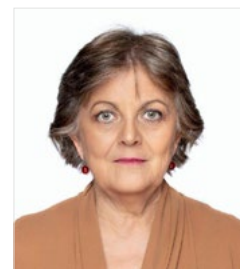
For all of these reasons – high-quality jobs, lifelong learning, social inclusion – Europe is investing in the skills and education of the Turkish Cypriot community. The stories in this booklet demonstrate a comprehensive range of investments: from promoting child-centred pre-school education, to providing secondary schools with state-of-the-art laboratories; from setting standards in vocational training, to creating systems for lifelong learning.

I am encouraged by the many positive impacts. Children are set up for educational success. Young people are provided with core work skills such as communication, problem solving and teamwork – and they have used this knowledge to secure that first job. Skills gaps are filled and we are making a vital contribution in a context of high unemployment.

These actions are part of a broader package of European investment in Cyprus. Our goal is to support economic development, foster reconciliation, and support civil society. We aim to provide a solid basis for future Cypriot reunification, by bringing the Turkish Cypriot community closer to the EU, and building trust.

Elisa Ferreira

Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms



INTRODUCTION

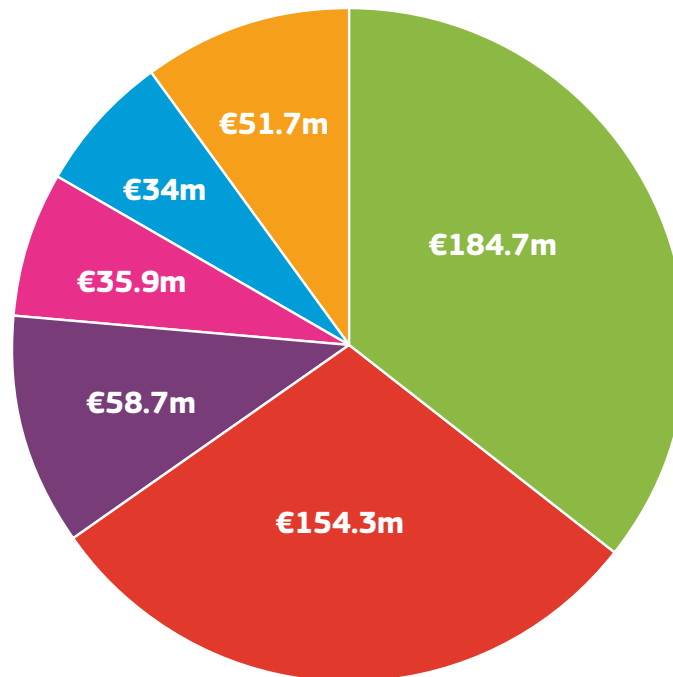
Cyprus joined the European Union 15 years ago. Since then, the EU has been supporting the island's two communities to work towards a final settlement and to end decades of division.

To pave the way for reunification, one of the aims of EU aid has been to bring the two communities more closely together economically.

Much of the EU's support to Cyprus therefore focuses on developing the economy of the island's Turkish Cypriot community. Since its introduction in 2006, the EU's **Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community** has provided over half a billion euros in financial support.

The programme supports projects in areas such as agriculture, environment, infrastructure, civil society, community development, cultural heritage, telecommunications and education, as well as private sector development, labour market, crossings, traffic safety, energy, providing information about EU policy and encouraging alignment with the EU.

Overview of funding 2006-2018 (Total allocated: €519.3 million)



Objective:

-
- Infrastructure
 - Bringing Turkish Cypriots closer to the EU
 - Socio-economic development
 - TAIEX Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument
 - Confidence building
 - Reserve (Support and Settlement facility)

KEY SUCCESSES (2006-2018)

Developing and restructuring infrastructure:

263 km of water supply distribution networks renewed

3 wastewater treatment plants constructed

99 km of sewage networks constructed

7 refuse collection trucks supplied

2 incinerators for animal by-products supplied

Promoting social and economic development:

271 rural development and local community development projects supported

138 projects for schools, lifelong learning organisations and the labour market supported

More than **150** grants to SMEs / start-ups

Consultancy services and training provided for **more than 1 000** businesses and entrepreneurs

Training provided for **almost 200** farmers to improve water use efficiency and farm hygiene

Over 800 farmers informed about disease-related risks, disease prevention and the long-term benefits of disease elimination among livestock

Encouraging reconciliation, building confidence, supporting civil society and bringing the Turkish Cypriot community closer to the EU:

1 EU Infopoint established to proactively inform the Turkish Cypriot community about EU policies and the Aid Programme, via events, social media and web-based information activities

60 projects for civil society organisations supported

More than 80 training sessions carried out to strengthen the work of civil society organisations

885 missing persons identified and their remains returned to their families

More than **1 400** Turkish Cypriots given educational opportunities in EU Member States through EU scholarships

75 cultural heritage sites supported island-wide

5 new Green Line crossing points opened

BOOSTING SKILLS

In this booklet, we focus on the EU's support to boost skills in the Turkish Cypriot community. Through a range of initiatives, the EU is investing in education and boosting employability, thereby contributing to social and economic development and providing opportunities to bring the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities closer together.

Between 2006 and 2019, the EU's Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community allocated nearly €40 million to boost skills through education.

The support seeks to build a workforce that is able to meet the needs of the community's labour market and to drive sustainable economic development in the long term.

Education, training and lifelong learning are all important parts of this. The Aid Programme has provided grants to nearly 140 projects to support schools, lifelong learning organisations and the labour market in the community. The impacts of this support are already visible, as improved education and training standards are nurturing a more skilled and adaptable workforce.

A new generation of entrepreneurs is also emerging, as more Turkish Cypriots start their own businesses. With the help of EU funding, thousands of Turkish Cypriots have undertaken scholarships in EU Member States, enabling them to learn and pass on their experiences at home in Cyprus.

Meanwhile, investment in the latest technologies and equipment is helping the Turkish Cypriot community to keep pace with changes in the labour market and with EU standards.

While positive signs can already be seen in today's working population, support is also focusing on the younger Turkish Cypriot generation. New teaching methods and resources are helping to put children on a path to success from a young age, as high teaching standards are applied across all educational stages.

In this booklet, we hear the stories of a number of beneficiaries of the Aid Programme to explore how the support is having positive impacts in many areas, from primary and secondary education to vocational training and apprenticeships, entrepreneurship and lifelong learning.

CHILD-CENTRED LEARNING IN PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOLS

We begin in the classroom of a pre-primary school in the Turkish Cypriot community in Nicosia, where traditional teacher-centred methods are gradually making way for more practical, child-centred approaches.

Teacher Fatma Kükrer's school is one of two pre-primary schools to have taken the lead on this. Their child-centred approach emphasises that children are innately willing and able to learn. It ensures that from a young age, teaching is tailored to each individual child's ability to learn. Children have freer access to learning materials and are encouraged to learn by doing.

Funding through the Aid Programme helped familiarise Fatma and her fellow teachers with these approaches, which are widely applied across the EU.

'With this approach, I'm able to help children to become more creative, efficient and modern-thinking,' Fatma says.

Family members have also been able to notice change in their children.

'I've seen him become more independent, more willing to take on responsibility,' says Halide Liman, whose son attends one of the schools. 'He's bolder, more courageous, more willing to do things on his own.'

'My grandson has started asking more questions,' agrees Emine Büyükalsancak. She believes the child-centred approach to teaching is what children need, as it will make them 'more successful individuals in the future'.

The EU's funding has also provided new equipment and teaching materials. Now, the staff have the right resources to teach to the high standards they strive to achieve.

This project has increased education standards by providing teachers with the resources they need to introduce child-centred teaching methods to the Turkish Cypriot community for the first time, inspired by the approaches used in the EU.

Having seen the project's success and amid growing demand from parents for education of this kind, other pre-primary schools have also been inspired to follow suit and adopt the new, child-centred teaching methods. Many have also applied for additional EU funding to help them in this process.

This means the new approaches are continuing to be implemented beyond the lifespan of the project, as the EU's support builds momentum for change.

Most importantly, this support is helping children to have a good start in life. This sets them up for the next stage of their education and paves the way for success later on in their professional lives.

“*I've seen my son become more independent, more willing to take on responsibility. He's bolder, more courageous, more willing to do things on his own.*”

Halide Liman, parent



Teacher Fatma Kükreç: 'With this approach, I'm able to help children to become more creative, efficient and modern-thinking.'



Children learning at a primary school in Nicosia, which follows a new child-centred method.

STATE-OF-THE-ART LABORATORY EQUIPMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

As she speaks to us in her school laboratory, biology student and aspiring doctor Doğa Bahçeci explains how the same principles of practical, student-centred learning are being applied at secondary school level.

Doğa's school was one of four in the Turkish Cypriot community to receive EU-standard laboratory equipment through the Aid Programme's investment in science and innovation. EU-funded projects provided 11 laboratories across the four schools with new state-of-the-art equipment.

Just as Fatma was trained in the new pre-school methods, teachers at Doğa's secondary school received training in how to get the most out of their new resources.

Practical teaching methods help students to retain knowledge and take a keener interest in the subject. Doğa can testify to this, describing the hands-on teaching and practical lessons in her school's new laboratories as 'more fun and more productive'.

As less time needs to be spent on setting up and taking down the new equipment, there is more time for the practical exercises enjoyed by Doğa and her classmates.

By using state-of-the-art equipment, students are also learning skills that will be essential should they choose to continue studying a similar subject at higher education level. One student who is already looking to the future is Adil Tugac.

'Having the chance to do experiments in the laboratory is very important, as when we move on to higher education, it is actually what we are going to be doing,' Adil says, adding that he 'will not struggle as much [in higher education]' thanks to the practical lessons.

As at pre-primary level, other secondary schools are being inspired to follow suit as word spreads of the success of the new methods. Doğa also says the number of students wanting to attend her school has risen, 'because of the new laboratories and the improved education standards'.

Following this successful initiative, the EU has planned a further €5 million in investment to train young scientists and innovators in the Turkish Cypriot community. The hope is that this support will continue to inspire a future generation of scientists who are well equipped for a modern labour market and economy.

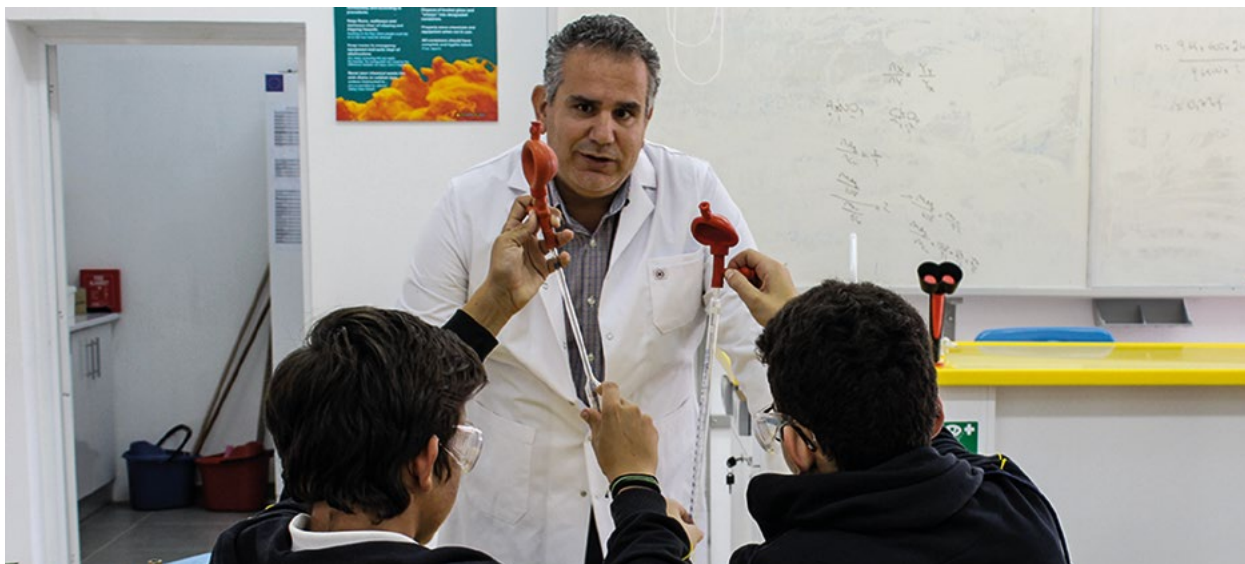
The early signs are good. Students are not only going on to study science themselves, but also inspiring others to do the same. Science fairs organised across the Turkish Cypriot community, including by the EU Infopoint, have given students the chance to share their work with others. At the fairs, these newly motivated scientists have improved their communication and presentation skills by encouraging others to take up science too.



Biology student Doğa Bahçeci: 'What the EU is doing here is investing in the future – because we are the future.'

“ Having the chance to do experiments in the laboratory is very important, as when we move on to higher education, it is actually what we are going to be doing. ”

Adil Tugac, student



Students study chemistry at a secondary school.

This project has brought science laboratories at schools in the Turkish Cypriot community in line with EU standards. Future EU support will focus on upgrading laboratories in all schools in the community.

It has also improved the practical skills of teachers to help them make the most of these resources.

Throughout their time at school, from pre-primary to secondary, children are now benefiting from consistently high teaching standards built on practical learning.

As they move on to higher education and the working world, they can feel confident that they have the skills and knowledge to succeed in their chosen careers. This is helping to create a critical mass of well-trained, well-developed scientists who are both benefiting from and contributing to the Turkish Cypriot economy.

‘What the EU is doing here is investing in the future – because we are the future,’ says Doğa.



Practical student-led science demonstrations take place at the European Researchers Fair organised by the EU InfoPoint.

SETTING STANDARDS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Science is just one example of a sector with highly specialised professions. In such sectors, the vocational education and training system needs to work hand in hand with the job market to bridge skills gaps.

The EU has helped set qualification standards across more than 40 different vocations in the Turkish Cypriot community.

‘When we developed these qualifications, we took on board requests and suggestions from private sector representatives and put them into the curriculum,’ explains Eda Hançer Akkor, who works for a Turkish Cypriot chamber that represents small businesses. ‘The qualifications match the skills that the businesses need.’

Seeing positive progress, the chamber decided to put the new standards into practice through the Training for Results project. With the help of EU funding, it aligned its apprenticeship programme more closely with EU standards, giving employers a clear framework for their on-the-job training.

Training for Results focused on improving training in six professions – hairdressing, barbering, auto-mechanics, electrical wiring, plumbing and cooking – by helping to bring training programmes more in line with the skills actually needed by the sector.

‘We updated the curricula for those professions, which meant that we took [on board] the requests or demands of private sector representatives and of business owners, and then put them into the curriculum,’ explains Eda.



Apprentice Mehmet Göz installing electrical components as part of the Training for Results project.

'So those who were being trained were receiving the skills and qualifications needed by the private sector. For instance, we brought together chefs and asked them what kind of skills or qualifications you would expect to see in a chef who is trained in a vocational school.'

Launched in 2016, the scheme saw a 60 % rise in apprenticeship enrolments in its first year.

In particular, the scheme provided an opportunity for young people who had dropped out of school or were looking to get into work to build professional skills and boost their job prospects. High-quality vocational education and training offers a credible alternative educational route to higher education and allows young people to take their future into their own hands.

Consistent with the approach in the community's schools, the emphasis in vocational education and training is shifting towards practical learning. Previously, apprentices were only assessed through a written exam. Now, a pool of local assessors tests them on their practical skills, too.

'In such technical areas, there's a lack of people with relevant skills,' explains electrician and local business owner Turgay Paşa. 'We need to give them a hand and

teach them the skills they need.' Turgay believes the support to vocational education and training 'is helping to reach EU standards' and 'improves the quality of the end product'.

The EU's support to vocational education and training in the community has helped to improve the quality of services across the island by building a highly skilled and qualified workforce, for the benefit of the economy.

By empowering business owners, the EU has also encouraged employers to take the lead in ensuring a sustainable training path through vocational training, high-quality apprenticeships and on-the-job assessment.

For apprentices such as Mehmet Göz, who works for Turgay's business, this has provided a clear path into work.

Mehmet says his apprenticeship experience has been a life-changing one. 'I can stand on my own two feet now,' he says.

As for his plans for the future? 'To have my own business, like Turgay.'

“ *In such technical areas, there's a lack of people with relevant skills. We need to give them a hand and teach them the skills they need.* ”

Turgay Paşa, electrician and local business owner

ENCOURAGING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Setting vocational qualification standards has been a positive step towards bridging the skills gap in the Turkish Cypriot community. Nevertheless, many regions, such as Famagusta, still have high levels of youth unemployment.

To address this, the local cultural association in Famagusta set up the LEAD (Learn, Experiment, Apply and Develop) project. LEAD's support targets youth and women – the two groups most affected by unemployment in the region.

The EU-funded project provides free training to help participants improve their skills and become more employable. The training focuses on a wide range of areas, from language and computer skills to sales and marketing techniques. It also offers paid internship programmes, career mentoring services and networking opportunities.

'The first thing we did was analyse the labour market in Famagusta so that we can provide training which targets gaps in the market,' says LEAD Project Manager Münise Alibeyoğlu.

'We are also trying to integrate lifelong learning into the lives of youth and women. This in turn will improve their skills, facilitate their employability, strengthen their entrepreneurial skills and help them gain economic freedom and confidence.'

The youth centre in Kyrenia also provides free training to young Turkish Cypriots. Through vocational training and various activities such as music lessons and art classes, it has helped over 100 young participants build well-rounded skillsets that increase their employability.

Kemal Özkaram is a graphic designer who took part in a digital marketing course at the centre. 'Now I know more about digital marketing and how to apply my existing skills as a graphic designer to this new area of work,' Kemal says. 'With this extra knowledge, I can offer more to my clients. The centre is also helping me to make professional connections so that I can better access work in this field.'

The centre's work goes beyond just providing skills to help people access jobs. It also looks to challenge young people's attitudes towards work and to encourage them to open businesses that create work for themselves and for other young people.

'It's about changing the mindset,' says Hasan Tabakçı, a project manager at the youth centre. 'Young people are naturally curious and creative. By providing a nurturing environment for start-ups, we can support them onto an entrepreneurial pathway to be successful in the current economic climate. This increases innovation, skills and, ultimately, employment across the community.'

Initially, the centre invited entrepreneurs to the centre to share their start-up success stories and their lessons learned along the way. It then hosted training on how to plan a business, followed by workshops where participants developed business plans for their own ideas.

“By providing a nurturing environment for start-ups, we can support them onto an entrepreneurial pathway to be successful in the current economic climate.”

Hasan Tabakçı, project manager



The youth centre in Kyrenia promotes vocational training and capacity-building among young Turkish Cypriots.

In the workshops, 30 young entrepreneurs were able to develop their skills and devise forward-thinking business ideas fit for the 21st century economy. Their ideas included plans for a technology start-up and a mobile application to promote sustainable travel.

By encouraging independence and an entrepreneurial spirit, the centre is addressing current labour market needs, but also helping to drive long-term economic growth. New entrepreneurs are emerging in the community, equipped with both the skills and the desire to succeed.

The Innovative Entrepreneurship project aims to establish shared spaces, including an innovation centre in Nicosia, to support innovation, entrepreneurship and knowledge sharing in the community.

The €3 million project, which was launched in 2019 and will run for three years, will work with local partners to provide opportunities for researchers, innovators, aspiring entrepreneurs and companies in the early stages of their development.

Through projects such as this, the EU will continue to grow a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the community.

UPDATING SKILLS THROUGH LIFELONG LEARNING



A continued professional development programme is helping architects like Simzer Kaya to update their knowledge and skills.

EU aid in the Turkish Cypriot community is supporting young people across different stages of their education, from schools to vocational centres. However, learning and development does not stop when they move from the classroom into the working world.

Once these young people begin their careers, they need to continue building and refreshing their skills. For the workers themselves, this helps them to stay employable. For the economy, it ensures qualified workers are available to meet the needs of the labour market.

EU support is redefining the role of Turkish Cypriot professional organisations to support their members through continuing skills development. This approach enables those in specialist professions to keep up to date with technical developments, innovations and new regulations, including EU standards.

This not only increases safety, quality of service and customer satisfaction, but also helps boost the competitiveness of the Turkish Cypriot economy.

“ We need to keep up to date with developments and learn new things. ”

Mustafa Hançerli, architect and training participant



Lifting machine operators are developing their practical knowledge as part of the Lifting the Operators Up project.

For example, architects in the Turkish Cypriot community have set up a programme of continuous professional development using EU funding.

The purpose of their programme, designed based on previous study trips to the EU, is to ensure local architects' skills are up to date. It also works to bring architectural standards and practices closer to those used in the EU. In the longer term, the architects intend to set up a dedicated centre and introduce compulsory standards for the sector.

Mustafa Hançerli is an architect who participated in the programme's training sessions. 'We [architects] need to keep up to date with developments and learn new things if we want to continue to meet the needs of our clients and to expand our businesses,' Mustafa says.

Simzer Kaya, also an architect, is quick to emphasise the importance of the programme's funding for this process. The EU grant is 'like a start button', Simzer says. 'I think it will lead architects into a new era.'

Mechanical engineering is another sector working hard to keep up with industry standards.

The EU-funded Lifting the Operators Up project was launched by the chamber of mechanical engineers in the Turkish Cypriot community. The project has provided training courses for 80 mechanical engineers and hundreds of lifting machine operators, as well as improving health and safety standards in the sector.

Mechanical engineer Ferhat İközler says learning about using construction equipment has improved his own confidence at work: 'I pay more attention to health and safety and I know a lot more technical details. That gives me more self-confidence in what I'm doing,' he explains.

Ali Şefik, an engineer and academic, believes EU projects such as this can help the Turkish Cypriot community to 'get much closer to the EU standards', particularly in terms of health and safety.

Such standardisation will be important in the continued pursuit of economic integration between the two Cypriot communities. Nowhere is this more important than in the electricity sector. Although the two communities have separate electrical grids, the two grids can be connected when needed to enable electricity to be shared across the island.

The Electrical Field project, implemented by the association that brings together Turkish Cypriot electrical contractors, aims to improve communication and more importantly, to align electrical practices based on international standards between electrical technicians across the two communities.

Through this project, Greek Cypriot trainers have provided specialist expertise and equipment to develop the skills of their Turkish Cypriot counterparts. Training has so far covered 12 different topics, from solar power installations to occupational health and safety. The project plans to cover around 20 topics in total.

By sharing expertise across the communities, the project has ensured electrical technicians are working to the same high standards all over Cyprus. This has helped not only create job opportunities for Turkish Cypriots across the island, but also to meet the demand for skilled workers in both communities.

‘Through this project, we are training more electricians and better electricians. Now we have trained people entering the labour market, and employers finding qualified workers,’ explains Osman Asilzade, coordinator of the Electrical Field project. ‘The quality of their services has also increased. Customer satisfaction has increased. The trainings have a domino effect,’ he says.

As in the community’s schools, the training has adopted a practical approach, which Osman believes is essential. ‘The students have to learn how to use all kinds of devices, they have to learn how to handle the equipment,’ he says. ‘If there is no practical training, there is only so much you can learn from a whiteboard. It is not effective. Now, we are able to provide these courses like they are supposed to be provided.’

Over 450 workers in the community, some of whom were previously unemployed, have already improved their skills by attending the practical training courses.

Many participants have also been able to boost their careers by embracing the new trends and technologies covered in the training.

‘We have a member who attended our trainings and improved himself professionally in a number of new technologies,’ Osman recalls. ‘He recently came and told me that now he is making double the money he used to make in his previous 15 years in the sector.’

Another worker who has benefited from the training is Ali Yeşilada, who qualified as an electrician back in 2007. Ali has found the continuing professional development very useful. ‘I feel much more confident in my job,’ he says. ‘I wasn’t able to answer questions on certain topics. I found the answers in these training sessions. Now I can provide my customer with what is needed.’

Like architects and mechanical engineers, workers in the electricity sector are putting great emphasis on continuous development and lifelong learning. In a sector that is changing rapidly due to technological advances, professionals like Ali know they need to keep up.

‘Technology is changing and advancing at such a speed that would be impossible for us to follow if it wasn’t for projects like this,’ Ali adds. He is even thinking about moving into the field of occupational health and safety, so that he can contribute to raising standards in the community. ‘Through this training, maybe I can start working in that field and help prevent work accidents,’ he says.

Fortunately, the good work of the project will continue beyond its lifespan thanks to the creation of a Green Lab. This school will provide joint training for Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot electrical technicians, ensuring the high standards established across the island can be sustained in the long term.



Turkish Cypriot electricians receive professional training as part of the bi-communal Electrical Field Project.

“ *I feel much more confident in my job.* ”

Ali Yeşilada, electrician and training participant

STUDY TRIPS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

As well as learning from specialists in the Greek Cypriot community, Turkish Cypriots have participated in study trips to the EU to learn from European experience.

Between 2007 and 2018, around 1 400 Turkish Cypriot students and professionals benefited from the EU Scholarship Programme. It took them on short-term language courses and internships, as well as longer-term undergraduate and postgraduate studies, across the EU.

The programme gives Turkish Cypriots the opportunity to gain first-hand EU experience and specialist skills and knowledge that they could apply on their return to Cyprus.

In many professions, such an experience can be a game changer. It can even help save lives. Cardiologist Sevgül Maydonozcu Kara used her EU scholarship to attend the Charité University in Berlin, an experience that improved her understanding of heart failure and its diagnosis.

‘For me, the best part was that I learned how to establish an integrated healthcare system,’ Sevgül says. ‘I learned that I needed to be part of a system and not just by myself.’

When she returned to Cyprus, Sevgül used her experience to set up a protective healthcare unit, where she works with other doctors to offer patients integrated services.

‘For example, a gynaecologist does surgeries for women and helps them give birth, but they also integrate [into their work] the early detection of cancer patients, or they give lectures to the pregnant women, for example about nutrition or how to take care of themselves during their pregnancy’, Sevgül explains. She says that this holistic approach helps to not only deal with current health issues, but also to ‘protect the health of the future generation’.

On a personal level, she says her experience abroad helped to ‘break out of the small box I was confined in, where I was trying to save everybody and it never seemed enough’.

Importantly, Sevgül was able to share her own experience with others to encourage best practices to be applied across the community, helping to bring healthcare closer to the standards she experienced in the EU.



Cardiologist Sevgül Maydonozcu Kara: ‘We are all benefiting, because I’m trying to develop good practices out of what I learned.’

'We are all benefiting, because I'm trying to develop good practices out of what I learned,' she says. 'My scholarship gave me the power of knowledge, and by getting this knowledge, I was able to educate other clinicians, other healthcare givers.'

“*My scholarship gave me the power of knowledge, and by getting this knowledge, I was able to educate other clinicians, other healthcare givers.*”

Sevgül Maydonozcu Kara, cardiologist and EU Scholarship Programme participant

We also spoke to designer Doğuş Bodamyalızade, who travelled to Italy for a scholarship at the Domus Academy, one of Europe's best-known design institutes. 'Famous designers came to the academy and we developed projects with them. It was like a dream for me,' he recalls.

During his time in Milan, Doğuş developed his design skills and embraced new technologies. 'A lot of what we learned related to the digital market, which is growing every day. We learned how to create our products in a digital format using digital modelling techniques.'

Like Sevgül, Doğuş is putting his new-found knowledge to good use at home in Cyprus. He now teaches students how to design and make models, passing on the skills that he learned during his EU scholarship in Italy and encouraging his students to apply them.

Through the EU Scholarship Programme, Turkish Cypriots are improving their understanding of European values, standards and traditions. The experiences of Doğuş and Sevgül show how this can make a difference in the community, helping to prepare the society and economy for a united Cyprus in the EU.



Designer Doğuş Bodamyalızade has developed his design skills to a high level and embraced new technologies.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

From early years education to adult learning, the programmes and projects featured in this booklet are laying the groundwork for sustainable economic development across the island of Cyprus.

While the EU has invested funding to get these activities off the ground, it has been the Turkish Cypriot community itself that has devoted time and energy to ensure that the activities are successful and sustainable.

Equipped with the right methods and resources, teachers are encouraging children to take charge of their own education from a young age. When they leave school to enter higher education and work, these young people have the skills and independence to succeed in their chosen careers.

Building a qualified, skilled labour force – trained in line with EU standards – will support the local economy and promote the economic integration, and eventual reunification, of Cyprus's Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities.

It is clear from speaking to Turkish Cypriots who have benefited from EU support that much good work has already been done. One eye is already on the future, though, as continuous knowledge sharing and lifelong learning help make this development sustainable.

Through further projects, the EU plans to continue supporting the Turkish Cypriot community on this journey.

In 2018, the EU continued its funding for schools seeking to improve their teaching practices, including through child-centred learning. Some of these projects focus on extracurricular activities, as well as on social inclusion and mobility of children with special needs.

They also put greater emphasis on English and Greek language learning, which will play an important role in preparing for a reunified economy.

In all schools, there will also be more investment to provide EU-standard science laboratories and educate the innovators, researchers and scientists of the future.

Another new project will help develop the curricula for all vocational education and training across skilled occupations. The project will build on the success in this area so far and continue to work together with businesses and trainers.

Meanwhile, the recently launched Innovative Entrepreneurship project will continue to support entrepreneurship, an area that has shown great potential to develop the local economy. The hope is that this programme will in turn encourage innovation across and between the communities.

By working together, both communities can help sustain the island's economic development and improve job prospects for all Cypriots across the country.

Disclaimer:

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the Contractor (Ecorys) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

Funded by
the European Union

