

Financial Aspects of Open Schooling

Key messages

- ⇒ **Open schooling initiatives need continued funding from their initial phases throughout the life of the programme**
- ⇒ **Funding can be allocated with the school or other actors of open schooling programmes, and need to ensure that families do not have related financial burden**

Financial provisions for open schooling need to be designed in a sustainable way, and they need to ensure that open schooling activities do not create any extra financial burden for families. These are prerequisites of inclusive education provisions. This means that legislation has to be in place that either gives schools appropriate and flexible budgets to finance their activities, including open schooling ones, or there needs to be a fund available for other open schooling actors to provide their services free for the school. We need to consider it a reality that successful pilots are only sustainable if their operating costs are provided for.

The fundamental rights of children to free, quality education are enshrined in legislation in all European countries through the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The European Union made a further commitment to deliver on the right to education and in particular on access to free compulsory education in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union in 2012. This offers the legal basis to approaching the financing of open schooling and innovation in STE(A)M education. When implementing open schooling programmes, there is a need to ensure there is no financial burden on families thus it has a positive impact on equity and inclusion.

Financial provisions for education, their amount, allocation and the level of autonomy of schools in the field of budget greatly varies from country to country. In general, school systems have limited financial resources with which to pursue their objectives, thus funding policies and schemes play a key role in ensuring

that resources are allocated in a way that ensures necessary changes and development. When implementing innovative programmes, such as open schooling in the field of STE(A)M education, there is a need to differentiate between provisions for designing and setting up an innovative partnership and maintaining it. Successful open schooling initiatives are only possible in financing environments that provide funding not only for initial phases of such programmes, but also consider and provide for the costs of sustaining it.

Inspiration #1 - Rødovre

In Rødovre, part of greater Copenhagen, there is a systematic open schooling strategy on municipal level. The strategy is inspired by the Norwegian “cultural ruck sack” and involves both STEM-oriented and cultural activities. This strategy is implemented through a new programme for every school year. It contains compulsory open schooling activities for all grades from kindergarten to 9th grade at the seven public schools in Rødovre. These activities are publicly funded 1/3 from local school budgets and 2/3 from the municipal school administration budget. In Denmark, it is not allowed to charge parents for students’ school activities. The compulsory open schooling programme is discussed every year and decided on by the municipal administration and representatives of local schools together. It must be emphasized that the compulsory program is a minimum criterion, and is implemented to ensure all pupils are given the opportunity to participate in open schooling activities, regardless of individual teacher preferences. This still leaves plenty of room for teachers to allocate other curricular activities into to an open schooling framework. The municipal open schooling consultant also provides free in-service training to the teachers on open schooling didactics, and thus these activities often get integrated in general learning plans instead of becoming stand-alone visits. In some cases, the municipal administration has co-financed offer by external providers of open schooling activities in order to make the content match local didactical strategy of e.g. innovation and technology competences.

[\(More information\)](#)



In the reality of schools, different bodies are involved in raising, managing and allocating budgets. A growing number of school systems is characterised by multi-level governance, with a growing set of actors including different policy levels, schools themselves and private providers involved in school funding. Central governments should continue to provide the majority of financial resources for schools as it is part and parcel of their legal obligation to provide free education. The responsibility for spending these funds is shared among an increasingly wide range of actors in the spirit of stakeholder involvement and collaborative leadership. In many countries, the governance of school funding is characterised by increasing fiscal decentralisation, placing considerable responsibility on local school stakeholders over budgetary decisions. This generates opportunities for implementing open schooling programmes and establishing partnerships, but also poses challenges for schools, and thus require adequate institutional arrangements. To support effective school funding and avoid adverse effects on equity in changing governance contexts, there is a need to ensure that roles and responsibilities in decentralised funding systems are well aligned; to provide the necessary conditions for effective budget management at the school level; and to develop adequate regulatory frameworks for the incorporation of private funding into budgets in a way that prevents direct interference.

science and technological domains, connecting the school with the Society, enhancing some values like solidarity and volunteering and the European dimension of education.

In CAF the set of activities was designed to ensure the monitoring of students in the 1st cycle of basic education before and or after the components of the curriculum and the AEC, as well as during periods of school interruption. ([More information](#))

There is a need for well-designed funding formulas in distributing funding for current expenditure in a transparent and efficient way. Providing funding to the school directly or financing the costs of non-formal provisions are equally effective and appropriate as long as it is arranged in a well-planned and reliable way for sustainability. Governments should ensure a stable and publicly known system to allocate public funding available for open schooling in order to support the achievement of equity objectives through school funding mechanisms. Funding schemes need to be aligned with strategic targets and priorities. At the same time education budgets should also be flexible enough to respond to new priorities and unforeseen circumstances as well as providing incentives for efficiency, but through transparent regulation and not on an ad hoc basis.

Sources: OECD, European Commission

Inspiration #2 – AEC, Portugal

In Portugal the Government supports this free program – AEC: Atividades de Enriquecimento Curricular (Curriculum Enrichment Activities) They are part of a broad strategy of articulation between the school and the organization of social responses into the field of family support. This strategy is based on three main strategies: Animation and Family Support Activities in Pre-School Education (AAAF); Curriculum Enrichment Activities (AEC); Family Support Component in the 1st cycle of Basic Education (CAF).

AAAF are designed to ensure the monitoring of children in pre-school education before and or after the daily period of educational activities and during periods of interruption of these activities.

AEC happens in the 1st cycle of basic education. The activities are optional and can have playful, formative and cultural nature that focus, namely, in sports, arts,

ABOUT PHERECLOS

PHERECLOS is aiming to establish "Local Education Clusters" (LECs) of different design as examples of open schooling. All LECs will bring together schools and other relevant actors in the education ecosystem in a particular pilot region, supported by a peer mentoring programme. The LECs will be incubators for enabling a dialogue between various parties and help to set up joint activities in formal and non-formal education. The LECs will also help to develop collaborative learning environments as experimental testbeds for schools, and in parallel, they aim to impact on the quality of science engagement opportunities available in these areas.

More information: www.phereclos.eu



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