

## Short Term Scientific Mission (STSM) Reflections

### 'Celebrating collaboration' - COST Action 15221 – We ReLaTe

**STSM recipient name:** Michelle Attard Tonna

**STSM recipient institution and country:** University of Malta, Malta

**Host institution and country:** VIA University College, Aarhus, Denmark

**Dates of visit:** 27/08/2018 – 31/08/2018

**STSM Title:** The mentoring of beginning teachers: A resource pack for schools and higher education institutions as part of COST Action CA15221

#### **My STSM was about**

The overall purpose of this scientific mission has been to promote awareness and critical understanding of practical ways of mentoring, specifically that of assisting beginning teachers to teach in schools. Teacher mentors can profit from systematic assistance and support from others to develop the capabilities of their new role.

Throughout the week, I had the opportunity to discuss in depth the context of teacher mentoring, and the induction of beginning teachers, in Denmark, and collaborate with members of the Research and Development Department in this campus to understand their role in teacher professional learning. Meetings were also with a member of the Teachers' Association in Aarhus, with the librarian of the campus library at VIA University College, and with a number of educators during a school visit to Aarhus Efterskole. On the last day of this work visit, I shared a presentation of the context of teacher mentoring in Malta, and a discussion with the members of staff of the Research and Development Department ensued.

#### **The most significant thing that I learned from my STSM was ...**

This visit led to very important insights, particularly the fact that although Denmark, as a geographical context, is more resourceful and has a longer history in teacher education than Malta, the people I collaborated with still experience a number of challenges in the field and the teacher mentors (the focus of my visit) still sometimes struggle to offer the required support to the NQTs (newly qualified teachers).

#### **What I enjoyed most about my STSM was ...**

I enjoyed immersing myself in this new culture; being received by this institution and given the opportunity to learn all about my research focus; being respected for the kind of learning I could contribute to this institution and given the opportunity to share knowledge coming from my own context.

#### **My advice to colleagues considering an STSM is ...**

This is an excellent opportunity to combine the aims of the COST Action with the work you do on an everyday basis. A Scientific Mission can render the COST Action more tangible and it provides enough flexibility to structure the learning experience so as you benefit from it.

#### **And finally, ...**

I would like to thank you for this brilliant opportunity as it brought me closer to people working in the field of teacher mentoring; it led to further collaboration and also some tangible results, in particular a resource pack which I will be using in this coming academic year.