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# REIMAGINED:

A whole-school intervention framework for enhancing social and emotional skills in secondary schools through arts-integrated practices

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## Table of contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	2
<b>2. Theoretical framework structure for social emotional competence</b>	3
a. Social emotional competence	4
b. Instructional teaching practices	5
<b>3. Overview of the most implemented SEE frameworks, models and arts-integrated practices in EU countries</b>	7
a. Finland	7
i. Social emotional education in Finland	7
ii. Arts-integrated practices from Finland	10
b. Greece	12
i. Social emotional education in Greece	12
ii. Art integration in Greece's education	13
iii. Non-formal education	14
c. Hungary	16
i. Current status of SEE in Hungary	16
ii. Arts-integrated practices in Hungary	17
d. Italy	18
i. Current status of SEE in Italy	18
ii. SEE: Educational projects and research	20
<b>4. Training needs identified through a survey related to the design of SEE programs</b>	22
a. Method	22
b. Results	27
<b>5. Focus groups in partner countries</b>	29
a. Method	29
b. Educational public authorities	29
c. Local civil society organisations (CSOs)	31
d. Students	33
<b>6. Summary discussion of the framework study</b>	37
<b>7. Intervention methods</b>	39
a. Greece: Method for outdoor school projects at community level connecting extra-curricular with cross curricular activities	39
b. Hungary: Guidelines for arts-integrated practices in Social Emotional Education according to Rogers Foundation expertise	42
c. Italy: Possible interventions in the context	44
<b>8. References</b>	50

## 1. Introduction

The evolving demands of 21st century society and associated recurring challenges, such as economic recession, poverty, social inequalities, climate crisis, and health crisis, are having a profound impact on the realm of education, necessitating a shift from a 'learning to know' approach to one that emphasises 'learning to be, do, and live together' (Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, 2018). Consequently, the traditional approach of formal education, which focuses on verbal-linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences, is deemed inadequate in addressing the elevated social and emotional needs of 21st century individuals, particularly in terms of fostering creative thinking, resilience, and creativity (NESET II, 2018). Despite most member states recognizing the significance of social and emotional education (SEE), national policies lack clear goals, schools lack concrete plans and practical paradigms for teaching and implementing it, and educators often lack sufficient training, experience, or motivation to effectively deliver sustainable SEE programs (H2020 Boost Policy Brief 2020, JRC 2019). Additionally, there is a documented deficiency of evidence-based pedagogical guidelines and teaching methods to assist educators in enhancing students' social and emotional skills (OECD, 2015). Despite existing research indicating that arts-based learning leads to improved student engagement and a positive school culture and climate (DeMoss, 2002; Camille, 2019) and has a strong correlation with the objectives of SEE (Karen, 2014), cross-curricular arts-based learning in Europe remains limited. Simultaneously, the impact of Covid-19 on the mental health and emotional well-being of school communities, particularly for children facing social and economic exclusion (Moroni et al., 2020, Hamedani et. al, 2015), further emphasises the aforementioned needs, particularly in light of prolonged school lockdowns and distance learning (JRC, EC, 2020).

The combination of social and emotional education and arts education can be a powerful tool for learning, offering many creative and fun ways to build their skills in the classroom. Social emotional education is important in dealing with bullying, poverty, and intense expectations. Arts can have a profound impact on the social emotional health of students (Arts Integration, n.d.). Arts can help build community among students, reflecting artwork, discussing or playing music, watching movies et cetera. Arts can help bring self-awareness, and also deepen the learning of any content, making the content more memorable through experiences. Social and emotional skills can be embedded in these by dramatising a scene in a story, which offers opportunities to understand the emotions, thoughts and motives of characters in a scene, or students can create a doorway to the past by listening to music of a historical era, and discovering how people were feeling during the time (Peterson, 2022).

Currently, SEE and arts education projects and practices exist in a scattered array around the world. Several websites offer resources and teacher professional development programs for arts integration and social emotional learning. Perhaps one of the biggest of such websites is the Institute for Arts Integration and STEAM, which offers a variety of tools for social emotional learning and arts integration (Arts Integration, n.d.). The Inspired Classroom (n.d.) is another such website, which focuses on Integrating the arts with social and emotional learning, calling it SEAL, Social-Emotional Artistic Learning. They offer professional development programs for teachers online to develop art-

integration in their teaching. The Art of Education University (n.d.) and PBS learning media (n.d.) offer online resources for Social-Emotional Learning through arts. Museums like The Metropolitan Museum of Art (2022) in New York offer a free lesson plan in this topic centred on their art collection. Although these resources are available online, they are mostly centred on the US, and there is little evidence of European local practices of arts and SEE integration.

In light of the aforementioned, the REIMAGINED project endeavours to jointly address EU-wide needs by providing pedagogical intervention frameworks to support educators in implementing a cross-curricular approach to enhance SEE. This framework aims to: a) examine the interrelation between SEE and arts education and identify arts-integrated practices that can be used in a cross-curricular approach to enhance students' social and emotional skills, b) identify the training needs of diverse educators to deliver sustainable SEE programmes through arts-integrated practices, c) assess the current needs for social and emotional skills of lower secondary students, with a focus on adolescents facing social exclusion, considering the impact of a year-long distance learning due to Covid-19, d) specify the benefits of connecting curricular and extra-curricular school activities to emphasise hands-on learning, e) specify the project's intervention framework through a whole-school action plan within and outside school environment.

Concerning the accuracy of the term, social emotional learning (SEL) refers to similar concepts of SEE. Although the teams are defined or used in different contexts, they are used interchangeably. While SEE indicates specific educational programmes, practices, strategies, and teaching (Cefai et al., 2018), SEL is often used more as an umbrella term that encompasses the development of a range of social and emotional competences, including emotional regulation, empathy, decision-making, and relationship building (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2020; Durlak et al., 2011). Therefore, in this report, SEL is also used to analyse the needs of educators to deliver sustainable SEE because the theory and analysis tools we use are developed with the term SEL.

## 2. Theoretical framework structure for social emotional competence

This chapter introduces the theoretical framework of SEE and learning that is applied for the project. In order to approach students' and professional educators' needs for SEE, we employ the conceptual framework of social emotional competence (SEC).

SEE has become an increasingly important aspect of education in recent years, as educators, parents, and policymakers recognise the vital role that social and emotional aspects of education play in shaping successful, well-rounded individuals. In brief, social-emotional learning (SEL) is the ability to identify and regulate emotions, find effective solutions to problems, and build positive relationships with others (Zins and Elias, 2007). SEL refers to the process of developing awareness and skills in the emotional, social, and behavioural domains, with the goal of promoting overall well-being and positive outcomes (CASEL, 2003). SEC is an outcome of SEL and SEE. SEC encompasses a wide range of competences, including emotional awareness, empathy, self-regulation, healthy relationships, resilience, and responsible decision-making. Evidence has shown that SEL can not only enhance individual well-being, but also improve academic performance and reduce problem behaviours (Cantor et al., 2019, Durlack et al., 2011). According to Yodar (2014), teachers' social

emotional competence is enacted through a set of instructional teaching practices. He showed the relationships between teachers' social emotional competence and teaching practices (Figure 1).

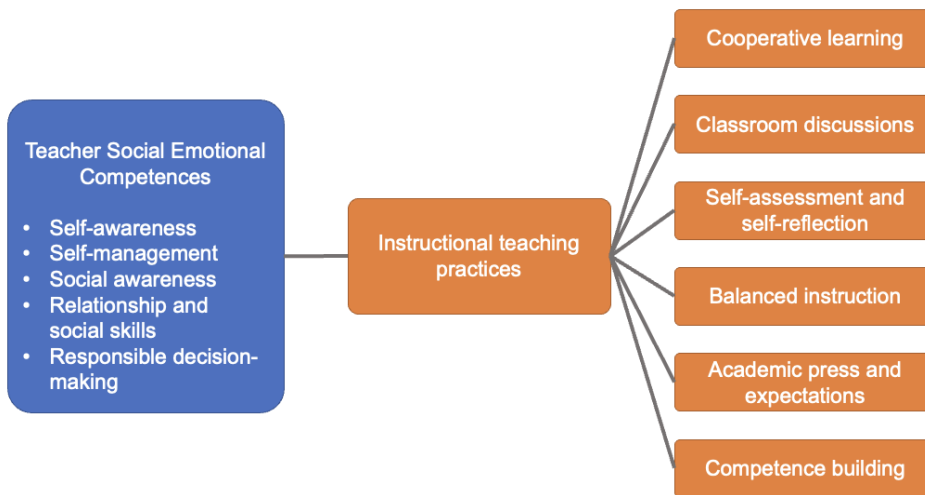


Figure 1. The relationships between teacher social emotional competence and their teaching practices (Yodar, 2014)

### a. Social emotional competence

There appears to be a lack of agreement regarding the definition of social emotional competence. In this framework study, we have chosen to use the CASEL framework (2020) despite the existence of several terms, such as emotional intelligence and emotional literacy. This is because the CASEL model encompasses the most essential aspects of social and emotional competence as described in leading theoretical models, serving as a link between theory and practice (Zhou & Ee, 2012). The CASEL model has five aspects of SEC: *self-awareness*; *self-management*; *social awareness*; *relationship management*; and *responsible decision-making*. SEC is not only important for students but also teachers. One study shows that teachers' social emotional competence is crucial to realise prosocial classrooms where students are cooperative, helpful, and concern others, which leads to fewer misbehaviour (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

*Self-awareness* is the ability to accurately assess one's feelings, interests, values, and strengths, and to have a grounded sense of self-efficacy (Payton et al., 2008). Self-awareness involves recognizing one's own strengths, weaknesses, feelings, and emotions and understanding their impact on performance (Torrente et al., 2016; Zins & Elias, 2006). It is a cognitive capacity that leads to reflection and better understanding of emotions (Zhou & Ee, 2012), thereby leading to regulating behaviour and making responsible decisions. In the classroom, teachers need to be aware of their own attitudes, limitations, and how personal factors like emotions, background, and personality affect their teaching (Yodar, 2014). Socially and emotionally competent teachers understand the impact of these personal factors on themselves and their students and aim to build strong relationships by bridging differences (Yodar, 2014).

*Self-management* refers to the ability to manage and change emotions in terms of their valence, intensity, and duration (Gross, 1998). Negative emotions require more management than positive ones, and teachers vary in their capacity to regulate their own emotions (Gross, 1998). Children who don't have effective ways of dealing with strong emotions may exhibit socially unacceptable behaviour and have difficulty forming relationships with their peers. Additionally, in school settings, students who struggle to regulate their emotions tend to have difficulty thinking clearly and achieving academic success. (Eisenberg et al., 1995; Zhou & Ee, 2012). Socially and emotionally competent teachers are better equipped to handle the demands of teaching as they can identify their own emotions and manage them appropriately, taking into consideration different perspectives (Yodar, 2014). They also model and guide students to regulate their own emotions, promoting prosocial behaviours and a focus on learning (Yodar, 2014).

*Social awareness* refers to the ability to read other persons' cues and to understand, and appropriately respond to their feelings (Frey, Hirschstein, & Guzzo, 2000). This ability is closely related to prosocial abilities, such as empathy (Eisenberg, 1986), perspective taking (Grant & Berry, 2011; Parker & Axtell, 2001; Zins & Elias, 2006) and prosocial behaviours (De Dreu & Nauta, 2009). Teachers with high social emotional competence, characterised by their social awareness, are better able to prevent disruptive behaviour and promote student engagement by attentively monitoring and responding to their needs (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). This leads to improved relationships and conflict resolution (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Yodar, 2014).

*Relationship and social skills* is a specific set of abilities exhibited by an individual that enable successful completion of a social task, including cooperation, help seeking and providing, and communication (CASEL, 2020; Zins & Elias, 2006). Studies suggest that children who face rejection from peers, increased feelings of loneliness and social isolation, and associate with troubled peers, are more likely to disengage from academic activities and eventually drop out of school (Sage & Kindermann, 1999; Zhou & Ee, 2012). Students at high risk for behavioural and emotional regulation difficulties benefit greatly from strong relationships with their teachers (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1999). A teacher's supportive response to challenging behaviour can have a lasting positive impact on a student's social and emotional growth, particularly in the early years of their education (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Yodar, 2014).

*Responsible decision-making* refers to the ability to consider ethical, safety, and societal factors in making decisions, such that individuals can deal responsibly with daily academic and social situations and contribute to the well-being of one's school and community (CASEL, 2020). Responsible decision making can be enhanced through training focusing on a sense of social responsibility towards others (CASEL, 2020). Teachers with strong social emotional competence make informed decisions about instruction, classroom management, and student interactions by using multiple sources of evidence based on their prosocial values (Yodar, 2014). They consider the individual needs, well-being, and academic goals of each student and their class as a whole, and weigh both emotional and academic considerations in both long-term planning and immediate decision making (Yodar, 2014).

## b. Instructional teaching practices

Yodar (2014) identified two types of teaching practices, instructional and social teaching practices. Instructional teaching practices include cooperative learning, classroom discussions, self-assessment

and self-reflection, balanced instruction, academic press and expectations, and competence building while social teaching practices emphasise more communication aspects, such as teacher language, warmth, and support (Figure 1). This framework study focuses only on instructional teaching practices because the aim of this project is to build a framework with which arts-integrated practices enhance students' social emotional competence. Teachers must enhance their own social and emotional competence to effectively implement these practices. For example, teachers must possess the necessary skills to communicate effectively with students and handle challenging situations in the classroom, in order to model and foster positive student interactions (Brackett et al., 2009). Teachers with strong social and emotional skills establish supportive relationships with students, design activities that play to their strengths, and support their development of fundamental social and emotional skills necessary for classroom success (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Yodar, 2014). The definitions of the instructional teaching practices by Yodar (2014) are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Instructional teaching practices derived from teachers' social emotional competence (Yodar, 2014)

Practices	Explanation
Cooperative learning	Cooperative learning is an instructional approach in which students work together towards a common goal, facilitated by the teacher. To effectively implement cooperative learning, five elements are necessary: positive interdependence, individual accountability, promoting each other's success, social and interpersonal skills, and group processing. Collective accountability and group processing are important for the impact on student learning and development of social and emotional skills.
Classroom discussions	Classroom discussions are conversations between students and teachers about the content being studied. They are facilitated by open-ended questions from the teacher and aim to have students elaborate on their own thinking and the thinking of their peers. Effective classroom discussions are student-driven and build upon each other's thoughts. To achieve this, teachers need to develop students' communication skills, including the ability to extend their own thinking and listen attentively to classmates. Teachers also need to ensure students have sufficient content knowledge and the necessary skills for substantive discussions.
Self-reflection and self-assessment	Self-reflection and self-assessment are instructional activities where teachers ask students to evaluate their own work. To facilitate this process, teachers should ask students to assess their work against performance standards and encourage them to think about how to improve. Teachers also need to work with students to set goals and priorities and teach them how to monitor their progress. The process of self-reflection should also include learning how and when to seek help and finding resources.

Balanced instruction	Balanced instruction refers to the use of a balanced approach by teachers between active and direct instruction, and individual and collaborative learning. The goal is to provide students with opportunities to directly learn about the material and engage with it through activities such as project-based learning. In project-based learning, students are involved in solving a problem through independent or collaborative means, and they must plan, monitor, and reflect on their progress.
Academic press and expectations	Academic press refers to the practice of a teacher setting high, meaningful, and challenging work standards and expectations, with the belief that all students can and will succeed. This approach helps create a sense of responsibility and pressure to succeed, but should not be too strict. Effective implementation of academic press requires teachers to know their students' academic abilities and emotional responses to challenging work.
Competence building	Competence building involves teachers developing social and emotional competencies in students through a structured instructional cycle. This involves setting goals and objectives, introducing new material, group and individual practice, and conclusion and reflection. The teacher models prosocial behavior and provides feedback to students on their interactions and content learning. In case of problems, the teacher guides students through problem-solving and conflict-resolution strategies.

### 3. Overview of the most implemented SEE frameworks, models and arts-integrated practices in EU countries

This chapter presents a summary of the most commonly used SEE frameworks, models, and arts-integrated practices in EU countries, with a focus on partner countries, as determined through desk research.

#### a. Finland

##### i. Social emotional education in Finland

In Finland, social and emotional skills are embedded in the national curriculum and courses across all education. The national curriculum for basic education, introduced in Finland in 2016, includes social and emotional skills in all school subjects as part of the seven transversal competence areas:

- Thinking and learning to learn;
- Cultural competence, interaction and expression;
- Taking care of oneself and managing daily life;
- Multi-literacy;
- Information and communications technology (ICT) competence;
- Working life competence and entrepreneurship; and
- Participation, involvement and building a sustainable future.

In the first two grades of primary education in Finland, social and emotional skills are included in environmental studies, which is a combination of biology, geography, physics, chemistry and health



education. Its goal is to direct students to practising group work skills and emotional skills and to strengthen respect for oneself and others. Students practise emotional skills and mental well-being development and a respect for others that is appropriate for their particular life phase. In grades 3-6, social and emotional skills are practised, for example, in religion classes, with topics on children's rights and responsibilities; forming and justifying one's own views; friendship, positive class and school society formation; and preventing discrimination. From grades 7-9, students develop preparedness in social and emotional skills in health education classes, which supports students' capability to act in different conflict situations, and acknowledge one's own values and attitudes. Students work on issues such as individualisation, communality, equality, and responsible decision-making. They also work on expressing and regulating emotions in social interactions. Students learn to deal with conflicts, problematic situations, stress and crisis in a constructive manner. Quite a few social and emotional skills are developed through these programmes and tie in with the skills – assertiveness, co-operation, empathy, persistence, responsibility, self-control, sociability, stress resistance, tolerance and trust.

Developing social and emotional skills is also embedded in all programmes of upper secondary education. Students enrolled in vocational education programmes develop 8 lifelong learning key skills, including societal and citizenship skills, which encompass social and emotional skills. The new national curriculum for general upper secondary education implemented in 2021 is based on transversal (generic) skills. These include social and emotional skills to support student well-being. In general upper secondary education, social and emotional skills are also embedded in health education. Students can also opt for an optional course on learning skills, which includes 3 themes: studying; social relationships; and emotions and the mind. The goal is that the student understands the meaning of feelings, how feelings are formed and how feelings and thoughts affect each other. Students learn about the role of social relationships for their well-being and acknowledge their responsibility in social relationships. At this upper secondary level of education, emphasis is put on developing social and emotional domains and skills such as task performance (responsibility, persistence and self-control), collaboration (empathy, trust and cooperation) and engaging with others (sociability and assertiveness).

Assessment is at the core of the implementation of the basic education curriculum. In Finland, assessment focuses on three dimensions: students' learning, work and behaviour. Social and emotional skills are thus assessed as part of students' behaviour. Behaviour objectives are based on the educational objectives of the school and the school policies that define the culture of the community.

Perhaps, the biggest provider of information about the state of social and emotional skills is the Survey on Social and Emotional Skills (SSES), developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The survey aims to:

- Provide participating cities and countries with information on their students' social and emotional skills.
- Identify factors in students' home, school and peer environments that promote or hinder the development of social and emotional skills.
- Explore how broader policy, cultural and socio-economic contexts influence these skills.
- Provide insights as to how students' social and emotional skills relate to key life outcomes.
- Demonstrate that valid, reliable, comparable information on social and emotional skills can be produced across diverse populations and settings.

The OECD Survey on Social and Emotional Skills (SSES) focuses on 17 social and emotional skills ranging from curiosity and creativity through to emotional control (OECD, 2022). The main results of SSES from Finland indicate that in Helsinki (capital of Finland), intellectual curiosity, persistence, assertiveness and trust are the social and emotional skills most strongly related to 15-year-olds' school performance in reading, mathematics and the arts. Overall, gender differences in students' social and emotional skills are slightly more pronounced in Helsinki than on average across participating cities. 15-year-old boys exhibit higher skills in the domains of emotional regulation (stress resistance, optimism and emotional control) and engaging with others (sociability, assertiveness, energy), in Helsinki and in all participating cities. Likewise, 15-year-old girls exhibit higher levels of responsibility, empathy, co-operation, and tolerance. On average, across all participating cities, socio-economically advantaged students exhibit higher levels of every social and emotional skill measured by SSES than those less advantaged. 15-year-olds exhibit lower social and emotional skills than 10-year-olds, in Helsinki and on average across participating cities. The differences are particularly pronounced when it comes to optimism, trust, energy and sociability. In all participating cities including Helsinki, students who participate in after-school art activities report higher levels of creativity, particularly among 15-year-olds. In Helsinki, 17% of 10-year-olds and 14% of 15-year-olds have experienced bullying at least a few times a month or more. Students' exposure to bullying is negatively related to almost all social and emotional skills. In Helsinki, social and emotional skills that matter for students' current psychological well-being include optimism, self-control, stress resistance, trust, and energy.

Cefai et al. (2018) summarise Finnish SEE research as follows: "Many social-emotional-education projects in Finland combine physical activity, art and music as a way to enhance children's social and emotional wellbeing and healthy development (Kokkonen, 2011). The most known and manualised programmes in the country are Tunnemuksu (Peltonen & Kullberg-Piilola, 2005), which is focused on emotional understanding and self-regulation for children aged four to nine years, the Steps of Aggression (Cacciatore, 2008) targeted to reduce and prevent aggressive behaviour in children and young people under the age of 25, and the Lions Quest programme (Talvio & Lonka, 2013)." Since 2009, Finland has also incorporated a national anti-bullying programme in schools named "The KiVa Antibullying Programme", which has had various benefits, not only decreasing bullying, cyberbullying and victimisation, but also anxiety and depression (Williford et al., 2012), among other improvements in school liking, academic motivation and academic performance (Salmivalli et al., 2012; Veenstra, 2014).

Haapsamo et al. (2009) have screened Finnish children as young as 18 months for developmental social and emotional problems, using a "Bitsea" assessment tool. Kirvesniemi et al. (2019) on their part have focused on the Finnish day-care centre as an environment for learning social-emotional well-being. In day-care centres educators observe and monitor children and are in interaction with them in several places, but there are still visible moments or longer periods when the educators do not encounter the needs of children. Especially, quiet children may remain invisible and the participants of the day-care centres do not always identify categorised gender norms (Kirvesniemi et al., 2019).

Määttä et al. (2017) showed that Finnish educators are using different materials and methods to support children's social-emotional competence in early childhood education, and Koivula et al. (2020) have investigated the implementation of Papilio, a German social-emotional learning programme in Finnish early childhood education and care centres, which has yielded positive results

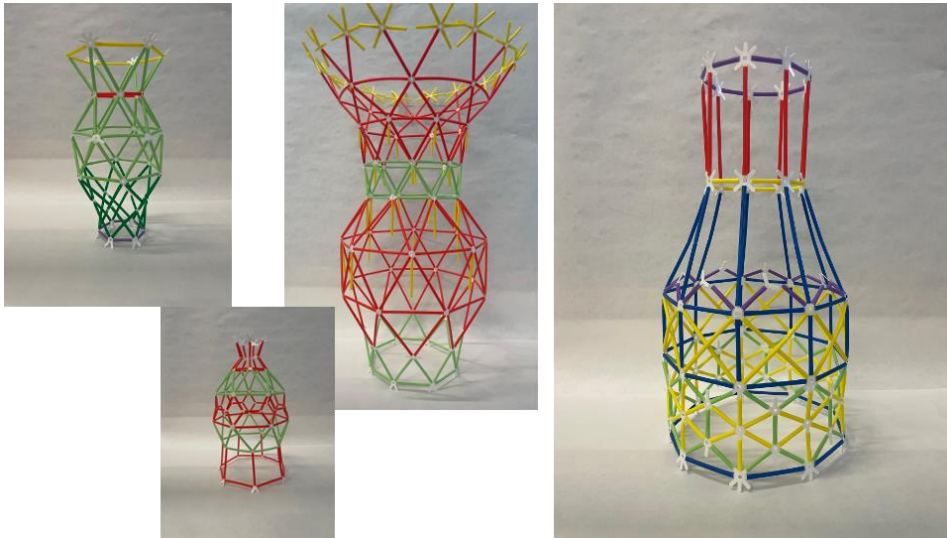


in improving the children’s social-emotional competence. Salmela-Aro and Upadyaya (2020) showed that with socio-emotional skills, such as high curiosity, grit, academic buoyancy, social engagement, and belongingness, students were more likely to be engaged in their study rather than feel stressed or burned out.

## ii. Arts-integrated practices from Finland

Finnish schools have “phenomenon-based learning” in their curriculum, in which more than one traditional study subject is combined to learn from projects, based on real-life scenarios or simulations of them. The STEAM learning approach, for example, combines science, technology, engineering arts, and mathematics in various ways. One example of this kind of learning situation is addressing water shortage in hot areas by building a Warka water tower (see: <https://warkawater.org/>) to harvest water from condensation in air. JYU’s Innovative Learning Environments research group (ILE) has organised many STEAM workshops like this, and teachers appreciate this kind of hands-on experience, as it is a good example of how STEAM-learning can answer many different learning goals set by the national and local curricula in Finland.





Teachers in Finland have such creative freedom to figure out how to answer all the needs of the curriculum during each semester, so they can include as much arts-integration in their teaching as they like. Settings like building the Warka water tower include some knowledge from many areas of learning, without the students even thinking about it.

ILE interviewed teachers from a Finnish School Norssi, in Central Finland, in terms of what kinds of practices they use to teach arts-integration. Teachers said that they have previously built bridges from styrofoam, rubber bands, newspapers, straws, toothpicks, peas, legos et cetera. In one class there had been a middle-age themed castle building project from cardboard boxes etc. that students had brought from their homes, and they had made 3D pictures of the castle, and then they had infrastructure of all the bridges and could move inside the castle using software-based simulation. This was a project to learn historical knowledge and to build skills in architecture and basic engineering.

Another example of projects that teachers had done previously was an art museum collaboration where the students would first see an art exhibition and then create soundstage art for it. In handicraft, they have built catapults and other mechanical works, but it depends a bit on the students which style suits and interests them. One teacher had built Rome, from painting a canvas to building the central market and building temples around it, and they also made a virtual representation of the city they built using software. Ancient greek technology and roman technology, all the concepts that they had in the past, can be used very powerfully and eye-opening. Aqueducts for example were demonstrated so that they had the equipment and they had to build and problem-solve how to transport water from place a to b.

More examples of how project-based STEAM teaching are incorporated in Finnish teaching followed. At a certain level, students need to build some personal, local and international and national product as a response to sustainable development, and this is also where teachers thought the Warka water tower could work as an example. The teachers thought that people don't do technological and engineering work in a concrete way very often, or at least don't think that way. One teacher said that not many people even think that a doorknob is technology and an example of engineering.

Teachers thought that in STEAM, Art is very important since it contains creative expression, including music, creative writing, and arts expression in drawing or painting. Teachers also appreciate the group work-centred way of working that is often present in arts-integration. The skills developed in these kinds of actions directly support the needs of the curricula. In Finland, these things are taught in a student-centred way, offering more flexibility and freedom of expression for the student, as well as letting the student decide which way they wish to approach a given task.

Despite these many examples of arts-integrated practices in Finland, there are not many courses for preservice teachers or professional development for in-service teachers considering arts-integration, that are offered locally for this type of teaching. There is much room for improvement, and the level of creative integration depends on the teacher's dedication and self-directedness to incorporating it.

## b. Greece

### i. Social emotional education in Greece

The current status around social and emotional education in Greece was recently discussed by public authorities Mrs Andreou, Education Coordinator, Mrs Perakaki Head of the pedagogical lab of the Department of Music Studies in University of Athens and Mrs Adamopoulou, Scientific Advisor for the Arts at the Institute of Educational Policy. The three aforementioned persons formed a focus group organised by Mrs Papadopoulou representative of Actionaid Hellas within the framework of the European Project Re-imagined. Through the discussion, the following was said about today's social and emotional education practice in Greece:

- *Innovative school programs* are extracurricular activities, 2 hours per week, in which up to 30 students from different classes can participate at a time. The teacher chooses the topic in collaboration with the students, which must meet the following conditions: fall into the students' interests, incorporate the principles and values of sustainability, promote the cooperation of the school community with the local society, encourage democratic behaviours, strengthen the students' citizenship as well as their social identity perspective.
- *The Youth Parliament Program* is an extracurricular activity referred to the students of A' and B' classes of Lyceum (aged between 15 and 16 years old). The main objectives of the program are students' cultivation of active citizenship in practice, familiarisation with the principles and values of democracy, as well as with the functioning and role of Parliament, exercise in democratic practices and moreover activation in issues that concern school, community and society.
- *Psychologists and social workers* in schools support students from vulnerable social groups, if needed, or implement psychosocial and emotional support programs for students.
- *The Educator's Guide for School and Social Life* includes the conceptual framework of the specific field of knowledge, where modern theoretical approaches, international experience and the necessity of applying School and Social Life in the school context are described. In addition, reference is made to the developmental characteristics of students in various areas of development (self-awareness, social and emotional competence, physical competence). As for the students, through School and Social Life, they are given the opportunity to acquire social skills that are important for their lives and their coexistence in a group, while at the same time preparing for their lives inside and outside of school. Students develop skills,

attitudes and values that help them learn, build relationships, solve everyday problems and conflicts and adapt to change, apply for jobs, live harmoniously with others, communicate, protect and care for themselves.

- *The Skill Labs* are curriculum activities in lower secondary education, 1 hour per week. There are four thematics: 1) Live better – Live well, 2) Care for the Environment, 3) Care and Act – Social awareness and responsibility and 4) Create and Innovate – Creative thinking and Innovation. Skill Labs are targeted on the development of the so-called 21st century skills: life skills, soft skills, technological competency and science skills. On an indicative basis amongst the 21st century skills we can find the development of critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, flexibility and adaptability, initiative, organisational skills, empathy and social skills, problem solving, digital and technological literacy.

## ii. Art integration in Greece's education

In the Greek educational system from kindergarten (Nipiagogio) until secondary education (Gymnasium and Lyceum) arts are part of the curriculum, as a subject. Generally, art lessons in the Greek educational system are separate subjects and the hours of the specific lessons are limited in the weekly curriculum. In the higher classes of secondary education, the lessons related to arts are decreasing; as a result, there is no art in high school. The Greek curriculum at a glance are following:

- I. Kindergarten:
  - A. Visual arts: The content of the visual arts curriculum is approached through four axes: Experiences with materials and ideas, familiarity with visual arts technique, interaction with works of art and other stimuli from the environment, communication through artistic creation
  - B. Music: Main goal for children is to develop and cultivate their musical skills
- II. Primary school (6 classes)
  - A. Visual arts: for all ages, 2 hours per week for the 3 first classes and 1 hour per week for the 3 last classes
  - B. Music: for all classes, 1 hour per week
  - C. Theatre: only for the 3 first classes, 1 hour per week
- III. Lower Secondary School (Gymnasium / 12-14 years old)
  - A. Visual arts: 1 hour per week
  - B. Music: 1 hour per week
- IV. Upper Secondary School (Lyceum / 15-18 years old)
  - A. No arts subject /lesson

Although institutionally art lessons do not follow the worldwide trend to integrate the curriculum, in many cases teachers take the initiative, especially in kindergartens and primary schools, to use art to enhance the curriculum. Teachers use arts as a tool or a strategy to support other curriculum areas; however, there are no objectives in the art form explicitly being taught. For example, teachers use some songs in order for young students to learn the alphabet but it does not mean that they learn music including learning about the melody and the synthesis. Additionally, it is common for primary schools to have afterschool arts programs as an initiative of parents, who pay educators for those lessons. Usually, after-school programs include visual art, traditional Greek dances, and in some cases theatre.



In the lower secondary schools (Gymnasium), there are a few hours of teaching music and visual arts while in the upper secondary schools (Lyceum) there is no space for art. Any artistic action or activity in the educational grades, especially mural art (temporary art action in schools) or/and theatrical team (more permanent art action in schools) is an initiative of teachers because they either believe in the power of art (as a learning tool, befriending tool, as a tool for creating a way to express themselves, or even to find their future job) or because they are forced to supplement their working hours.

Special mention should be made to private kindergartens and primary schools, where it seems that the integration of arts is gaining more and more ground for development (Impschool, 2021). At this point, there should also be a reference to the institution of Music and Art Schools, for ages 12-18 that exists in some regions of Greece. In these schools, students follow the curriculum of lower secondary school (Gymnasium) and upper secondary school (Lyceum). However, they have more hours of artistic lessons as a part of the curriculum: art areas theatre- movies, visual-craft arts, and dance.

Another special reference should be done to EU projects, in which many schools are participating (Kmakad, 2023). Many schools during the last few years, especially lower secondary schools, are participating in artistic EU projects like e-ARTinED (ArtesCommunity, 2023), ERASMUS +, Creative Europe projects. In most of the projects, arts are used as optional tools to approach each topic. Programs that are focused on arts, as a topic and/or essential tool to approach the topic, are less for SEE.

### iii. Non-formal education

In non-formal education, there is a slight difference. The data we have is limited as there is no record of specific actions about art integration in Greece. Although we can mention some institutions and organisations who try to integrate arts in their daily practice:

- *ActionAid Hellas*: Besides arts lessons (art education), theatre and visual arts, the main sector in which we use Art Integration Approach is in remedial teaching. It creates a manual, a toolkit, which includes activities and exercises, based on many art forms (theatre, visual arts, painting, dance, creative writing, games, cooking, etc) that teachers can use for their daily teaching. This manual is used by the teachers of adult education as well. Taking into account that “adult education” in ActionAid Hellas means to teach the Greek language to immigrants, the art-integrated education generated remarkable results, not only about how fast they learn but how the whole process of learning becomes more creative, more holistic, and empowering for the students.
- *Hellenic theatre/drama Education Network (TENet-Gr)*: TENet-Gr was founded in 1998 in Athens Greece as a network of teachers and artists and developed into a registered non-profit and non-government institution. It is an association of teachers and artists for the promotion of research on and practice of theatre, educational drama, and other performing arts within formal and non-formal education. Its dual purpose is to provide assistance for the performing arts in order to gain a main role in schools and contribute to the development of approaches and techniques, considering theatre as an art form, as a learning tool, and as a tool for social intervention (TheatroEdu, 2023). This association provides educational programs in schools, lesson plans, articles to support teachers and artists using drama or other performing

arts in their daily work life. This association rarely uses other forms of art and when this happens, usually music is only to support drama. Their lesson plans and toolkit is more arts (drama)-enhanced curriculum rather than integrating arts in the teaching process. Besides that, they have a lot of lesson plans and materials for raising awareness for social topics through drama. Finally, they run a lot of seminars and EU funding projects to educate teachers on how they can use drama as a powerful tool in education.

- *Museums*: There are a lot of art museums for the general audience and especially for kids. Almost all provide art workshops for children and teens, using the form of art. For example, the Museum of Traditional Greek Pottery organises pottery workshops.
- *“Integrate Arts in education” by Marina Sotiropoulou-Zorbala (2019)*: In 2020 a university professor published the above book, in which she brings together all her experience in integrating art into the educational process. Besides the theoretical framework, she gives examples and lesson plans on how to integrate arts in primary school.
- *National theatre and Greek film centre*: These 2 governmental institutions provide seminars and long/short-term trainings to educators in order to use drama and filming in their daily teaching, firstly to enhance curriculum and secondly to be an artistic expression of the students.

To sum up, art integration, as we defined the term above, is not part, at least institutionalised, of the public education system in Greece. Arts is part of the curriculum as a subject, mainly visual arts, music, and theatre (only in primary school), and the teaching time for these lessons is limited. However, in many cases, one form of art, mostly visual arts and theatre, is used by teachers to enhance the curriculum, and this is their individual initiative. Most of the above cases are unfortunately mainly found in kindergartens and primary schools and rarely in the other levels of education. In secondary education, Gymnasium and Lyceum, we can find groups of students who form e.g., the theatrical team of the school. Usually, a teacher, and not an art educator, oversees this team and all the rehearsals take part in the school regarding the hours; most of them are included in the weekly lesson program. For all the above it is obvious that in the public education system, there are a lot of things to do to achieve art integration.

In terms of academic studies and research, there is a plethora of articles by Greek scientists that prove the multiple benefits to students and teachers from art integration and conclude with the demand for art integration to be institutionally included in the curriculum of schools (School Education Gateway, 2019) The above request seems to be shared by a high number of teachers as there is high participation in paid workshops/seminars that show how to use specific art forms in the educational process.

In non-formal education, unfortunately, the mapping is not helpful to have the whole picture of art integration activities in the Greek community. But it should be taken for granted that in non-formal education there is flexibility to apply new methodologies regarding art integration and art education. In many private educational and cultural institutions, NGOs use art as an exclusive theory and methodology for the development of individuals, personally and socially. Most of them follow the public-school model, utilising one form of art, depending on the profile of the institution e.g. National Theater - theatre, National Gallery-painting.

In NGOs and specifically for ActionAid Hellas, besides arts education, it uses art forms not only to meet the needs of the public school curriculum but to succeed in the holistic development of individuals, children, and adults. Although it does not have much data about art integration in non-



formal education, it is true that art nowadays is the main tool to approach knowledge, skills, and values. The importance of art integration in the Greek society of 2023 is a subject of debate, research, study, and practical application in the university community. Many undergraduate and postgraduate pedagogical curricula have art integration as the centre of their studies. Similarly, there are several conferences and workshops on this topic at the university level, so tomorrow's teachers will have a different relationship with art integration, which we hope to apply in the future classroom (Brown, 2010).

### c. Hungary

#### i. Current status of SEE in Hungary

Historically, public education in Hungary primarily focuses on the development of cognitive rather than social competences. However, the National Core Curriculum effective from 2020 places a strong emphasis on teaching effective learning techniques, developing positive attitudes towards physical and mental health, and preparing for adult life, by which pupils' social and civic competences are developed. Currently, there are few programmes and concepts to help teachers develop social and emotional competences in Hungarian schools. Official handbooks, or national guidelines supporting this process do not exist yet. Nevertheless, some experiments and programmes demonstrate the effectiveness of conscious, planned development (Zsolnai, 2012). One of the first complex programs was established by Eva Csendes in the late 20th century that targeted the development of life-skills such as: self-awareness, healthy and safe living and self empowerment and self-protection ability of lower secondary school students. (Csendes, 1998).

As researchers show evidence of better life skills of those who are in possession of social and emotional skills, more and more projects and programs are aiming at developing these skills not only in Western countries but in Hungary as well. Experience shows that those programmes which are integrated into the general curriculum and led by teachers in school are more effective in the long term for student outcomes than complementary interventions delivered by external professionals (Greenberg et al., 2003; Hoagwood et al., 2007).

To mention some examples, it is worth focusing on the book written by the most influential Hungarian researcher and developer of this area, Anikó Zsolnai and her colleague Ildikó Konta about the playful development of social skills in schools (Zsolnai & Konta, 2002). The book includes a thorough collection of playful activities for lower and upper elementary school students, supplemented by the literature on social development. Zsolnai's name is rather well known among elementary school teachers in Hungary, even if not everyone applies her studies in their pedagogical practice.

While SEE is not the main focus in the National Curriculum, there are strong initiatives to introduce programmes in pre-school and primary and lower-secondary education. The following programs are already working in Hungary: The so-called "*Complex instruction*" method's three methodological pillars are multiple ability assignments, group-work and status treatment. The method was developed in the 1970's at the Stanford University by Elizabeth G. Cohen and Rachel Lotan later introduced to several schools in the US and from the early 2000s was successfully adopted in several Hungarian schools. These schools, which are committed to change, are mainly in poor and socially undeveloped regions, where teachers face hopelessness, poverty, demotivation, low school performance and early school leaving in their everyday practice. Another organisation is "*Everywhere*

*at home* " that specialises on complex programs for parents and teachers to help them better support children's social and emotional development. Among other programs, one worth mentioning is the socio-emotional pedagogic therapy developed by a Hungarian researcher and psychotherapist: Orsolya Göbel, PhD. Her program, based on her decades of study and experience is named: "*Enchantment games*" (Varázsjátékok) and is a special method to help teachers, parents, therapists and the children themselves. It helps kids with special needs to reach a more well-tempered state and get integrated in their community. It also helps the community to accept their less ordinary members, it increases the cognitive capacity of the kids, helps strengthen social relations and has many other positive effects. Another successful and fruitful program is the "*Happy Hour*" (Boldogságóra) program, which is based on positive pedagogy and also addresses the parents, the pedagogues and the children in a complex way.

In summary, it is obvious that the need for SEE is present in Hungary and also in the mind of Hungarian educators who lack officially published training material for these areas. The above-mentioned programs address the teachers, the parents and the kids and some of those programs are specialised in a way that can be connected to the public school education. Official educational material cannot be found.

## ii. Arts-integrated practices in Hungary

Most likely a number of teachers use arts-integrated methods individually in their daily teaching practice, while there is not an official collection of these, nor any guidance for doing so. Nevertheless Arts-integrated social skill development is one of the fundamental approaches of Waldorf pedagogy, therefore a lot of those practices are available in the Waldorf schools. Unfortunately, the connection between public schools and Waldorf school is not strong, mainly kept on by individual school teachers who can learn from each other in an informal way. According to the Waldorf pedagogical approach, complex arts education including interdisciplinary tools is an opportunity to develop essential skills for the future such as social and cultural competences (Mesterházy, 2014). Complex art education in their understanding includes music, dance (eurythmia), drama and visual arts. They use tools that address the childrens' emotions, imagination and pictorial thinking, while in higher classes (above 12 years), a greater emphasis is based on awareness about their experiences and cognitive processing. A very important and significant example of the combination of project pedagogy and art-based pedagogy in Waldorf schools is their practice to put a drama on stage in which an entire class works on that piece of art for almost half a year. This working process involves a lot of hours together and directly and indirectly develops emotional and social skills, while also gives the experience of forming a whole art-piece together. In Eurythmy children learn to move in thoughtful and disciplined ways in collaboration with others. While this art is soulful and expressive, it also teaches skills like cooperation, spatial and sensory awareness, midline crossing for brain building, motor skills and more. Eurythmy both requires and develops focus and goodwill. Eurythmy has an overall harmonising effect on a participant's health and vitality (Elmore, 2020).

The other branch of art-based emotional development in Waldorf schools is visual arts. They use drawing, painting and several artistic processes included into the daily routine of the pupils. These can also be a great help in understanding and shaping a child's temperament, while rhythmic, repetitive movements during handicrafts are used to strengthen the will and the ability to think logically.

## d. Italy

### i. Current status of SEE in Italy

SES in Italy is a “great challenge”. In recent years in Italy, also following the pandemic influenza from Covid-19, the topic of SEE has taken centre stage in a debate involving teachers, educators and students. However, the path to their full recognition/legitimation in schools still appears uncertain and strewn with obstacles. It has to clash with a traditional conception of the Italian school (still widespread in society) that has ancient roots, according to which it is cognitive skills, particularly 'basic' ones (linguistic and mathematical-scientific subjects), that form the citizen of today and tomorrow, and equip people with the necessary tools to face adult life. Indeed, the socio-emotional education perspective is mostly embraced in schools in the first cycle of education, and especially in the primary school (6-11 years), which is more flexible and open to innovation and didactic experimentation.

Studies and research carried out also in Italy, referring to the international literature, have highlighted how SEE exerts a very positive role on various aspects of individuals' lives both in the short and long term, emphasising in particular their 'functional' role (Patera, 2019). SEE is, for example, conducive to the reduction of mental health problems in children and young people, predispose young people to a greater chance of success, reduce biographical risks and increase the ability to counter these risks in the family, study, work and society at large (Clarke et al., 2015; Durlak et al, 2011; OECD, 2015). Social emotional skills are therefore predictors of a wide range of important life outcomes such as school performance (e.g., Poropat, 2009), income (e.g., Danner, 2020), success in re-employment (e.g., Gnambs, 2017), health (e.g., Bogg and Roberts, 2004), and life satisfaction (e.g., Rammstedt et al, 2017), often beyond cognitive abilities and sociodemographic factors such as educational level (e.g., Spengler et al., 2015). There is agreement that SEE is 'individual capabilities' that can be developed through formal and informal learning experiences and influence important socio-economic outcomes throughout the life course (Maccarini 2021).

The notion of SEE approaches a vision that emphasises the need for adaptation and integration in increasingly complex, interconnected and collaborative contexts of life, work and daily interactions. The definition of SEE widely used also in Italy for the assessment of these skills, refers to the broad categories of the Big Five model (Figure 2):

- Openness to experience (open-mindedness)
- Conscientiousness (task performance)
- Emotional stability (emotional regulation)
- Extraversion (engaging with others)
- Agreeableness (collaboration)

**Commented [1]:** This reference is missing from the reference list, I do not know what document is referred here, couldn't find it with a quick search.

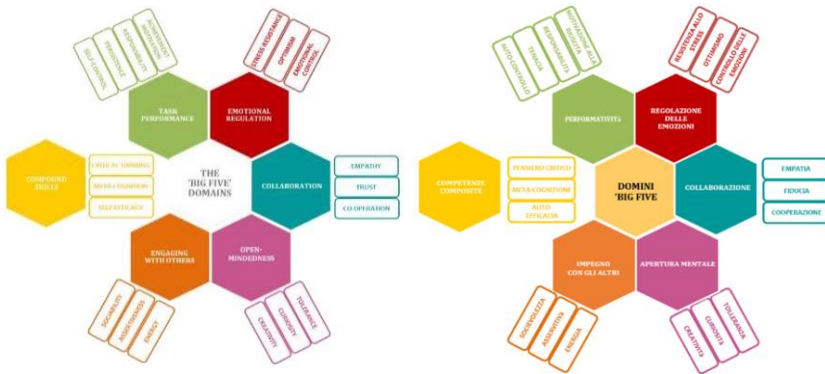


Figure 2. The Big Five Model – Skills area

References to socio-emotional education and the development of SEE can be found in several documents of the Italian Ministry of Education, starting with the National Directions for the curriculum of pre-school and I cycle of education (MIUR, 2012) and then in the Guidelines for actions to prevent and combat bullying and cyberbullying (MIUR, 2015). However, it was only in the last legislature (XVIII, 2018-2022) that the Italian Parliament took the first steps towards a formal recognition of these competences in the school setting, with Bill No. 2782 of 13/11/2020, entitled "Provisions on the experimental teaching of emotional intelligence education in schools of all levels" aimed at introducing non-cognitive competences at school and enhancing emotional competences in the teaching programmes. The bill, which was approved by the Chamber of Deputies on 11/1/2022, envisaged the introduction of a curricular hour of emotional intelligence to effectively tackle bullying, educational poverty, school drop-out and other deviant phenomena, encouraging the recovery of lost emotional vocabulary, the improvement of the relational climate - both among students and between students, teachers and families -, the improvement of learning environments, the relaxation of relations between the educational institution and families and the prevention of isolation and early onset of pathologies among adolescents. With its final approval (in the Senate), a nationwide voluntary experimentation for the inclusion of activities aimed at the development of non-cognitive skills and teacher training should have begun. According to the bill, no more teaching hours would have been required in Italy, but schools participating in the experimentation would have had to revise their teaching methods and introduce life skills and emotional competences into their curricula. With the dissolution of the Italian Parliament in 2022, the bill also lapsed. We trust that it will soon be reintroduced considering the broad parliamentary agreement it had gathered.

*How do social-emotional competences intertwine with primary and secondary school curricula? And with children's and adolescents' learning? Who promotes these pathways?* It is the third sector actors who propose the initiatives that most encourage the development of social-emotional skills in students and the skill training in their teachers. These initiatives come from specific or more general projects proposing curricular and/or extracurricular activities, both in school and outside school hours.

In recent years, the Italian school system has obtained substantial European funds to tackle early school leaving and recover basic cognitive skills; however, there is no reference to social

emotional skills in the calls for proposals regulating the disbursement of these funds. It is therefore up to the sensitivity of the school and teachers, in the operational definition phase of the project, to assign a prominent "place" to these competences, functional to develop the "basic" cognitive ones. In Italy, the national system for surveying and evaluating the learning outcomes of students aged 6 to 18 (governed by the National Institute for the Evaluation of the Educational System of Education and Training INVALSI) is built and defined mainly on cognitive skills and dimensions, and the results are affecting national policies and decision in the adoption of early school leaving programs and policies. The inclusion of SEE among the cognitive skills, to be surveyed also through the development of the OECD-PISA system, albeit gradually and on an experimental basis, would allow their integration in school educational processes.

## ii. SEE: Educational projects and research

In the field of social-emotional education, some school projects have been implemented, some of which take their cue from SEL programmes that propose useful reference tools for young people, necessary for dealing with school, work, interpersonal relationships and more generally, their life project. The pillars of social-emotional learning proposed by these SEL-based projects basically correspond to the Big Five

- Self-awareness (emotional awareness, which enables the identification and recognition of emotions)
- Emotional self-regulation (the ability to regulate and control one's emotions);
- Responsible decision-making (the ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behaviour and social interactions);
- Interpersonal skills (communicating, cooperating, negotiating, lending and asking for help);
- Social awareness (i.e. empathy, respect for others and appreciation of diversity).

Here we briefly review the results of two projects implemented in Italy, one educational and one action-research. The first one, called "Crescendo insieme si cresce" (Growing together we grow), was implemented in a small area in Northern Italy starting in 2013 with continuity to date and involves 4 primary schools, 400 pupils, numerous teachers and external subjects, such as designers, educators, psychologists and pedagogues. The development phases of the project involved:

1. Enhancement the emotional-relational skills of teachers, for the management of complex situations;
2. Workshop activities involving pupils and their parents on a growth path focused on processing anger and understanding their own and others' emotional states;
3. Actions to supporting parenting;
4. Ongoing evaluation and documentation phase.

The project was designed to work on emotions in the five years of primary school, through the theme of the five senses (one per school year): year 1 (corporality tout court), year 2 (sensory perceptions and in particular sight and touch), year 3 (hearing and taste), year 4 (citizenship rules), year 5 (general affectivity and social relations). The benefits that emerged are the following: improved perception of students' well-being, motivation to learn, improved school results, prevention of school drop-out and aggressive behaviour. Through the activation of several classes in a school, it was possible to create a small community that collaborates and exchanges ideas, to find new tools adaptable to the needs and thus for the personal fulfilment of all users, including teachers.

The second project examined the role of schools in SEE (titled Schooling processes and the construction of socio-emotional competences in Italy, 2018-2021), and involved 11 primary schools in Turin (Classes V) in a developed pathway aimed at investigating whether and how pupils' social and emotional competences change during a school year and what factors or processes within classes and schools play a significant role in this change. The skills investigated in the pupils were: perseverance, resistance to stress, sociability, collaboration and creativity. With regard to teachers, organisation, resistance to stress, energy, collaboration and creativity were investigated. The research investigated the variables that weighed most in the emergence of social emotional skills across several dimensions. The first is related to teachers' practices and styles:

- The value given by teachers to education has proven to be relevant, particularly if the growth of the individual from his or her personal vocations, interests and training needs is prioritised over mere scholastic performance;
- The type of relationship between teachers matters, depending on whether it is based on substantial cooperation or, on the contrary, forms of antagonism prevail in the interaction between colleagues;
- The educational style counts, which may be more inspired by criteria of listening, accompaniment, participative interaction and communicative mediation, or characterised as authoritarian, or even overloading the affective dimension of the educational relationship. The style correlated with higher levels of SEE in pupils is neither individualistic and competitive, nor protective and maternal, but authoritative and 'pactful': it implies a positive relational climate, trust and personalisation of educational relations;
- Conflict management - fair and aimed at repairing damaged relationships - among peers by teachers.

The second dimension is correlated with school environments, whereby SEE was found to develop more:

- if the school is endowed with an autonomous identity (distinctiveness), with a manager and teachers endowed with entrepreneurial skills, sensible relations with families and the territory;
- whether SEE are embedded within a systematic, organic and coordinated project (systemicity), whereas they are ineffective if embedded in programmes and experiences of various kinds and with various objectives;
- if socio-emotional training is reflected in a school culture lived and acted upon by all those involved (overall school culture). Learning these skills becomes impossible if there is a lack of coordination between the various dimensions (teachers, managers, families...) and the central educational message;
- if there is a real project involvement of the stakeholders (families and communities);
- if there is a focus on the development of the individual pupil, which is particularly relevant for this type of competence (personalisation of the pupil profile). It means establishing "face-to-face", personalised relationships, outside the classroom moments and dynamics;
- if there is teacher training;
- if there is a reflexive and integrated governance integrating different professionalism, skills, territorial and management levels.

## 4. Training needs identified through a survey related to the design of SEE programs

This chapter examines the training needs that were identified through a survey of lower secondary school educators and directors. The survey focused on the design of SEE programs that incorporate arts-integrated practices and extracurricular activities across curricula. The analysis looked into the impact of Covid-19 on educators and the challenges they faced in supporting student well-being, as well as the need for educators from different subject areas to work together in order to mainstream SEE in the school setting. Therefore, the research questions for the survey are set as follows:

1. In what areas of teachers' practices regarding social-emotional instruction do they exhibit greater or lesser proficiency?
2. In what aspects of social-emotional competences do educators perceive themselves as possessing a surplus or deficit?

### a. Method

*Participants.* The survey was conducted on primary and lower secondary school teachers in Greece, Hungary and Italy, from November to December 2022, using a convenience sampling method. First, the research team invited partner schools in each country to participate in the survey, and the questionnaires were distributed to schools that agreed to participate. Each teacher filled in the questionnaire online. Following the ethical code for the official Finnish guidelines on Responsible Conduct of Research and Procedures for Handling Allegations of Misconduct in Finland (Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity, 2012), we explained the survey's intention, the analytical process, voluntary participation in the survey, and ethical considerations, including guaranteed anonymisation, at the beginning of the survey. Altogether, data were collected from 85 teachers at primary schools and lower secondary schools (25 from Greece, 42 from Hungary and 18 from Italy). The average age was 50.46 (SD = 7.94) years and the experience of these teachers was 20.27 (SD = 10.65) years.

*Instruments.* Teachers' social emotional teaching practice was measured using 39 items, Self-assess implementation of teaching practices on Instructional Interaction, developed by Yoder (2014). The scale consists of six dimensions: Cooperative learning ( $\alpha = .90$ ), Classroom discussions ( $\alpha = .87$ ), Self-assessment and self-reflection ( $\alpha = .90$ ), balanced instruction ( $\alpha = .83$ ), Academic press and expectations ( $\alpha = .81$ ) and Competence building ( $\alpha = .83$ ). The overall Cronbach's alpha of all 39 items was .96. The response scale was a seven-point Likert-type scale anchored at 1. I do not implement this practice and 5. I implement this practice extremely well. The item descriptions of the scales and the items' means and standard deviations are shown in Table 2.

Teachers' social emotional competence was measured using 21 items, Self-assess teachers' own SEL competencies on Instructional Interaction, developed by Yoder (2014). The scale comprises five dimensions of social emotional education: Self-awareness ( $\alpha = .77$ ), Self-management ( $\alpha = .77$ ), Social awareness ( $\alpha = .82$ ), Relationship and social skills ( $\alpha = .84$ ) and Responsible decision-making ( $\alpha = .77$ ). The overall Cronbach's alpha of all 21 items was .93. The response scale was a four-point Likert-type scale anchored at 1. Strongly disagree and 4. Strongly agree. Item descriptions, mean, and standard deviation of the items are shown in Table 2.



Table 2. Means (*M*), standard deviations (*SD*) of the teachers' social emotional teaching practice and competences

No.	Items	Dimension	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Self-assess implementation of teaching practices on Instructional Interaction (N = 85)</i>				
Inst_1	I encourage my students to work with other students when they have trouble with an assignment.	Cooperative learning	3.58	.76
Inst_2	I create learning experiences in which my students depend on each other.	Cooperative learning	3.31	.85
Inst_3	I create learning experiences in which my students must apply positive social skills to be successful.	Cooperative learning	3.36	1.06
Inst_4	I hold individuals and the group accountable for learning during small-group work.	Cooperative learning	3.46	1.02
Inst_5	I provide opportunities for my students to share their work and receive feedback from each other.	Cooperative learning	3.44	1.05
Inst_6	I provide space to allow my students to collaboratively process how they work together and monitor their progress toward their goal.	Cooperative learning	3.22	.93
Inst_7	I give students feedback on how they interact with and learn from others during cooperative learning experiences.	Cooperative learning	3.41	1.11
Inst_8	I help my students identify how to listen (e.g., tracking the speaker, making mental connections).	Classroom discussions	3.59	1.06
Inst_9	I help students learn how to respond to and learn from their peers' contributions during a discussion.	Classroom discussions	3.47	1.01
Inst_10	I help my students learn how to effectively communicate their points of view (e.g., elaborate on their thinking).	Classroom discussions	3.69	.90
Inst_11	I hold in-depth discussions about content with my students.	Classroom discussions	3.44	1.20
Inst_12	I ask my students to listen to and think about their peers' opinions and whether they agree with them.	Classroom discussions	3.76	.97
Inst_13	I tell my students the learning goals for each lesson.	Self-assessment and self-reflection	3.60	.99
Inst_14	I have my students reflect on their personal academic goals (e.g., make connections to the lesson goals).	Self-assessment and self-reflection	3.16	1.03
Inst_15	I provide my students strategies to analyze their work (e.g., using performance rubrics, peer reviews).	Self-assessment and self-reflection	3.07	1.16
Inst_16	I create opportunities for my students to monitor and reflect on their progress toward their learning goals.	Self-assessment and self-reflection	3.22	.98
Inst_17	I create opportunities for my students to monitor and reflect on their social learning.	Self-assessment and self-reflection	3.08	1.00





Inst_18	I help my students develop strategies to make sure they meet their learning goals.	Self-assessment and self-reflection	3.59	.99
Inst_19	I provide my students opportunities to reflect on their thinking and learning processes (e.g., using graphic organizers or journals).	Self-assessment and self-reflection	3.16	1.15
Inst_20	I ask my students to think together to provide feedback on the effectiveness of learning activities (e.g., debriefing tool, feedback form, simple survey).	Self-assessment and self-reflection	2.62	1.13
Inst_21	I use an appropriate balance between providing students opportunities to directly learn new information, as well as actively engage in the material.	Balanced instruction	3.62	.96
Inst_22	I have my students work on some extended projects that require at least one week to complete.	Balanced instruction	2.73	1.32
Inst_23	I require my students to extend their thinking when they provide basic answers (e.g., ask multiple follow-up questions).	Balanced instruction	3.52	1.12
Inst_24	I use multiple instructional strategies to keep my students engaged in learning.	Balanced instruction	3.74	.88
Inst_25	I make sure that my activities are not just fun, but represent one of the best ways for students to learn the content.	Balanced instruction	3.85	.84
Inst_26	I ask students to work on products (e.g., Web pages, skits, or posters) that are meant to be shared with multiple audiences (e.g., parents, community members).	Balanced instruction	2.44	1.16
Inst_27	I give my students more challenging problems when they have mastered easier material.	Academic press and expectations	3.71	.90
Inst_28	I ensure that my students feel responsible for accomplishing or failing to accomplish their academic work.	Academic press and expectations	3.82	.83
Inst_29	I teach my students the connection between effort and results, and I expect my students to put in full effort.	Academic press and expectations	3.89	.93
Inst_30	I give my students work that has more than one right answer and ask them to defend their answers.	Academic press and expectations	3.59	1.09
Inst_31	I support my students socially and emotionally while challenging them with new or higher levels of learning.	Academic press and expectations	3.91	.92
Inst_32	I model and practice new learning with my students before asking them to perform independently.	Competence building	3.89	.83
Inst_33	I demonstrate a concept using a variety of tools (e.g., modeling, demonstrations, mini-lessons, or texts).	Competence building	3.65	1.01
Inst_34	I conference with my students on ways to make their work better.	Competence building	3.51	.93



Inst_35	I use multiple strategies with my students until they have figured out how to solve the problem (i.e., graphic organizers, leveled text, checklist, verbal cues).	Competence building	3.55	.84
Inst_36	I give my students frequent specific feedback to let them know how they are doing in my class (academically and socially).	Competence building	3.75	1.00
Inst_37	I have my students correct their mistakes (academic or social) based on feedback from me or their peers.	Competence building	3.44	1.03
Inst_38	I provide specific feedback that is focused on the academic task at hand.	Competence building	3.61	1.08
Inst_39	I use student misconceptions to guide my instruction without singling the student out.	Competence building	3.86	.97
<i>Self-assess teachers' own SEL competencies on Instructional Interaction (N = 85)</i>				
SEC_1	I am aware of instructional teaching practices that I need to improve in order to grow professionally.	Self-awareness	3.06	.70
SEC_2	I can effectively implement instructional teaching practices with my students.	Self-awareness	3.13	.61
SEC_3	I am usually aware of how my emotions, culturally grounded beliefs, and background are precursors to my emotional reactions, and I understand how they impact my instructional teaching practices with my students.	Self-awareness	3.44	.61
SEC_4	I understand how student responses (positive and negative) affect my emotions and my behaviors during instructional teaching practices.	Self-awareness	3.42	.64
SEC_5	I am aware of how my cultural beliefs and background affect my instructional teaching practices with my students.	Self-awareness	3.39	.71
SEC_6	I continuously refine my personal goals about how I will best implement instructional teaching practices with my students.	Self-management/emotion regulation	3.14	.68
SEC_7	I effectively use multiple strategies (e.g., breathing techniques and mindfulness) when I have a strong emotional reaction in the classroom (e.g., stress, anger) when implementing instructional practices.	Self-management/emotion regulation	2.36	.94
SEC_8	Through the effective management of my emotions (e.g., use of stress reduction techniques), I am better able to implement instructional teaching practices and to develop a positive learning environment that is free from bias and prejudice.	Self-management/emotion regulation	2.82	.89
SEC_9	I model behaviors (e.g., form guidelines, set boundaries) to help students learn to regulate emotions during instructional practices.	Self-management/emotion regulation	3.15	.72



SEC_10	To effectively implement positive instructional teaching practices, I usually understand the perspectives of my students and can pay attention to their emotional cues during classroom interactions.	Social awareness	3.39	.64
SEC_11	I try to understand why my students are or are not actively participating, and I am usually successful at providing my students the necessary skills to participate in the instructional teaching practices.	Social awareness	3.14	.58
SEC_12	I successfully support positive emotions and respond to negative emotions during instructional teaching practices.	Social awareness	3.18	.68
SEC_13	I address the commonalities and differences (e.g., racial, ethnic, cultural) that exist among students when I implement the instructional teaching practices.	Social awareness	3.18	.74
SEC_14	I clearly communicate behavioral and academic expectations in a manner that addresses students' individual needs and strengths when implementing instructional teaching practices.	Relationship/social skills	3.15	.73
SEC_15	I am comfortable helping my students resolve interpersonal conflicts that come up during instructional teaching practices, and I have experienced success with this.	Relationship/social skills	2.98	.69
SEC_16	I use the instructional teaching practices to help form meaningful relationships with my students and cultivate their SEL skills, and I am usually successful at building meaningful relationships.	Relationship/social skills	3.13	.74
SEC_17	I use the instructional teaching practices to help cultivate my students' SEL skills, and I am usually successful at building their SEL skills.	Relationship/social skills	3.05	.74
SEC_18	I am effective at considering multiple forms of evidence, such as balancing the needs and the behaviors of my entire class, while implementing the instructional teaching practices.	Responsible decision making	2.96	.72
SEC_19	I regularly include my students and/or collaborate with colleagues to solve problems that arise in the classroom related to the instructional teaching practices.	Responsible decision making	3.29	.74
SEC_20	I stay focused and consistent when I implement instructional teaching practices.	Responsible decision making	3.32	.58
SEC_21	When I implement the instructional teaching practices, I balance awareness of students' emotional needs and academic needs.	Responsible decision making	3.13	.70

*Analysis.* In this section, we try to grasp teachers' need for SEE. First, we examine the difference between teachers' social emotional teaching practice areas. Second, we investigate the difference

between teachers' social emotional competences. The differences are analysed by repeated measures ANOVA. The analysis of all the data was conducted utilising SPSS Version 28.

## b. Results

A repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to examine which areas of instructional practice teachers frequently engage in and feel need support in. As Mauchly's sphericity test was significant ( $p < .001$ ), Greenhouse-Geisser's analysis of variance results with adjustment for degrees of freedom were used. The results showed that the teachers' instructional practice on SEE varied significantly between areas,  $F(1,84) = 19.74$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .19$ . To further explore the interaction, post-hoc comparisons were conducted using the Bonferroni method of multiple comparison adjustment. The comparison results indicated that teachers have Academic press and expectations and Competence building areas most while they have implemented in Self-assessment and self-reflection and Balanced instruction areas least. The whole comparison results were shown in Table 3. The similar trends can be seen in Hungary and Italy while Greece showed that they implemented more Classroom discussions and less Cooperative learning (Figure 3).

Table 3. Means ( $M$ ), standard deviations ( $SD$ ) and pairwise comparisons of the teachers' social emotional teaching practice

Areas	$M$	$SD$	Pairwise comparisons
1. Cooperative learning	3.40	0.77	5, 6 > 1, 3, 4
2. Classroom discussions	3.59	0.84	5 = 6 = 2
3. Self-assessment and self-reflection	3.19	0.82	1 = 2
4. Balanced instruction	3.32	0.78	2 > 3, 4
5. Academic press and expectations	3.78	0.71	3 = 4
6. Competence building	3.66	0.66	

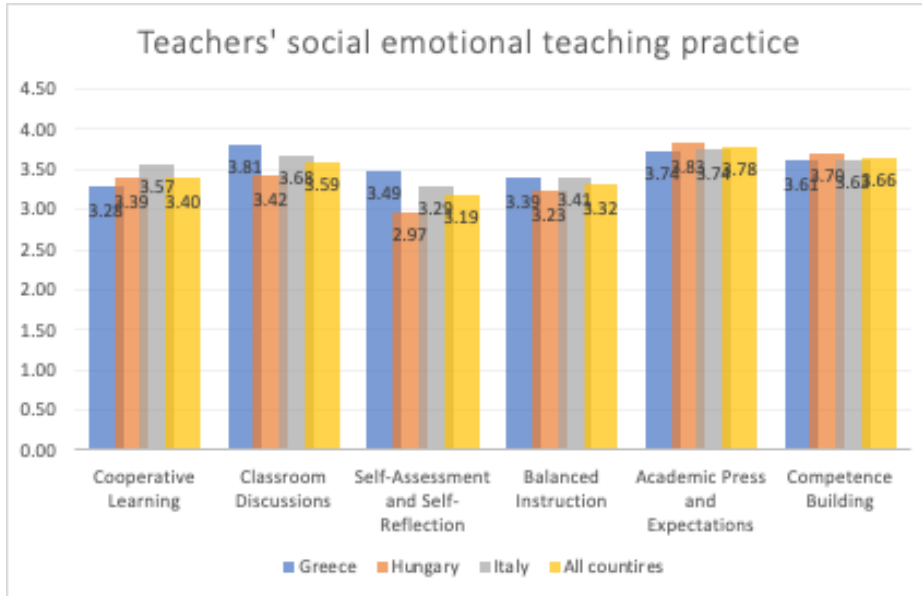


Figure 3. Teachers' social emotional teaching practice in each country

The other repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to examine which areas of SEE competence they feel they have. Mauchly's sphericity test was not significant ( $p = .07$ ). The results indicated that the teacher SEE competence varied significantly between areas,  $F(1,18) = 20.82, p < .001, \eta^2 = .20$ . The comparison results showed that the teachers feel they have the SEE competences on Self-awareness and Social awareness areas most while they feel they have the competences on Self-management/emotion regulation area least. The whole comparison results were shown in Table 4. The similar trends could be seen in each country (Figure 4).

Table 4. Means (M), standard deviations (SD) and pairwise comparisons of the teachers' social emotional teaching competence

Areas	M	SD	Pairwise comparisons
1. Self-Awareness	3.29	0.47	1 = 3 = 5
2. Self-Management/Emotion Regulation	2.87	0.62	1, 3 > 4, 2
3. Social Awareness	3.22	0.54	4 = 5
4. Relationship/Social Skills	3.08	0.60	4, 5 > 2
5. Responsible Decision Making	3.18	0.53	

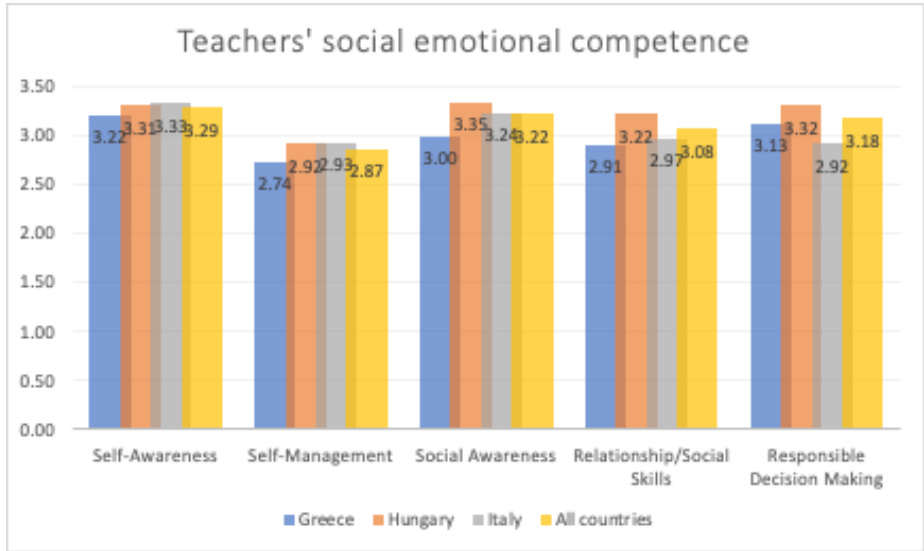


Figure 4. Teachers' social emotional competence in each country

## 5. Focus groups in partner countries

### a. Method

This project applied a focus group method to collect opinions from multiple stakeholders, including educational public authorities, CSOs, and students. In each focus group, first, a coordinator from each partner county explains the project. Second, the guiding questions are introduced to the participants. The participants are required to answer according to the five SEE aspects. Finally, the participants write their answers in Jamboard. In the analysis, similar answers are grouped up as a bigger theme.

A focus group was organised by the educational public authority, which included participants from four countries. The total number of participants was 13, with 3 from Greece, 9 from Italy, and 1 from Hungary. These participants were from various institutions, including educational policy institutes, Ministries of Education, and school leadership positions. For the CSO focus group, the participants included 7 from Greece, 11 from Italy and 17 from Hungary. They are from CSOs and NGOs. All of them are working with adolescents with diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. For the student focus group, the participants included 10 from Greece, 21 from Italy and 14 from Hungary. They were from primary and lower-secondary schools.

### b. Educational public authorities

In the focus group interviews for educational public authorities, they were asked two questions:

1. From the perspective of educational public authorities, what kind of **the national policy framework** do you think would promote social emotional education?
2. From the perspective of educational public authorities, what do you think are **the institutional barriers** for promoting social emotional education?

i. National policy framework promoting SEE

In the discussion, the participants indicated that many educational policy frameworks support students' SEE. Because educational policies cover many domains of education, the participants felt difficulty to allocate specific educational policies into each SEE aspect. Therefore, educational policy frameworks enhance students' SEE as a whole even though the policy frameworks are mentioned in each SEE aspect.

*Self-awareness.* Students develop their self-awareness through many educational frameworks and activities, including club activities, extracurricular programs with a wide range of topics, student councils and youth Parliament program enhances students' self-awareness. In some countries, the governments take initiatives to develop students' SEE, such as the Innovative School Programs in Greece.

*Self-management.* In Greece, some political endeavours are conducted; Innovative School Programs and Health Education Innovative programs. The participants agreed that social workers and psychologists in schools play an essential role to develop self-management of students. Also, some require integrating the teaching and reinforcement of SEE skills into teachers' daily interactions and practices with students.

*Social awareness.* The participants indicated the importance of the collective support by families, schools and communities. They require more institutional connections at policy level such as communication between Ministries of Health and Education in planning educational programs.

*Relationship and social skills.* Interdisciplinary assessment can be one framework to enhance students' SEE at school level. The assessment could reinforce new participatory learning methods based on emotion-based cooperative learning. At educational policy level, educational professionals in counselling and support centres such as school coordinators/mentors and counsellors help students develop relationship-related skills.

*Responsible decision-making.* In Greece, teachers are able to use the Educators' Guide for School and Social Life curriculum and the Skill workshop, which introduce the conceptual framework for social and emotional competence. In Italy, still they call for a new perspective and new approaches and support strategies that have to be designed.

ii. Institutional barriers for promoting SEE

All of the participants agreed that the most serious institutional barriers are related with the inadequate teachers' in-service training and assessment, the insufficient staffing of school psychologists and social workers, as well as the lack of actions' reflection and assessment. However, each country is different when it comes to how much SEE is prevalent in the county. In Italy, schools are not required to introduce SEE in their school curricula. Some schools are testing SEE-based activities while others are not. In the countries where SEE is not prevalent at educational policy level, the main institutional barriers for promoting SEE is the lack of a national legislation and dedicated resources to introduce and promote the SEE into the schools. The participants suggested that it could be useful to set training courses on the SEE for teachers and identify a national institutional system for recognizing the non-formal competences acquired by the students in extra-activities schools. Another point mentioned is that conducting SEE may touch the sensitive data and privacy of children in relation to the families. However, a Hungarian participant warned that we have to move SEE forward, otherwise the educational system would reproduce the societal differences.



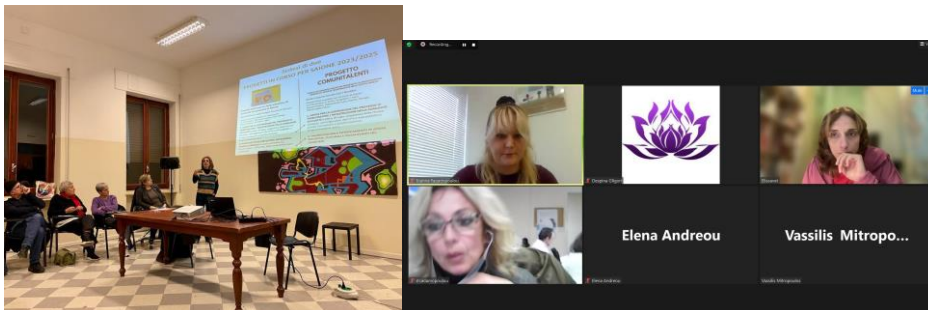
*Self-awareness.* First of all, teachers are not trained to teach SEE in their teacher training. However, teachers' in-service training is not enough. Second, even though there are some educational interventions for some students, follow up is not enough and still needed. Finally, the participants pointed out the need for teachers to have more awareness and competences in order to effectively incorporate social emotional education into their school programs.

*Self-management.* There are barriers to enhancing social emotional education for students, including optional in-service training for teachers and lack of sufficient numbers of psychologists and specialised staff in schools. Specifically, the absence of a national education policy focused on social emotional education is a typical barrier in Italy. Otherwise, teachers would not be mandated to use SEE approaches.

*Social awareness.* The barriers mentioned are following: a lack of sufficient numbers of psychologists and specialised staff in schools, difficulties in cooperation between Ministries of Health and Education in planning and implementing educational programs, and variation in awareness and implementation of SEE across schools (some using specific approaches and materials while others do not).

*Relationship and social skills.* Teachers are struggling to conduct SEE because the emphases of national curriculums are still on cognitive goals. In Italy, there are teachers who have a concern to step in students' personal and psychological aspects when conducting SEE. Families may be afraid that personal information would be addressed.

*Responsible decision-making.* At the educational policy level, there is no framework that encourages students' reflection and assessment on their learning and actions. Moreover, there is a lack of institutional support for CSOs to integrate the curriculum at schools.



### c. Local civil society organisations (CSOs)

In the focus group interviews for CSOs, they were asked three questions:

1. What do you think are **the benefits of promoting social emotional education** when you connect educational curricular and extracurricular activities?
2. What do you think are **the opportunities to promote social emotional education** when you connect educational curricular and extracurricular activities?
3. What do you think are **the challenges** when you connect educational curricular and extracurricular activities to promote social emotional education?



#### i. Benefits

In general, the participants strongly agreed with the impact and benefits that extracurricular activities have for students especially for students in vulnerable situations like early school leaving students or at risk of exclusion. Social emotional education improves self-esteem, the awareness of one's own talents and social skills. The participants pointed out the benefits for each SEE aspect:

*Self-awareness.* Self-acceptance involves becoming familiar and accepting of one's thoughts and feelings, including the difficult parts of one's personality. When students are familiar with themselves, their mental health becomes stable. This leads to increased positive self image, self-confidence and the ability to recognize and accept emotions. It also involves awareness of personal boundaries and expressing oneself in different ways, as well as recognizing and valuing one's own skills and abilities.

*Self-management.* Better time management, setting boundaries, and developing skills to adapt to new social settings are key for self-management. Additionally, the ability to relate to others and the use of critical thinking are important tools for successful self-management. In addition, setting goals for the future can serve as a compass for life.

*Social awareness.* Perception of personal boundaries leads to respect for oneself and others. Being a happier and more balanced person, acting in a balanced way, developing empathy, taking control of oneself by understanding the personalities of others, and reinforcing social cohesion through collective activities between individuals can all contribute to this.

*Relationship and social skills.* Expressing oneself through different ways is important, such as sharing personal significant experiences by using artistic languages. Creative outlets, including the arts, practical, and manual activities, can also be used to express oneself.

*Responsible decision-making.* Mature decision-making, based on respect for oneself and others, is crucial. Through such decision-making, students are able to take responsibility for tasks and objectives. A socially and emotionally skilled person is more likely to be stable and successful in life and can stand as a role model for others, which leads to leadership..

#### ii. Opportunities

The participants claimed that the non-formal education approach gives values to the creative thinking of the students and creates an occasion to use the practical and artistic languages to express themselves in the best way. Participation for SEE refers also to promote collaborative behaviours and social cohesion between students at school. Participants use playful activities for SEE: group play, several training activities, drama play, board games and games between groups, common cooking and eating, excursions, storytelling and summer camps where students are led by professionals with social emotional skills. As SEE techniques, participants utilise active listening, talking (one-by-one, small groups and plenary sessions), gathering attention to others, show examples for conflict resolution and show consistency both in behaviour and in verbal communication. In terms of opportunities to, the participants identified them in each aspect:

*Self-awareness.* Functional classrooms and the ability to successfully exist in social settings are important. Discovering one's own skills and competencies leads to finding one's identity.

*Self-management.* Finding one's own identity enables him/her to plan for future independence. Creating collective moments to promote and share emotions and awareness can be beneficial to nurture a cooperating and participatory attitude towards life in general.



*Social awareness.* Development of citizenship skills, including critical thinking and problem solving, are important. Self-expression is also essential because s/he can learn how others react when s/he expresses oneself.

*Relationship and social skills.* Adopting peer education methods to learn and improve competences and developing a sense of belonging to achieve group results benefits relationships and social skills. Creating a cooperative culture of mutual respect, managing and avoiding manipulative people, and promoting mental health are essential to make more socially fair and equitable communities.

*Responsible decision-making.* Creating opportunities for students to reflect on their emotions and well-being can be useful.

### iii. Challenges

The participants mentioned some challenges related to the implementation of non-formal education in a traditional school setting. These challenges include resistance from educators and parents who are accustomed to traditional teaching methods, a lack of interest and funding for non-formal education, conservative attitudes, a lack of time, and outdated teaching materials and curricula. Additionally, there may be limited opportunities for collaboration between schools and community organisations, and a lack of recognition for life skills development by the education system. Moreover, there is a call for an institutional system to recognise the importance of life skills (e.g., flexible curriculum) and for the policy makers to play a role in this.



### d. Students

In the focus group interviews for students, they were asked four questions:

1. What kind of social emotional competences do you think are **important** for you?
2. What kind of social emotional competences do you think are **your strengths**?
3. What kind of social emotional competences do you think are **your challenges** (difficult to develop, improve and acquire)?
4. How has **COVID-19** affected your social emotional competences?

#### i. Important competences

Students mentioned SEE competences in common in many SEE aspects. Frequently referred competences were following:

- To feel confident
- To be patient
- To be able to manage your own emotions
- To respect others' voices and spaces
- To be able to understand others' emotions
- To listen to others
- To forgive others
- To help others
- To enact leadership
- To solve conflict
- To have humour

Since the idea of competence was new for students, it seemed difficult for them to answer the questions. Students could point out SEE behaviour and skills more easily, including cooperating, giving help, being polite, and solving conflicts. However, the more abstract SEE competences (consciousness, resilience, leadership) were difficult for them to derive. The aspect of responsible decision-making was particularly difficult for them to answer. This means that the more abstract competences and the aspect may have space to develop.

*Self-awareness.* When it comes to self-awareness, students emphasise the importance of feeling confident. If they feel self-confidence, they can be decisive, patient, and even generous to others. They also mentioned that they need to live according to their values.

*Self-management.* In order to control yourself, students pointed out that it is crucial to manage how to properly express your own emotions.

*Social awareness.* Students mentioned behavioural and psychological SEE competences. Behavioural competences include listening to others, not interrupting others when they are talking, and respecting personal spaces for others. Psychological competences cover being responsible and understanding others' emotions. These competences are important for making friendships.

*Relationship and social skills.* Students knew that skills for good relationships are based on social awareness. In the social awareness aspect, students have already noticed how they understand others. In this aspect, they could mention skills at more behavioural levels: forgiving, asking questions, cooperating, apologising, being polite, being kind, solving conflicts, having humour and resisting peer pressure.

*Responsible decision-making.* Students seemed difficult to come up with SEE competences in this aspect. It was remarkable that helping and forgiving others are mentioned as a competence of responsible decision-making. One interesting insight was that they noticed having logical thinking for responsible decision-making.

#### ii. Strength

As similar to the importance, the students felt difficult to answer their abstract strengths regarding SEE. They could notice their strengths at a more behavioural level: *solving problems, making friends, cooperating with others, and helping others.*

*Self-awareness.* Some students mentioned being creative, friendly, humorous and thoughtful are strengths when they look at themselves. Some claimed that being able to recognise his/her own weaknesses is even one of their strengths.

*Self-management.* The students agreed that solving problems and organising ways to achieve goals are their strength. When the goals and problems are clear, they can manage themselves.

*Social awareness.* The students recognised their strengths in relation to friends. In the relationships, they try to gain trust from other friends, solve conflicts, and have smooth corporations. They acknowledged noticing others' emotional state to have good relationships.

*Relationship and social skills.* As behaviours, they noticed their SEE strengths, such as helping others, leading a group, and induction for new people. Regarding attitudes towards having better social skills, they mentioned that among the strengths are being a trustworthy person and planning a better future with friends.

*Responsible decision-making.* Identifying a problem is not an easy task, but they are ready to do it. When they face problems and challenges, they are also willing to help other friends, which leads to collective decision-making.

### iii. Challenges

We were very happy that the students wrote a lot of things honestly to this aspect as well, for example, “I can easily lose my temper”, “I can hardly accept when I am not right”, and “When I think of a bad memory with my peers, I can start crying unintentionally”. Regarding the most challenging competences, many students mentioned the ability to express *their feelings, handle frustration and anger, manage time functionally, identify and take initiatives.*

*Self-awareness.* The students feel difficult to understand themselves. Even though they recognise that being creative is important, they feel challenges to be creative. This relates to how much they can be confident in themselves.

*Self-management.* Their challenging competences in this aspect are following rules, control yourself, being patient, expressing your own emotions, and managing anger, stress and time. The students seemed constantly struggling to reconcile with external constraints, such as social rules and relationships with others.

*Social awareness.* Many students feel that they are not good at taking initiatives, including leading a group, asking questions, and taking responsibilities. This may be related to what they said that they are not also good at being patient.

*Relationship and social skills.* In this aspect, they mentioned challenging competences concerning self and others. Regarding competences for self, they feel expressing themselves in public, such as having speech and expressing emotions, as challenges. As for competences for relationships with others, being empathic, accepting others' opinion, starting conversation and asking for help from others are the main challenges for them. They sometimes feel it is difficult to approach others when they need help.

*Responsible decision-making.* For effective relationships, students understand the importance of diversity of people (friends). However, they find it difficult to talk openly among them, for example discussing positive and negative aspects. All in all, they also feel difficult to lead a team or group.

### iv. COVID-19



The students discussed much about this topic. Interestingly, the students mentioned that COVID-19 affected their social emotional competences positively and negatively. The positive points were following, for example: appreciating friendship more, learning to handle difficult situations by myself, becoming more open for others, and having less quarrels. On the other hand, the negative points were becoming more shy and timid, difficult to concentrate for lessons, and forgetting a lot of things easily.

*Self-awareness.* In virtual learning situations, some students feel that they are not patient enough. It may be because they are facing the screen all the time during the lessons. However, studying in such situations could be a good opportunity for some students because they realise they are acting differently at school and at home.

*Self-management.* Many students claimed that it was difficult to manage stress during COVID-19 time. Although they had a lot of free time, they could not use the time efficiently, which made them bored and feel stressed. In this sense, some students mentioned that they acquired the ability to handle situations by themselves.

*Social awareness.* In online situations, the students had a new challenge to recognise others' emotional status through a computer monitor. Communications online limit information of others, such as body language, emotions, and tone of voices.

*Relationship and social skills.* The students positively learned many things in this aspect. For example, they learned a sense of humour, flexibility, forgiving, cooperating, and building trustworthy relationships. However, they faced challenges as well. They felt that they were far from their friends, and making friendships online was difficult. Expressing one's feelings and emotions was especially difficult online.

*Responsible decision-making.* It was interesting that there were two opposite opinions concerning responsible decision-making. Some students mentioned that having more time positively affects them because they can have more time to consider. On the other hand, effective time management proves to be a challenge for them, as they must carefully consider how to allocate their time for various tasks.







teaching. This may come from the traditional teacher training where teachers are trained as evaluators and students are the subjects to be evaluated. This result was supported by the results in the focus group. In the EPA focus group, the participants pointed out the lack of teacher training for assessment as a barrier to promote SEE. Even though incorporating interdisciplinary study could augment participatory learning that could provide opportunities to give feedback to each other among students, it seems that educators have yet to be trained in utilising interdisciplinary learning. While self-evaluation of one's own learning has been implemented in some countries such as Finland, it remains an uncommon practice. This may be due to a predominant inclination towards summative assessments rather than formative assessments in schools. It is possible that educators may require additional training in incorporating self-evaluation as a formative assessment tool.

*Cross-disciplinary and balanced education.* Teachers appear to encounter challenges in delivering instruction through a diverse array of pedagogical methods. This was evidenced by the low scores for Balanced instruction, which suggests that teachers face difficulties in providing SEE through various modalities such as play-based learning, online resources, posters, community interactions, etc. However, participants in the CSO focus groups claimed that the quality of SEE can be elevated through a multitude of approaches, particularly in the realm of non-formal education where emotional approaches to learning are more feasible. This can be achieved through emotional expression through drama, play, self-awareness through group work, recognition of others, and relationship building. The low level of implementation of these educational approaches can be attributed to a lack of clarity regarding the desired outcomes of education and the difficulty of determining the focus of cross-disciplinary education such as art-integrated education. It is imperative to design education that clearly defines the focus on one or more of the five areas of SEE, as this will motivate teachers to adopt these pedagogical methods.

*Competence in self-management and emotion regulation.* The results of the quantitative survey showed that the teachers demonstrated the highest levels of proficiency in the domains of Self-awareness and Social awareness, and the lowest levels of competences in Self-regulation/Emotional management. The teachers appeared to experience challenges in maintaining emotional stability and effectively managing stress, thus impeding their ability to achieve their objectives. It was identified that there is a need for enhanced emotional management in the classroom when dealing with students, managing stress from job demands, and navigating interpersonal relationships with colleagues and parents. This topic was also widely discussed in various student focus groups. For instance, it was observed that students lacked competences in expressing their emotions, particularly in the online context. Moreover, students encountered difficulties in mitigating stress resulting from virtual learning. Consequently, enhancing teachers' emotional competence in emotional regulation has the potential to address students' challenges in emotional regulation.

In conclusion, this intervention framework suggests utilising the points below when structuring (art-integrated) teacher training for SEE:

- Teachers can develop self-assessment competence of students
- Teachers can develop skills to provide opportunities for students to gain feedback from others as a formative assessment
- Teachers can utilise multi-disciplinary or non-formal educational activities
- Teachers can clarify the focus on one or more of the five areas of SEE when conducting multi-disciplinary or non-formal education



- Teachers can promote competences to emotional management (emotion and stress arisen from job and relationships with students, colleagues, parents, and others) for teachers, which leads to skills to develop students' emotional management

The generalisability of the results of this framework study is subject to certain limitations. First, it has been difficult to conduct student focus groups in many countries. The terms used in the discussion related to SEE were not familiar to the students. In some countries, students were not used to the group discussion activities as we conducted at the secondary school level. Second, for the quantitative part, the sample size was relatively small. Even though we found the important results, they would not be generalised.

## 7. Intervention methods

Based on the results of the framework, the following interventions are envisioned in the participating countries of ReImagined.

### a. Greece: Method for outdoor school projects at community level connecting extra-curricular with cross curricular activities

In relation to the research on the framework of the national policy in the promotion of SEE, the problems in Greece are focused on the following three points:

- Insufficient, as well as not nationally organised specialised on SEE teachers in-service training.
- Discouraging students' self-assessment.
- Lack of cooperation between educational institutions and other ministries for promoting social and emotional educational programs.

In 2011, as a part of an educational reform named New School, the Ministry of Education prepared the teacher's guide *School and Social Life* aiming on SEE implementation. Despite the scientific validity and the thoroughness of the writing of the material, this action was never accompanied by a national systematic training of teachers in order to be piloted, evaluated and then integrated into the school curriculum. The Erasmus program REIMAGINED, can, through its pilot application and the upcoming results, be a new chance for the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the IEP, to redesign the implementation of SEE in Greek school education.

Partnerships between schools and communities have benefits on both local citizens' life and wellbeing, as well as on students' achievement (Epstein, 2001; Epstein & Sanders, 1998; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007; Sheldon, 2005). Among ActionAid Hellas Athens Community Center's (ACC) objectives are the development of relationships, which promote community participation and cooperation with the school community. Through a variety of projects, ACC attempts to build strong bonds with the local community and involve them in the implemented activities and actions, such as community building events, training interventions, awareness campaigns. As an NGO, currently implementing funded projects, ACC is providing schools the opportunity to enjoy the participation in multiple training interventions, community building events and programmes that support students and their families, which otherwise schools couldn't accommodate .

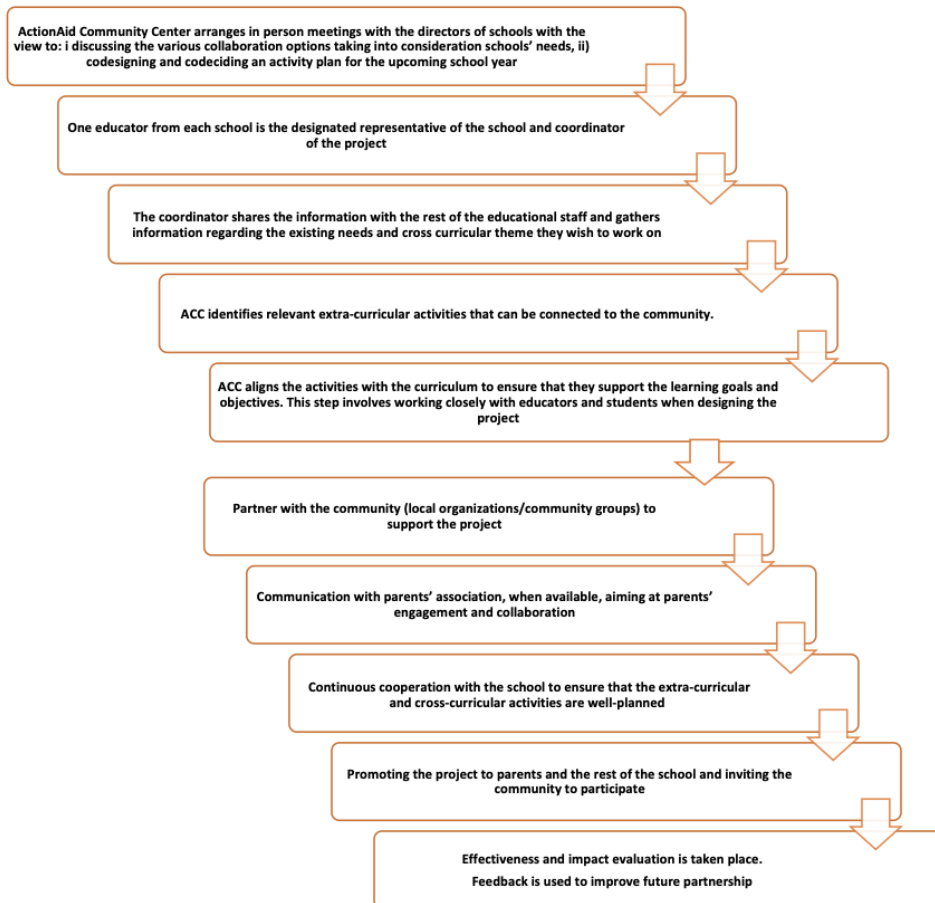


Many underprivileged youth face significant barriers to accessing educational and recreational opportunities that are vital to their personal and professional development. To address this issue, ACC offers a range of cost-free services and programs designed to support the needs of young people who may not have access to these resources elsewhere. Through our programs, children and adolescents have the opportunity to attend English lessons, remedial lessons, and computer lessons, providing them with the academic support they need to succeed in school. In addition, our sports and leisure activities, such as painting and theatre, offer participants the chance to explore their interests and passions outside of the classroom. We also offer vocational orientation services to facilitate young people identify potential career paths and explore options for their future. Moreover, cooperation with schools takes the form of developing school projects and designing extra-curricular activities. The level of trust is an important factor for a successful cooperation to be established. ACC, located since 2017 at the heart of the city in an area where people have been challenged for many years by unemployment and risk of exclusion, has managed to build strong connections with the local community.

Regarding the school projects at community level connecting extra-curricular with cross curricular activities are concerned, ACC at the beginning of each academic year, arranges in person meetings with the directors of schools from the neighbourhood and discuss possibilities for partnering. At that stage, ActionAid is informing through fact sheets and presentations the directors how they could actually cooperate highlighting benefits of extra-curricular activities; When connecting extra-curricular with cross curricular activities, material becomes more interesting and relevant and students more active and participatory in the process of learning. Students are taking over additional roles which assist them to improve life skills and competences necessary for both their academic progress and their life in general. Usually, the director of each school assigns to an educator the cooperation, who also acts as the coordinator of the action and is the contact person with the ACC. The educator/coordinator is facilitating the process of communication with the rest of the educators and assessing the needs they have and the cross curricular themes they wish to work on. Educators study the curriculum and find possible crossover opportunities with other subjects. Furthermore, the educator/coordinator with the support from ACC, organises a meeting with the educators' association, in order the idea and the scope of the intervention to be further explained. ACC identifies extra-curricular activities that are relevant to the cross-curricular theme chosen by the educators and that can be connected to the community. ActionAid has long experience with working with schools, projects developed so far focus on the issues of human rights, active citizenship, diversity and inclusion, youth violence, climate justice and responsible consumption. The methodologies for extra-curricular activities ACC is frequently applying are sports and art based. More specifically, with regard to sports, ActionAid is following the methodology of football3 ([shorturl.at/egFH6](http://shorturl.at/egFH6)) in order to work on adolescents' skills development and on preventing racism and xenophobia. As far as art is concerned, ActionAid is basically implementing theatre methodology and creative writing techniques. Consequently, ACC aligns the activities with the curriculum to ensure that they support the learning goals and objectives. The educators together with the staff of the community centre are designing the format of the project, as well as arranging the logistic and time related details needed. Experts from ACC are collaborating with the educators to create a project for the students. They review the curriculum and identify potential opportunities to connect academic subjects with extracurricular activities. The professionals are working closely, and active cooperation is crucial. Talking with the students and involving them in the designing process is an indicator of a

more successful intervention. Additionally, if needed, partnerships with the community are encouraged in order to support the extra-curricular and cross-curricular activities. This can involve working with local organisations or community groups that share an interest in the theme. For example, if the theme is environmental conservation, partner with local environmental groups to support the activities. Very frequently and if available, communication takes place with parent associations too in order for their collaboration and engagement to be achieved. The cooperation with the school is continuous so as the school to ensure that the extra-curricular and cross-curricular activities are well-planned. Promoting the project to parents and the rest of the school and inviting the community to participate in the activities is the following step in order for the engagement of all involved stakeholders to be established. The outcome of each project, which in ACC case, is an art experience, usually is being shared with the local community through local events happening in the neighbourhood with the form of street events. After the completion of the project, the evaluation of the experience is taking place with students providing their feedback regarding the learning outcomes. Finally, an evaluation of the partnership is taking place too, where educators and directors are discussing with the community centre about the results of the action and the possible future modifications of the cooperation.

It is worth mentioning that the process described is indicative and the steps can be modified depending on the implementing organisation, as well as on the national context of each country and the existing legislation regarding cooperating with schools. The steps of this collaborative process are depicted in following scheme:



## b. Hungary: Guidelines for arts-integrated practices in Social Emotional Education according to Rogers Foundation expertise

Rogers Foundation for Person-Centred Education specialises in several means of strengthening social and emotional skills in children and youth mainly through their educators via training.

Project results developed and implemented in the last 10 years are dealing with achieving resilience through drama and play, preventing early school leaving through emotional education, fighting for inclusion and against bullying, promoting free play in schools and so forth.

To reach our aims we use several methods in our projects. In the following projects several methodologies and frameworks were developed which form a solid basis for our teacher training, and our developed materials can be downloaded and processed individually also.

ARTPAD project aims to support the engagement of children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in formal and non-formal education to help prevent early school leaving. In the Artpad project we used drama techniques for engagement with learning and drama and play to build social understanding and behaviour.

We used a number of pedagogical approaches. One of those is Dorothy Heathcote's Mantle of the Expert that offers a dramatic enquiry based approach to learning. In this approach children and young people are endowed with the expertise. The approach guides learning through ownership and emotional engagement in the drama that unfolds with the participants. ".....the Mantle of the Expert approach places the child at the centre of the learning. The teacher's role is to create the conditions whereby a mantle of leadership, knowledge, competency and understanding grows around the child. This approach assumes a progressive view of learning, responsive to the needs of the child." (Aitken, 2013:35). The ARTPAD trainer guide introduces the user to the method step by step and the ARTPAD best practice guide offers specific exercises based on drama play.

Other approaches, such as Boal's (1979) use of Forum Theatre can engage children and young people, offering opportunities for debate and discussion and for different perspectives and opinions to be explored. It is in the development of the child's position in their social world that play and drama meet; in both experiences the child practices and learns how to behave, respond, survive and succeed in their social world. With each success they build their skills in communication, self-control, self-esteem and flexibility that will support their ability to creatively handle stress, problem solve, build respect, and develop their competencies and ability to cope within their social worlds and thus build their resilience. With the ability to use a range of approaches to drama, and a clear understanding of how to support children's freely chosen play, children and young people can be supported to learn whilst being given opportunities to develop their resilience in order to adapt and cope with a variety of stress factors.

The EUMOSCHOOL project aimed at spreading a certain methodology that was earlier developed and used in Italy: "Didattica delle Emozioni"© (Didactic of Emotions, DoE), developed from 16 years of experience and investigation into emotional education.

According to Danilo Dolci, education is to make possible the discovery of life, and emotions are our necessary tools to discover and appreciate life and all the relations we develop in our lifetime. Taking care of our emotions means to take care of our „human network“, our development, and society at large. This is the reason we need greater involvement from schools, teachers, families, public institutions – to support and enable this education process in its broadest sense. The Didactic of Emotions consists of providing the teachers with some tools and simple strategies to train the students to recognize, experience and manage their emotions. It is a fact that well-being, self-sufficiency and self-confidence are achieved through an effective recognition of one's own inner world. All this can be done at school, without interfering with the teaching programme and without heavy tasks both for the teachers and students. Furthermore, the Didactic of Emotion method is engaging for the students. The methodology was developed by Rosanna Schiralli psychologist, psychotherapist, writer, researcher and Ulisse Mariani psychologist, psychotherapist, writer, researcher in the early 2000's years.

In the EUMOSCHOOL project several specific activities were presented and also an online course for teachers are available on the website: <https://eumoschool.eu/oer/> The training course is basically a self-study course but during the pandemic we held an 30-hour online teacher training

courses to make easier to process the whole curriculum. Parts of the course can be incorporated to the arts-based curriculum to be developed in the ReImagined project.

In the CAPS project free play is in the focus. In this project we developed a handbook and a school curriculum to help introduce whole elementary schools to the theory of free play, which is in fact a very natural and long known, but lately less prioritised way of dealing with school children. Free play is a freely chosen, self-directed process that helps children learn about the processes of the real world in a safe environment, where in their play elements of the real world appear. This activity helps develop self-regulation, self-esteem, responsibility, communication, problem solving, conflict resolution and even more skills in children of various ages. With the support of the CAPS handbook and training materials from time to time we organise teacher-training sessions, where school teachers can experience the magic of free play and also receive ideas on how to make it a part of their everyday teaching practice and school life.

Besides free play we also introduced a big variety of board games, and held a course on the types of board games. These kinds of games, although differ very much from free play, can also be a part of soft-skills and personal development, as they help children learn self-regulating skills, follow rules, accept not being a winner and learn logical thinking in groups. With the introduction of board games we have to be very careful though, to use them within bounds and to moderate processes if needed not to make participants frustrated.

Different narrative methods are also used tools of Rogers Foundation. We use Folk Tale work method and storytelling of which the first is about listening to a composed tale and through identifying with the heroes of the story the listener can discover new ways of coping. This helps develop self-consciousness and resilience.

A recently learned method in our portfolio is the so-called symbolwork, which was developed by Wilfried Schneider, Austrian psychologist. This method is based on the discovery that symbols transmit information one cannot or does not want to share. Working with symbols is a good way of identifying the current personal attitude towards a selected topic. Furthermore, it helps to identify problems, barriers and fears. As soon as these difficulties have been properly identified, the trainers can begin with the development of possible solutions. Therefore it is important that trainers are aware of the “power of symbols”.

This method can be used for helping decision making, developing self-awareness and the ability of planning and also to raise empathy towards group members. One can see that these projects and methods are all aimed at developing social and emotional skills. Using them separately or combined, or tailored to the individuals and groups gives a big opportunity for experts to focus on specific target groups and on specific needs and problems as well. All these project materials and techniques are available and we can incorporate them into our project.

### c. Italy: Possible interventions in the context

Despite the increasing recognition of SEE in education in Italy, the approach to SEE remains discretionary, Italian schools are not required to introduce them in their school curricula and so some schools are testing SEEL-based activities while others are not. Their inclusion in the school curriculum comes from the most sensitive schools that recognise that it is essential to engage in the pursuit of objectives that are not exclusively linked to teaching.



In the focus groups conducted, it is evident that the teachers themselves recognise that these skills play an essential role in the growth of each individual, but they are also aware that the Italian context does not currently favour inclusion and that there is no direction towards the strengthening of these skills, even for the teachers themselves.

From the experiences of the Italian CSOs' there are different challenges to connect curricular and extracurricular activities. Unfortunately, the Italian school context isn't ready to implement these types of activities due to the lack of a national legislation from the educational institutions: there is a lack of financial resources and investments, there aren't training programs to train teachers and to involve also the CSOs at the same time. Still today teachers and schools consider non-formal education an extra activity of the curricula and the contribution of the CSOs less important than the traditional learning program. There is an issue about the recognition of the social emotional education skills acquired by students with extra-school experiences.

Connected with this situation from the perspective of educational public authorities, the main institutional barriers for promoting social emotional education is the lack of a national legislation and dedicated resources to introduce and promote the SEE into the schools.

It could be a useful foreseen training course on the SEE for teachers and identify a national institutional system for recognizing the non formal competences acquired by the students in extra-activities schools. A point of attention is also the issues of the sensitive data and privacy of children in relation to the families.

i. Art and emotional skills in Italy

Art is not only a diversion to our daily routine, it is also an effective tool for improving and raising awareness. Art is always inclusive because it is capable of uniting and holding together the object and the subject: think of music, sculpture, poetry, ballet, cinema, painting, art by its very nature does not separate but integrates, even when we are unable to appreciate it or find it not beautiful or do not clearly decipher the message, we are still interacting, we are dialoguing with the object and with ourselves; stimuli produce, whether we want them to or not, a response. This is why art is an opportunity to reflect on ourselves and the world around us.

Art, which has always conveyed aesthetic experiences (not only of beauty), thus finds itself offering a variety of opportunities to experience and develop emotions and feelings also from an educational point of view, a dimension understood here in an educational function. To educate for beauty, recalls Marco Dallari, is to educate emotional competence and sensitivity, it is to form a 'delicacy of imagination' where the opposite of beauty is not ugliness but cultural coarseness and emotional ignorance (Dallari, 2016). Educating for beauty and thus for art can mean the development of emotional skills and competences where the social and relational dimension also plays an important role.

Art is therefore one of the most immediate means of expressing oneself in a different way to speech, which often causes difficulties for those who are shyer or more fragile. When Oxfam often asks for opinions on a topic in its workshops, it solicits responses by means of images, post-it notes, creations, so that everyone is able to contribute to the discourse, which would be difficult if we asked them to intervene directly with a verbal contribution.

Considering that one of the essential challenges of the new millennium is to increase, in the younger generations, the emotional and social skills necessary to build a bright future in work and personal life (WHO, 1993), it is considered desirable, in the education of children, to re-evaluate aesthetics, beauty and the multi-sensory experience that characterises all artistic production.

Although the subject of art and emotions has become central especially in recent years, already in the 1960s Bruno Munari, with the motto 'Playing with art', devised a didactic methodology that through multisensory education could stimulate the child's development in all dimensions of individuality: cognitive, emotional, social, physical.

Imitating for Munari means learning to recompose in a single sequence, fragmented pieces of what is observed. It is at this point that the child's emotionality, originality and creativity emerge. Munari, with his *modus operandi*, considered art with children as that form of communication and emotional encouragement that is indispensable for initiating them into an understanding of reality: with a simple input of forming simple trees, with simple coloured paper shapes, for example, each child with the right tools will unleash his or her most fervid imagination (Munari B., 2004).

Munari's teaching is very important because it reminds us that the relationship between art and emotional competence is established in each of us from a very young age, and if guided and pursued can be extremely helpful in raising stable, self-aware and self-confident individuals.

- ii. Tools and good practices: How Oxfam combines art and emotion in its workshops

There are many tools that can be used to convey one's emotions, but in recent years Oxfam has used the technique of digital storytelling and the autobiographical method in some educational projects.

*Autobiographical methodologies.* Autobiographical methodologies are educational approaches that refer to writing of oneself or other people's stories as an act of taking care of oneself and knowing the world which can be done for our whole life:





There are three tools for autobiography workshops:

A. Illustrated books for self-investigation (picture books)

A well-designed illustrated book can really be a gateway to other worlds. This is why it is a very useful tool to introduce the topic at the beginning of an autobiographical workshop activity. "Telling" in general, if properly performed, transports the listener to another dimension in which he/she plunges without almost realising it. The choice of illustrated books at the beginning of a workshop activity is due to the many capacities of this literary genre: they speak a deep and polysemic language that combines words and images; they show different points of view; their meaning is different for each person according to their experience; they speak to children and adults alike, etc...A further important aspect of illustrated books is their capacity to inspire wonder and curiosity, two emotions that help young people in their learning process. Finally the generosity of the act of reading aloud, in addition to being a gift, also creates an intimate and beneficial relationship. In my personal experience, whoever has benefited from reading aloud becomes in turn a reader, thus creating a virtuous circle of gift and relationship. After the reading, we will place a white billboard on the floor in the middle of the circle. We will ask the students to repeat verbally, and then to write down some phrases, words, or images that the reading has evoked in them.

B. Writing and collection Stories

Writing or collecting stories allow to share something with the group: Telling a stories is important because:

- Highlighting the importance of telling one's story to take care of oneself and rediscover the past
- Linking one's narrative to the encounter with the other person: Can our story have an impact on the listener? If so, what kind?
- After reflecting on these goals with the students, try to summarise them in a sentence, such as: We tell our story because our story is important; telling my story means taking care of myself; we tell our story to share it with others.

C. Photographic portrait

The photographic portrait is not just a genre: It is the result of a certain way of looking at another person, searching for expressions and peculiarities that make that face interesting. Looking at the photographic portrait of a stranger, we start to wonder who that person is, what he/she likes, what his/her feelings were when the picture was taken. We start to get familiar with an imagined intimacy, just as we would with the character in a story.

Thanks to the usual practice of mixing drawing and photography, we can play with portraits by staging ourselves as real characters, and allowing the drawing to help us overcome our inhibitions and suggest new stories. Forget fixed and embarrassed expressions, let's do away with composure (especially the cautious attitude we are forced to adopt nowadays, staying at a safe distance over the last months), let's try our hand at "decomposed" portraits! We will turn into completely new faces, mix up our features, and literally redesign them so that we can play a new role and pose fearlessly in front of our classmates' cameras or cell phones.

*Digital storytelling* (as the name suggests) is derived from one of the oldest arts in the history of mankind - telling stories. It is based on creating and telling or sharing narrations using not only words, but also modern IT tools and multimedia materials like: graphics, video, audio, animation. Digital storytelling can be considered in two main aspects:



- as a "product" - the multimedia story used to transfer knowledge, values, emotion, attitudes to receiver;
- as a process in which the author, in a way of reflection or self-reflection and creative work builds and provides to recipients a specific tale.

Educational use of storytelling has been very well known for centuries, if not millennia. Even before the invention of writing people used the stories handed down through the generations for the preservation of history and culture of the community. The knowledge accumulated by the community, values that were appreciated and the attitudes that were expected were being transmitted in the same way. For those reasons the storytelling was an integral part of education and socialisation processes for hundreds of years.

Even better results come from an application of digital storytelling as a method of learning. It consists in placing pupils in the role of a creator, an author of digital narrative. Such projects are mainly aimed at developing skills such as:

- work planning and organising, time management,
- searching for reliable sources of information and digital content,
- processing and critical analysis of information,
- creative problem solving,
- teamwork,
- reflection and self-reflection in the analysis of own live and the world around,
- handling the digital tools.

It is worth noticing that the use of digital storytelling as a method of teaching and learning involves every sphere of a pupil's processing system: cognitive, affective and psychomotor. This is made possible because the creation of digital tale requires not only the collection and processing of information, but also triggers empathy, stimulates emotions, refers to the values, but also often requires from the author to undertake physical, manual actions (for example: prepare some materials, use a specific tool).

Multicultural, emotional and social education are ideal areas for the practical use of digital storytelling. Method of digital storytelling, as it was mentioned above, allows not only to present certain knowledge, but also fosters training of attitudes and development of eligible social skills.

This happens because a well-constructed story moves emotions, feelings, and refers to universal values. On the other hand, the creation of the digital story is an excellent opportunity for the author to analyse and reflect some specific events from hers or his own life and the surrounding reality. Also to undergo a critical evaluation of certain opinions, judgments regarding other linguistic, cultural, religious circles, with whom she or he meets every day. This form of work greatly encourages teachers and students to discuss issues related to diversity, emotion, acceptance, identity, cultural relativism, stereotypes and prejudices. Digital storytelling allows to present in a suggestive manner the experience of participation in various cultures or linguistic circles. Thanks to the stories that students receive or create, they can easily understand other perspectives and points of view. In a natural manner (as a result of their experience gained in the work) they train and develop the skills of cooperation in different cultural environments, adaptation to changing conditions, responding to diverse cultural and social contexts.

The benefit of the digital nature of the story cannot be forgotten as well. The use of IT tools allows in an affordable and easy way (using the Internet) to reach an unlimited audience for stories. But what is more important from an educational point of view, this makes it possible to work together on a



project for students from different countries, speaking different languages, raised in different cultures. In consequence of direct contact, they exchange not only their stories, but also the experiences, thoughts, ideas, emotions, feelings.

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