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## Sustaining the Erasmus+ Teacher Academy *teff* Beyond the Project's Lifecycle

### Abstract

This article investigates how the Erasmus+ Teacher Academy *teff* can sustain cross-European collaboration and innovation in teacher education beyond the project's lifecycle. The project shows that *teff* strengthened teacher education by integrating futures literacy, i.e. digitalization, sustainability, inclusion, and well-being skills, into both pre-service and in-service programs. The project created durable networks across ten European regions, enhanced institutional cooperation, and developed resilient communities of practice. Furthermore, agile governance, and long-term partner agreements ensure that durability is centered on cultivating adaptive, interconnected, and forward-looking educational environments.

**Keywords:** sustainability, (project) durability, impact, resilience

### 1. Introduction

The *European Education Area* sets ambitious goals for teacher education. It calls for systems that prepare competent, motivated, and highly qualified educators, while also promoting continuous professional development and research-based practice (European Commission, 2024). Recent EU initiatives, such as the Council Resolution 2019 or the Digital Education Action Plan (2021–2027), underline the urgency of equipping teachers with the skills to navigate rapid technological change and environmental challenges, and to foster inclusion, diversity, and well-being. Erasmus+ Teacher Academies are conceived as a response to these priorities, aiming to strengthen cooperation among teacher education providers, enhance mobility, and build capacity for innovation across Europe.

However, these aspirations confront persistent challenges: teaching remains insufficiently attractive (European School Education Platform (ESEP) Survey, April 2024), demographic trends signal looming shortages (OECD, 2025), and professional development opportunities are unevenly distributed (Vasileios et al., 2025; UNESCO, 2023). Mobility and collaboration are often limited by structural and policy barriers. Against this backdrop, the Erasmus+ Teacher Academy *teff* positions itself as a transformative initiative. It seeks not only to address these systemic issues but also to re-

imagine teacher education for a world in flux – one marked by complexity, uncertainty, and interdependence. Through its model-framework, *teff* integrates digital, sustainable (green), diversity and inclusion, and well-being skills with a European dimension, creating agile learning opportunities such as Makerspaces, Urban Laboratories, and Digital Learning Modules. These innovations aim to empower educators as future-literate change agents and ensure that teacher education remains adaptive, inclusive, and – the focus of this article – sustainable well beyond the project lifecycle.

Despite the ambition and scope of Erasmus+ Teacher Academies, durability<sup>1</sup> remains a pressing concern – as is the case with many third-party funded projects, both nationally and internationally. Many projects struggle to maintain momentum once funding ends. Networks often dissolve without clear governance structures, and innovative resources risk becoming static repositories rather than living tools for transformation. Financial sustainability is equally fragile: while Erasmus+ provides initial support, long-term funding streams, whether national or private, are rarely secured during the project phase. These vulnerabilities underscore the need for *teff* to move beyond short-term deliverables and design mechanisms that guarantee continuity, scalability, and relevance. Addressing these durability issues is not optional; it forms the foundation for *teff*'s critical framework and shapes the challenges explored in the next section.

## 2. Critical Challenges for *teff*

Erasmus+ Teacher Academies aim to create long-lasting, transformative impacts on teacher education systems across Europe, and this ambition raises several critical challenges for *teff*:

### 1) Exploitation:

How can the project ensure that its innovative models, tools, and practices are not only developed, but actively embedded into teacher education programs and institutional structures? This requires moving beyond producing outputs to guarantee their uptake and integration into existing systems. What strategies secure the active use of project results by partners and stakeholders, so that they influence policy and practice rather than remain isolated? Closely linked to this is the need for robust mechanisms to measure the adoption and effectiveness of outputs during and after the project lifecycle.

### 2) Dissemination:

How does *teff* ensure that its results reach teacher education providers, policy-makers, public authorities, and the wider educational community in ways that are clear, targeted, and sustained beyond the project's duration? This demands carefully designed activities, timelines, and communication channels, as well as lev-

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1 In this article, we use the term *durability* – alongside concepts such as *future-proofing*, *continuity*, and *resilience* (Gravett and Peterson, 2023; Day et al., 2011; ESEP, 2024) – to describe the long-term viability of *teff*'s activities, innovations, partnerships and products. This framing acknowledges that environmental and ecological sustainability is an important strand of the *teff* project. We use the term *durability* to avoid confusion and to emphasize the structural, institutional, and pedagogical endurance of the project results.

eraging platforms such as *eTwinning* and *ESEP* which have already been used in *teff*.

3) Impact:

How can *teff* strengthen professional competencies, foster institutional collaboration, and build capacity for innovation to ensure that its influence extends from participants and partner organizations to teacher education systems at local, regional, national, and European levels? To achieve this, *teff* must define measures, targets, and indicators that allow monitoring and assessment of progress in terms of teacher education quality, mobility, and European cooperation.

4) Durability:

What governance structures, scaling strategies, and financial pathways will ensure that *teff*'s networks, resources, and professional development opportunities endure beyond EU funding? The existing network of pre-service and in-service teacher education providers have to identify routes for securing European, national, and private resources.

### 3. Impact of *teff* Activities and Products

The *teff* Academy seeks to generate impact in futures literacy across four primary target groups – student teachers, in-service teachers, teacher educators, and policymakers – while indirectly benefiting pupils. The objectives agreed upon by the consortium include:

1. Strengthening a European network on teacher education
2. Developing innovative learning opportunities to build teachers' futures literacy
3. Creating spaces for practice-based knowledge exchange
4. Supporting teachers' well-being to enhance the attractiveness of the profession

Student teachers benefit from comprehensive and innovative learning opportunities such as on- and offline learning spaces that complement traditional study programs. These include mobility opportunities like Welcome Weeks, Educathons, Urban Labs, and Makerspaces (all introduced in this volume in more detail), positioning student teachers in a broader European perspective while addressing agile methods and topics often missing from standard curricula. All of this is developed and offered by numerous colleagues in the teacher training faculties and subjects of the *teff* partner universities – often with the help of in-service teachers. This ensures that these courses are gradually integrated into the training of prospective teachers across Europe.

In-service teachers gain accessible, hands-on, continuous professional development opportunities co-designed with *teff* partners and student teachers. These formats create a European space for reflection that enhances futures literacy and strengthens the social value of the teaching profession. Teacher educators access structured exchange within a European network, adapting and expanding their teaching through innovative methods and shared resources. Finally, policymakers and public authorities benefit from evidence-based recommendations through White Papers. These will

inform national and European strategies and contribute to the objectives of the European Education Area.

*teff* creates impact at several interconnected levels. At the local and regional level, the Academy strengthens partnerships between schools and universities and fosters communities of practice that encourage collaborative innovation. At the national level, *teff* co-designs learning opportunities aligned with policy priorities, ensuring relevance and scalability. At the European level, the Academy introduces a cross-phased model that links initial and continuous teacher education, promoting multilingualism and intercultural collaboration across borders.

To secure long-term impact beyond the project's lifetime, *teff* has implemented a comprehensive strategy. This includes a Quality Assurance Plan supported by co-designed impact indicators, and an Action Plan for sustainability that outlines governance and funding pathways. *teff* ensures open access to its resources by publishing Open Educational Resources (OER) and integrating these resources into *ESEP*. A strong *teff* brand and dissemination strategy – through a dedicated website, multimedia campaigns, and conferences – amplifies visibility. Additionally, the consortium is actively identifying new funding streams to guarantee continuation beyond 2026. The following table summarizes the short, mid and long-term core impact that the *teff* Academy will have on the target groups listed above:

Table 1: Impact on target groups

Target group	Short-term impact	Mid-term impact	Long-term impact
Student teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity to participate in the co-design of meaningful learning opportunities around <i>futures literacy</i> skills to be implemented at universities (and other providers of initial teacher education).</li> <li>• Being able to express the needs of their community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being part of the feedback loop to evaluate and improve the learning opportunities implemented at the level of initial education.</li> <li>• Participating in a local and European community of teacher education actors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefitting from a cross-phased educational model that (i) welcomes them into the world of teaching from day one, (ii) provides them with essential and futures skills that they will use throughout their career and (iii) ensures that they will continue having learning opportunities once in service.</li> </ul>
In-service teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity to participate in the co-design of meaningful learning opportunities around <i>futures literacy</i> skills, to be implemented at schools (and other providers of continued teacher education).</li> <li>• Being able to express the needs of their community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being part of the feedback loop to evaluate and improve the learning opportunities implemented at the level of continued education.</li> <li>• Participating in a local and European community of teacher education actors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefitting from a cross-phased educational model that provides them access to a range of professional development opportunities throughout their career, carefully balanced with their other day-to-day responsibilities.</li> </ul>

Target group	Short-term impact	Mid-term impact	Long-term impact
Teacher educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity to participate in the co-design of meaningful learning opportunities around <i>future literacy</i> skills.</li> <li>• Opportunity to exchange on innovative teaching methods with other teacher educators from around Europe in a structured manner and with a common goal in mind.</li> <li>• Being able to express the needs of their community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Driving the implementation of such educational opportunities (either pre-service or in-service) and being at the core of the evaluation and improvement processes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being at the forefront of teacher education and becoming (more) active contributors to the objectives of the European Education Area.</li> <li>• Being part of a support structure through which they can propose (and benefit from) innovative best practices in teacher education.</li> </ul>
Policymakers and public authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being offered the position of external advisors in the <i>teff</i> project, thus having the opportunity to influence and contribute to the design and implementation of the activities of a European Teacher Academy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having direct access to the research- and practice-based output being generated by the <i>teff</i> activities on the topic of teacher education (white papers, etc.).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having a direct line of support for decision-making regarding education and training within the European Education Area and beyond (2030).</li> </ul>

#### 4. Durability After the End of EU Funding

Without question, *teff* is a game-changer for teacher education across Europe by improving quality, accessibility, and cross-phase coherence, supporting employability and lifelong learning in line with the European Skills Agenda and the European Education Area 2025. Durability is embedded in all project activities, which are designed to create lasting structures, partnerships, and capacities.

- 1) To ensure that *teff*'s innovations do not remain isolated, outputs modules, frameworks, and learning tools are embedded or connected as much as possible into study programs. One specific example is the Learning Module on Diversity & Inclusion which is integrated in a Blended Intensive Program (BIP)<sup>2</sup> frequented by many students from *teff* universities.
- 2) All products are published as Open Educational Resources (OER) and will remain online on the project's website. Furthermore, all products are advertised (and will continue to be) via social media.
- 3) Transnational collaboration forms the backbone of *teff*'s durability. By maintaining strong partnerships across borders, *teff* fosters ongoing exchange between (local) schools, universities, and teacher education providers. These networks have a realistic chance to further mature beyond the funding of *teff*.

2 Footnote: BIP (as in all other volume papers mentioning the BIPs)

- 4) The brand name “*teff*” was secured so that work could potentially continue under the same umbrella and be used to secure more funding. Dissemination channels to policymakers and the public, supporting long-term contribution to European education priorities, have been established and will not be shut down immediately.
- 5) *teff* – with its resilient networks and communities of practice – also encourages spin-off projects, such as Blended Intensive Programmes (BIP), publications, and conferences, to expand outreach and influence.
- 6) To ensure *teff*'s results reach the widest possible audience and remain relevant beyond the project lifecycle, *teff* will leverage established European networks and tools, including *eTwinning* and *ESEP*, to share resources and foster collaboration among schools and teacher education providers. Project outputs will also be promoted through Erasmus+ dissemination channels, *teff*'s own website, and social media campaigns targeting educators and policymakers.
- 7) As partners, *teff*-teams will further the team's expertise in future collaborations – using existing networks (EUniWell or TEN) and (international) conferences/meetings.

## 5. Conclusion

While *teff*'s multidimensional strategy, anchored in transnational collaboration, professional development, and epistemological foundations, lays a strong basis for continuity and resilience, several challenges remain. Embedding *teff*'s resources into institutional structures is essential to prevent outputs from becoming static repositories rather than living tools for transformation. Equally critical is ensuring exploitation: project results must actively shape policy and practice, supported by mechanisms that monitor adoption and effectiveness beyond the funding period. Dissemination requires sustained and targeted communication to reach teacher education providers, policymakers, and the wider educational community, leveraging existing platforms such as *eTwinning*. Finally, durability depends on credible governance structures, scaling strategies, and financial pathways that secure *teff*'s networks and resources for the long term. Addressing these challenges is not optional; it is the foundation for *teff*'s ambition to create systemic, future-proof impact across European teacher education.

Continuity and resilience in the *teff* context are multidimensional and strategically embedded, permeating all aspects of Teacher Academies' – and in particular *teff* Academy's – design and operations. Transnational, curricular, digital, and epistemological frameworks create a resilient teaching context for educators to proactively navigate the above-mentioned future educational challenges. Strategic pathways embed *teff* innovations institutionally, cultivate communities of practice, and ensure accessibility through open resources. Strong governance and context-sensitive integration reinforce long-term viability.

Ultimately, *teff* demonstrates that project durability is not merely maintaining programs but cultivating adaptive, interconnected, and forward-looking educational envi-

ronments. By embedding its practices into structures, cultures, and strategies, *teff* positions itself as a lasting force for transformative, futures-oriented teacher education across Europe.

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