



## **Intellectual Output 4:** **Policy Recommendations**

Project n° 2015-1-IT02-KA201-015383

**2018**



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
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# The project

The EUMOSCHOOL project aims to develop, test and implement a new coherent methodology and innovative curricula of emotional education within school environments involving 6 countries (Italy, UK, Hungary, Romania, Turkey and Austria), providing an effective intervention model to reduce the phenomenon of Early School Leaving (ESL). educational methods and training to meet the increasing needs of the educational staff and pupils (aged 6 to 16 years old).

The project is based on the EU level adaptation of the Italian methodology “Didattica delle Emozioni”© (Didactic of Emotions, DoE), developed from 18 years of experience and investigation into emotional education. The methodology has been successfully tested on 3000 teachers, students, parents and tutors, in order to improve the wellbeing and transversal key competencies of pupils with a view to reducing ESL whilst supporting the professional development of teachers and pedagogical staff.

EUMOSCHOOL aims to spread the adapted methodology to a wide range of students, teachers, staff and schools through implementing emotional education into the school curricula.

The specific EUMOSCHOOL objectives are:

- To contribute to effective ESL strategies through the integration of emotional education intervention methodology into school curricula for all students, impacting on the reduction of ESL.
- To foster the development and assessment of transversal skills and competences among students to develop well-being and diminish emotional discomfort and associated risk factors through emotional education.
- To increase the professional skills of teachers and practitioners by equipping them with an accessible ESL intervention methodology, utilized through an Online Educational Resource (OER) combined with practical techniques and assessment tools, adapted for classroom learning at any level.
- To support holistic collaborative approaches to teaching through networking and events to promote dialogue with stakeholders in school education across Europe. Exchange good practice to address and support children and young people at risk of ESL and disadvantage.

Within EUMOSCHOOL, four main project results –intellectual outputs – have been developed:

- ***COMPARATIVE RESEARCH REPORT***

Includes:

1. literature review of the educational contexts and systems involved in the project;
2. primary research on schools and teachers' needs in; Italy, Austria, Romania, Hungary and Turkey, regarding the prevention of ESL and emotional education

- ***EUMOSCHOOL OER***

A self-learning OER adapted from the Didactics of Emotions (DoE) for teachers, accessed via Moodle ([moodle.org](https://moodle.org)).

- ***GUIDELINES FOR EUMOSCHOOL IMPLEMENTATION AS AN HOLISTIC APPROACH TO EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING***

These guidelines have been developed utilising the DoE and experiences of schools; staff and students.

- ***POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS***

A document to guide policy-makers and other relevant school stakeholders in their ESL strategies at a local, national and European level.

# Emotional Education contributing to the prevention of Early School Leaving

## The European Context

Early School Leaving (ESL), as a statistical measure, is the percentage of 18-24 year olds with lower secondary education or less and no longer in education and training (European Commission, 2013). The significance of ESL figures are associated with adverse outcomes for individuals in terms of social integration, economic prospects and positive later life outcomes, including health and well-being, (Gonzales, Dumka, Deardorff, Carter, & McCray, 2004; Kelly, 2009; Trautwein, Lüdtke, Marsh, Köller, & Baumert, 2006; Melkevik et al 2016).

Concern regarding the high levels of ESL within Europe are reflected within the EU 2020 strategy to reduce ESL to below 10% from 12.7% in 2012, equating to 5.5 million people. This key benchmark places ESL as one of the major contemporary problems facing European countries (Noel et al, 2015; Tarabini, Curran, Montes, Parcerisa, 2016). The concept of ESL, created by the European Union (EU) (2013), includes; 'school-drop out', those never enrolled, did not continue with education or failed final exams. The 'retrospective measure' of ESL (Dale, 2010; Bradhaw, O'Brannan, NcNeely, 2008) is considered the outcome of a long-term process of declining school engagement (European Commission, 2013; Eurydice & Cedefop, 2014; Lamote et al 2013; Ekstrand, 2015).

The project upon which this policy briefing refer to interventions which focus on emotional education as a key way in which to maintain school engagement and thereby prevent early school leaving.

## The role of emotional education

There is a clear, established link between a socially and emotionally literate school ethos and pupil's achievement results and attendance (Banerjee, Weare & Farr, 2014). Emotion Coaching, an intervention which supports children's emotional self-regulation, social skills, and academic success (Rose, McGuire-Snieckus & Gilbert, 2014) has been developed as a method for supporting emotional development within UK schools. Emerging evidence suggests that as a result of Emotion Coaching, and increasing emotional regulation skills, children and young people who were previously disengaging from school and therefore at risk, were able to re-engage (Gus et al, 2015; Havighurst et al, 2012).

## Didactics of Emotions

The Eumoschool project sought to adopt a range of interventions originating in Italy based upon the principles of the 'Didactics of Emotion' to their 6 partner countries in Europe. Interventions aimed to encourage the management and expression of emotions in school for increased well-being and mental health and positive longer term outcomes (see <http://eumoschool.eu/> for further details on the project). The evidence from this project is the basis of this policy recommendation document.

This policy briefing offers country specific detail in the ensuing pages

# Policy Briefing

## Emotional Education as a way to contribute to reducing Early School Leaving in Europe

### Statement of the issue

Early School Leaving (ESL) is a key issue within Europe, reflected within the EU 2020 strategy which aims to reduce ESL to below 10% from 12.7% in 2012, equating to 5.5 million people leaving school early.

ESL is associated with adverse outcomes for individuals in terms of social integration, economic prospects and future health positive later life outcomes, including health and well-being.

The links between emotional intelligence, engagement and academic outcomes, support the argument that emotional education (EE) is important and can promote positive longer term outcomes.

### Policy Recommendations

1. Integrate emotional education into new teacher training and professional development for current teachers
2. Integrate a component of emotional education into the curriculum

### Argument

The Eumoschool project adopted a range of interventions originating in Italy, based upon the principles of the 'Didactics of Emotion' to 6 partner countries. These included Italy, Austria, Romania, Turkey, Hungary and Romania.

Interventions aimed to encourage the management and expression of emotions in school for increased mental health and well-being and positive longer term outcomes (see <http://eumoschool.eu/> for further details on the project).

Data collected as part of the project from over 600 teachers via an online survey and 63 educators indicated that the training, skills, capacity and support for schools on emotional education is limited or non-existent. There was a clear suggestion that these areas needed to be addressed through policy in order to be able to provide emotional education to meet the EU2020 target of reducing ESL.



# ITALY

## Statement of the issue

There is an absence of support for the professional growth of teachers in the field of emotional education in Italy. Teachers see the value of emotional education and develop their skills in this area. However, this need is yet to be addressed. In order to support pupils in developing their non-cognitive competences (a need underlined by the Italian Ministry of Education Guidelines of 2012) it is necessary that teachers are trained to recognise and manage their own emotions, in order to be able to support their learners in this process. As a psychologist in class is not compulsory, this need becomes more important.

## Target audience

- The municipality of Palermo: Area school and childcare
- Ministry of Education
- School Headmasters, teachers, psychologists

## Current policy

Guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education in 2012 refer to the need for primary school pupils to develop their cognitive, social, emotional and ethical dimensions. As a result, emotional education is included in the national curriculum as a cross-subject topic. The Italian Educational system, as indicated in the National Directions for the curricula (2012), adopts a framework European Union (2006/962/CE) to define key competences to be developed in learners.

These directions represent a framework within which each school can elaborate its own choices about contents, methods, organization and evaluation, coherently with formative objectives established by this national document.

## Key recommendations

1. Offer professional development courses in psychology and pedagogy including emotional education training in initial teacher training, with tools to embed this within their teaching activities.
2. Psychological training for teachers could be an effective support for the quality of the teaching offer and the management of problematic situations in class.



## Argument

Recommendations come from the results of the research and observation carried out in the framework of the EUMOSCHOOL project.

The vast majority of Italian respondents (84%) of 99 teachers interviewed, agreed or strongly agreed emotions and emotional education have a role to play in preventing ESL. Among the factors contributing to ESL, having an unsupportive family background appears to be perceived as having the biggest impact. Other intrinsic causes are also observed, such as unhappiness when in school, lack of motivation to make an effort and lack of belonging in school. This observation is well aligned with research in 2015 (Noi-italia.istat.it, 2016) that showed how ESL can be also linked to the discomfort felt by learners at secondary schools in Italy.

The decision to drop out is often taken when learners no longer see a connection between their school experience and their needs and aspirations. Tutor observations revealed a need for teachers to be better trained in the development of their emotional competences, to adequately address the needs of their learners. Including emotional education in the curriculum and providing certified, coherent and structured courses will facilitate emotional education at school level with teacher support.

# ROMANIA

## Statement of the issue

There is little in initial teacher education that prepares future teachers for emotional education. Only 46% of teacher respondents to a survey conducted within the EUMOSCHOOL project stated that they had some training in this field during initial teacher education, while the rest were not sure or stated that they did not have such training. Yet 84% of teacher respondents strongly agree and 23% agree that emotional education is an important part of all teachers' work. The respondents view emotional education as something that supports improved learning performance (76% strongly agree; 23% agree) and contributes to preventing drop-out (72% strongly agree; 22% agree). A similarly large share (95%) strongly agree or agree that emotional distress causes learning difficulties. If emotional education is considered as part of a teacher's job, it follows that teachers need to be confident about this aspect of their job. However, only 30% strongly agree and a further 43% agree that they are confident they do their best to provide emotional education.

## Target audience

- National and regional level educational authorities
- Teacher training institutions especially those which train secondary subject teachers;

## Current policy

In 2016, the methodology of the Scoala Altfel (School Differently - SD) national programme was revised to focus, amongst others, on social-emotional learning. SD is a one-week educational programme to be designed, planned, delivered and evaluated by each school. During this week, classes are taught 'differently' from the regular schedule (i.e. involving parents and other stakeholders from the community, providing non-formal learning opportunities for learners, allowing groups of learners to leave the school premises) (Minister's Order 5034/29.08.2016).

The national level programme Romanian Secondary Education (ROSE), implemented in 2015-2022 in over 1,100 secondary schools across the country, which aims to reduce the ESL rate, provides support for the development of learners' social-emotional skills. A set of Guidelines on Socio-Emotional Skills are prepared for secondary schools, according to the programme description (<https://www.edu.ro/project-rose-request-expressions-interest-development-guidelines-socio-emotional-skills-and>).

In May 2018, among the criteria for teachers to be granted bonus salary (gradatie de merit), which is an additional 25%, participation in projects that aim for prevention of early school leaving and emotional education activities are included. (Monitorul Oficial, No. 395 / 9 May 2018).

### Key recommendations

1. Ensure that teachers are trained in their pre-service training to develop learners' social-emotional skills.
2. Support in-service training for teachers to develop their competences to address learners' social-emotional skills, mental health and well-being to prevent early school leaving.

### Argument

Psychology as a discipline is part of the initial teacher training curriculum. However, the approach is rather theoretical in most teacher education institutions. A much better connection between theory and practice is needed. As of now, most teachers feel unprepared to address social-emotional learning effectively. In the EUMOSCHOOL project, the teachers' response to the perceived usefulness of the course indicated that such teacher training programmes would be welcome.

# TURKEY

## Statement of the issue

Early School Leaving is a symptom caused by the disconnection (real or perceived) between the learner and their learning experience. A learning experience driven by the learners would at least partially address that disconnection, and therefore have a beneficial impact on ESL.

A common approach taken to promote emotional education is to empower teachers with curricular resources, professional development. However, there are a lack of measures designed to allow learners to be empowered by driving their own learning experience in a way that is meaningful to them.

Existing policies recognise the importance of developing soft skills. However, the approach taken continues to be teacher centric, which may not be an optimised approach to help learners develop these skills.

## Target audience

Teachers, teacher educators, head of the departments, academicians, school principals, inspectors, education experts from Board of Education, directors and vice directors of Regional Directorates.

## Current policy

There are some provisions in existing policies, made for pre-primary and gifted learners; however, they do not go deep and far enough. There are also specific measures targeting ESL, though they are made with a school-centric approach (e.g. the e-school system and the specific emphasis on girls' school attendance).

## Key recommendations

1. Develop an education framework that mobilises and empowers learners in communities they care about. Involve learners in the design of quality criteria, and develop frameworks to help them understand how learners should become accountable to each other, not to teachers.
2. Introduce standards such as ‘customer satisfaction’ (do learners enjoy going to school, do they like the emotional and social aspect of it, etc.), ‘inquisitive learning’ (are learners curious enough, do they want to find out more on their own accord, are they academically adventurous?), ‘self-directed learning’ (do learners feel responsible and empowered to be the architects of their own success?).

## Argument

The analysis of the comparative report from the EUMOSCHOOL Project has shown a strong incidence of ESL where cultural or socio-economic factors are playing an influential role. By connecting the learning experience to the reality of the specific communities, and by empowering learners to become responsible for their own learning experience, it is postulated that the perception of disconnection or division will be countered.

The recommendation is well aligned with UNESCO’s Sustainable Development Goal 4 which aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. (<https://en.unesco.org/node/265600>)

# AUSTRIA

## Statement of the issue

In Austria, emphasis is placed on the immediate continuation of education following completion of compulsory education. Adolescents finishing their secondary education, polytechnic school, or one-year vocational middle school education are considered as early school leavers. Research shows that the socio-economic status and the educational attainment of parents are among the strongest determinants of early school leaving. Therefore, many teachers find emotional learning methods very helpful and they also believe that it is necessary to integrate this into a curriculum.

## Target audience

- Tyrol, Department of Education
- Provincial School Board for Tyrol
- Schools
- Teacher
- Pedagogues
- Politicians

## Current policy

A number of national policy documents, influenced by the EU-2020 Strategy and the country-specific recommendations of the EU Commission have been issued to tackle the problem, including the National Strategy Paper on Lifelong Learning (2011) and the National Strategy Paper for Preventing Early School Leaving (2012).

Many of the measures developed and implemented in Austria do not focus on early prevention but on offering young people alternatives to complete their education later in life.



## Key recommendations

1. It is necessary that the existing curriculum also include emotional education methods.
2. Teachers need training on how to use the methods.

## Argument

The EUMOSCHOOL Project shows that the integration of emotional learning into the classroom is good for both the learners and the adults who work with them. Emotional learning changes the inner life of teachers. When educators start using emotional learning in the classroom, they change personally. The development of social-emotional skills in their own environment helps teachers to develop these skills for learners - a key factor in the successful implementation of emotional education.

This was found to be the case in the EUMOSCHOOL Didactics of Emotions programme whereby teachers reported personal change and development for themselves as well as learners.

# HUNGARY

## Statement of the issue

In Hungary ESL has been on the increase, explained as being due to economic and socioeconomic reasons. However, schools play a major role in equalizing out opportunities. Studies also suggest the lack of emotional competences as a factor behind ESL.

Whilst teachers believe that emotional education is mainly the family's responsibility, schools also play a major role. It is believed that schools can take over some parts of the role of the family, including basic emotional education, by providing a safe atmosphere, good role models, personal attention and assisting children in solving conflicts. These can result in a greater chance for learners at risk to stay in school.

However, most teachers have not received any formal training in emotional education, nor a comprehensive program for it. Therefore, they do not have the right set of tools, following their own ideas instead of a curriculum regarding emotional education.

## Target audience

- Formal teacher training – higher education, further trainings
- KLIK – Hungarian educational inspectorate
- School leaders, principals
- Pedagogues, teachers

## Current policy

The Hungarian National Curriculum states among its aims to emotionally educate learners (having a realistic self-knowledge, finding the place within the family and the wider community, aiming for meaningful relationships, being able to make responsible decisions, being able to orientate and for opinions independently). Learners can choose from two compulsory subjects: ethics and religious studies, out of which ethics focuses on enhancing certain subareas of emotional intelligence, such as values, morality, connection to others and the differentiation between right and wrong.

Other programs include the Bridge-programs, which target learners who performed well at primary school but were not accepted for high school or are over 15 years old and still in primary school.

Tanoda programme provide afterschool activities and support lessons for learners coming from an economically deprived background.

## Key recommendations

1. Emotional education should be an obligatory part of the formal teacher training.
2. There should be further training for teachers about emotional education.
3. There should be a comprehensive emotional educational program within schools (both in primary and in secondary schools).

## Argument

We base our statements and recommendation on the Eumoschool Comparative Research Report and on our experiences. Within the Research we have asked 104 teachers through an online questionnaire and conducted interviews with 13 more educational professionals. Core results included:

- 92% of teachers disagreed with the statement that emotional education is not part of their role;
- 64% of teachers said emotional education was not part of their initial teacher training (or don't know/remember it);
- 70-79% percent of teachers haven't completed a professional development programme in emotional education.

# Summary

Educators in all participating countries were in agreement with regards to the importance of emotional education and the role it may play in early school leaving.

The evidence from the EUMOSCHOOL project suggests that educators do not feel appropriately equipped or trained to deliver emotional education. The Didactics of Emotion interventions offer one way in which educators may be trained in order to support emotional education in school. This can contribute to school engagement, develop academic resilience, emotional intelligence and prevent early school leaving.

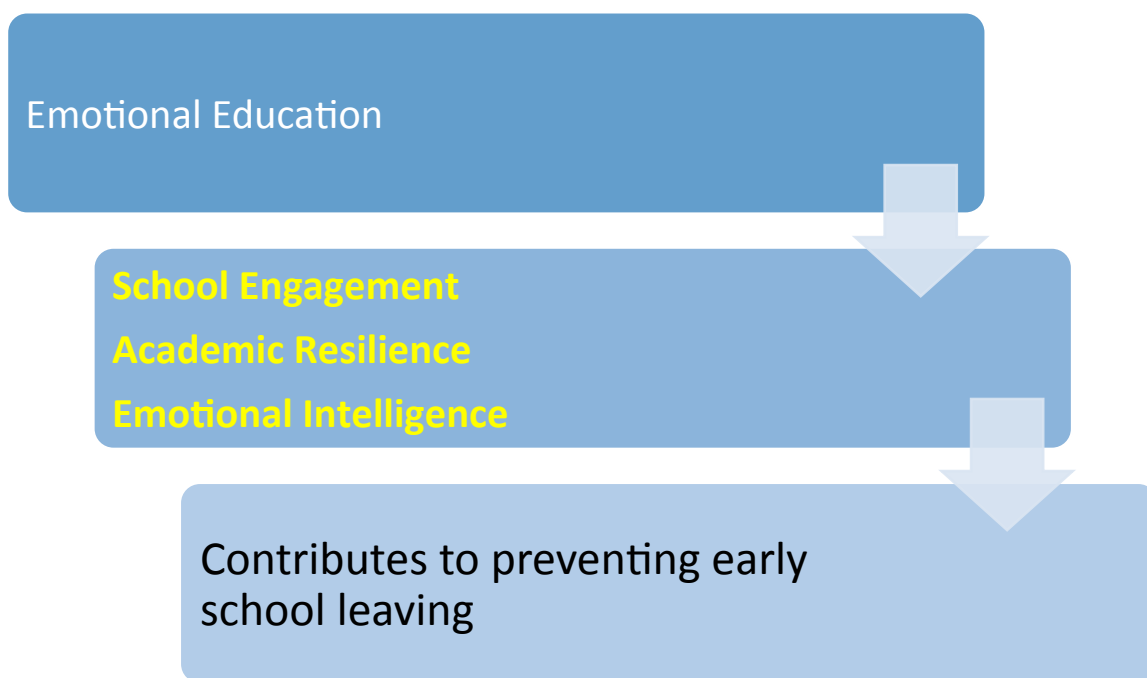


Figure 1 – A pathway from emotional education to preventing early school leaving<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We acknowledge there are a complex interconnected web of factors which contribute to early school leaving and emotional education can support a learner through navigating these factors only as part of a system-wide approach.

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# Partners



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