



# Framework Implementation Guide

2SMILE

– Community Based Resource Centre  
for School System to Address  
Behavioural Challenges



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# 1. Introduction

In today's society, substantial research has shown that **dropping out of higher education** is perceived as a serious issue, with multiple, known factors leading to the reasoning behind such a decision. Based on rich empirical data, most researchers agree that it is a **complex process** influenced not by a single factor, but rather by a combination of factors (Janosz et al., 2000; Lamot et al., 2013; Lyche, 2010; Rumberger, 2011).

In recent years, numerous reforms – in all European countries – were carried out to provide improved quality and fairness of the educational system. However, dropout rates are still high. This explains why the effort for a decrease in the number of young people dropping out of education represents one of the five key objectives stated in the European Strategy for Jobs and Growth (European Commission, 2010).

It is clear that education dropout is determined by not only social factors such as the family situation, but also the community that one is living in and the overall school environment. Decreased education dropout calls for a **whole-school approach** where all actors around the student are involved in the education process in a holistic way of thinking and where the learner is at the heart of **the learning process**.

**The 2SMILE Project argues that a “whole-school approach” and an education model based on a student-centred and on an outcomes-based learning approach would help to reduce school dropouts.** With this publication, a reflection about the (pilot) implementation

of a student learning approach in some different European countries will be presented and several recommendations that can inspire the different actors in the learning process, giving them a series of tools that will contribute and advocate for an educational and, specifically, for a student-centred learning approach. **This publication aims to contribute to a change in the European Educational System, in the educational experience and in the learning process itself.**

## 1.1. About the 2SMILE Project

Since 2008, a push towards the implementation of a Learning Outcomes Approach (LOA) in education has been making its way in all European Educational Systems. This approach in the development of school curricula emphasises what a student understands and assimilates to do upon completion of a learning process – irrespective of how, when and where the learning takes place. Even if the LOA has been adopted, so far, predominantly by VET and Higher Education, many European education authorities see it as an effective way to avoid potential mismatches, promoting active learning and inclusive teaching. With the 2SMILE community-based resource centre, the aim is to set a path that brings the LOA into compulsory education, targeting young people who are at high risk of leaving education (or have already done so). These include early school leavers, young people with low attainment levels and from disadvantaged backgrounds, those for whom a standard education system is not advantageous to their learning style, those who have been involved in violent incidents or display risky behaviours and those known to youth justice or social protection systems. By developing the theory of student-centred learning, the central belief is that a fundamental change must occur to benefit all parties involved.

Teachers will be delivering a curriculum built on knowledge, skills and competencies that learners can acquire through an interdisciplinary approach. They will be able to design learning programmes more flexibly, tailoring them to the needs of the learners and, in addition, applying innovative and individualised pedagogical and assessment procedures. Learners, on the other hand, will benefit from an outcomes-based

curriculum developed through profile assessments, whereby the educational environment becomes more “user-friendly” and active learning is a key element of success.

**In conclusion, the fundamental aim of this project is to push for an ‘exploratory conversation’ at a European level with key stakeholders, including local communities and practitioners on the ground, on how to bring about change in educational practice and benefit young people at risk of leaving education.**

## 2. The Whole School Approach

Education dropout is a multi-faceted phenomenon. Schools have a crucial role to play to ensure that all learners reach their full potential of growth irrespective of individual and family-related factors, socio-economic status and life experience. Schools should provide a safe, welcoming and caring learning environment, striving for learners' engagement. In this kind of environment children can grow and develop as individuals and members of the community, feel respected, valued and recognised for their talents and needs.

However, **schools cannot address early school leaving and educational disadvantage alone.** Different stakeholders and services, inside and outside the school, need to collaborate and integrate efforts. The school is the ideal place to initiate community collaboration. This calls for a ‘whole-school approach’. Schools must be seen as a multi-dimensional and interactive system that can learn and change; an open learning hub which provides support to its neighbourhood and receives support from the community.

Developing a 'whole-school approach' to reduce early school leaving means that the objective of eliminating dropouts and encouraging school success should be promoted consistently and systematically across all dimensions of school life which may have an impact on educational achievements. In a 'whole-school approach', all members of the school community (school leaders, middle management, teaching and non-teaching staff, learners, parents and families) feel responsible and play an active role in tackling educational disadvantage and preventing dropouts. The entire community engages in a cohesive, collective and collaborative action to support each learner in the most appropriate way.

A 'whole school around a whole learner' culture and environment is in place, with a view to improving the learners' educational achievement, behaviour and supporting their emotional, social and psychological well-being.

A 'whole-school approach' also implies a cross-sectoral approach and stronger cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders (social services, youth services, outreach care workers, psychologists, nurses, speech and language therapists, guidance specialists, local authorities, NGOs, business, unions, volunteers, etc.) and the community at large, to deal with issues, which schools do not (and cannot) have the relevant expertise for. The concept of a 'whole-school approach' allows for the entire system of actors and their inter-relationships in and around schools to be considered, acknowledging that each stakeholder has a part to play in supporting the learners' educational journey and nurturing their learning experience.

The objective of the research was to investigate the "whole-school approach" into schools from 7 local communities that face massive poverty, parental migration, influx of migrants, gang culture and violent behaviour. The focus of this study include disadvantaged learners, who are (or should be) in compulsory education in Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Romania, UK, Finland and Greece.

## 2.1. The Student-Centred Based Learning

Student-Centred Based Learning (SCL) is drawn from the philosophy that the student is at the heart of the learning process. SCL allows students to shape their own learning paths and places upon them the responsibility to actively participate in making their educational process a meaningful one. **The SCL experience is not passive, as it is based on the premise that “student passivity does not support or enhance learning and that it is precisely ‘active learning’ which helps students to learn independently”** (MacHemer and Crawford, 2007, p. 11). The concept of student-centred learning has been credited as early as 1905 to Hayward and in 1956 to Dewey’s work (O’Sullivan 2003). In learner-centred classrooms, one can see much of John Dewey’s social learning theory and educational beliefs in action. He viewed **the classroom as a social entity for children to learn and to solve problems together as a community. In these classrooms, children are viewed as unique individuals** and can be found busy at work, building their own knowledge through personal meaning, rather than receiving teacher-led knowledge and being taught through teacher-directed activities (Schiro, 2013). In these classrooms, children will be seen ‘learning by doing’ and they will be solving problems through hands-on approaches. When teachers plan the education path, students’ interests have to be taken into consideration and curricular subjects have to be integrated with an emphasis on project learning.

The **educational experience encompasses the intellectual, social, emotional, physical and spiritual growth of the child**, not just the academic growth (Schiro, 2013). Carl Rogers, the father of client-centred counselling, expanded this approach into a general theory of education (Burnard 1999; Rogoff 1999). In his book “Freedom to Learn for the 80s”, he describes the shift in power from the expert teacher to the student, driven by a need for a change in the traditional environment, where in this “so-called educational atmosphere, students become passive, apathetic and bored.” He pointed out how students preferred learning environments in which they were involved in collaborative learning activities and peer teaching, carrying out their own inquiries and classroom talks that required multiple levels of thinking. In such environments, he

saw teachers more as facilitators of learning. The expression “student-centred learning” was also associated with the work of Piaget and more recently with Malcolm Knowles (Burnard 1999). Student-centred learning stemmed from the constructivist learning theory, in which students ‘construct’ knowledge for themselves and learning is established when meaning is found. Learning, according to this theory, involves language that is used to influence learning itself. People talk to themselves as they learn - language and learning are inextricably intertwined. **Learning is also contextual**, as people do not learn through isolated facts and theories of abstract pieces of information, separated from the rest of their lives. Rather, people learn in relation to what else they know, what they believe, their prejudices and fears. Unlike the cognitivist theory, **learning is an active process** that requires students to utilise their sensory inputs and construct meaning from it. It is also a social activity, where learning is encouraged through interactions with peers, teachers and others. Learning also occurs over time, which means that students need to periodically revise the knowledge they have constructed and challenge it with new experiences.

Student-centred teaching **represents a paradigm shift from traditional teaching methods by focusing on how students learn instead of how teachers teach**. The different models in learning allow us to ask the question: “How can I improve my students’ learning?” instead of the asked question: “How can I improve my teaching?”

The European Students’ Union appears to have the most detailed and concrete list of what constitutes student-centred learning. It emphasises:

- the importance of feedback in learners’ progress;
- students’ rights to decide about curriculum content;
- teaching and evaluation methods;
- using committees to evaluate quality outcomes;
- the use of credits;
- the recognition of prior learning;

- the importance of group-work;
- the use of projects;
- different forms of assessment, simulation and research;
- the collaboration of librarians and teachers;
- innovative teaching methods.

Additionally, in the classroom there should be practical implementation of the SCL approach that includes several of the following components:

- problem-based learning;
- group project work;
- student-centred active learning;
- resource-based learning;
- use of case methods, role plays, classroom workshops, group presentations;
- use of a web-conferencing environment, particularly in distance education;
- small group work that enables students to learn how to work in a team, in the process of which they identify and fill the gaps in their knowledge.

**As an approach to learning and, above all, as a model that aims to shift the educational paradigm through a change in both culture and mindset, SCL and the usage of learning outcomes see students as active participants in their own learning, fostering transferable skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking and reflective thinking.**

### 3. The Whole School Approach *applied*

In order to achieve the main 2SMILE premise – a “**whole-school approach**”, a **student-centred education model** and an **outcomes-based learning approach will help to reduce school dropouts** – a pilot is planned and scaled up to a “how to” road map for local communities: the aim is to address the problem of their disadvantaged learners and turn them into active community citizens. This means bringing together local school authorities, schools as institutions, teachers, children, youngsters, community members and families. For each of these groups, separately, there is an abundance of resources and best practices. However, 2SMILE’s partnership proposes a holistic approach that will unite all stakeholders together to improve compulsory education. This is usually done with a top to bottom approach, involving curricula developers and ministry level experts without real engagement from teachers, families, communities and – most important – learners. Our project plans to challenge this approach, known for being counterproductive.

In this sense, the main objective of 2SMILE’s research is to pilot the “whole-school approach” into schools from six local communities that face huge amount of poverty, migration of parents, influx of immigrants, gangs and violent behaviour. The targeted individuals are disadvantaged learners who are (or should be) in compulsory education in Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Romania, UK, and Greece.

### 3.1. From theory to practice

In order to implement the “whole-school approach” in the six partner countries, over the last three years of the 2SMILE implementation, a **Learning Kit** was developed – a specific resource for teachers related to an education model based on student-centred and outcomes-based learning approach. The Learning Kit includes a set of activities that will allow an adaptation to the local contexts for the practices and models to be used in order to deal with specific problems from each educational context. This tool was developed with previous consultation with key actors in the educational system. It regards how to adapt the national curricula of each partner country, incorporating the basic principles of an education model based on student-centred and outcomes-based learning approach.

The Learning Kit provided a comprehensive framework for the next step in the project: the **Teachers' training course**. To empower teachers to adapt a set of education theories in order to have specific methodologies and tools to answer to problems in their particular schools, the training was divided in three modules: 1. The theory & practice of student-centred based learning; 2. Adapting national curricula to the concept of student-centred based learning; 3. Adapting the student-centred based learning to a class or cohort of kids. The course was implemented among 23 teachers in the partnership countries.

Finally, the Learning Kit empowered and sensitised the teachers to the need of following a “whole school approach”. The pilot implementation of the student-centred and outcomes-centred learning approach was ready to begin.

### 3.2. Pilot Implementation in Classrooms

The pilot in classrooms was implemented in the six European partner, with the participation of 23 teachers. Some of them were already following the student-centred learning approach, within the methodology or with specific tools or activities from the methodology.

## Who are the learners

The majority of learners that participated in this pilot implementation were disadvantaged students (approximately 280 students). With attention deficit disorder, special educational needs, history of retentions and with learning difficulties (as writing, reading). There were also learners with a low level of stability or support from their homes, migrants or members of the Roma community (in Romania), and some were affected by juvenile delinquency. Students from average families, with a good economic situation and positive learning results were integrated in the pilot also. All learners were aged between 6 and 18 years old.

## Methodology

All the teachers started with an **individualised student diagnosis** to better understand and identify the needs of each participant. Information such as family background, hobbies, opinion about school, about relations between their own and other students and teachers and information about specific needs, learning difficulties, but also strong and weak personal skills were gathered. In each school, tools from the project were used to build this individual profiling. In Portugal, Ireland and the UK, teachers pointed out that they were already working with some of these methodologies – or similar, using the same initial diagnosis of the student.

After having established an **individual profile** for each learner, teachers started to define students' study plans. In Greece, an individualised plan was created for each discipline. In History and English, for example, the contents were reduced and the focus was the development of specific skills. Each student was given the opportunity to request for a weekly meeting if desired. In Portugal, an individualised plan per subject and classroom was developed as well; a second teacher was provided for individual support, if necessary. In classes where students had multiple behavioural issues, teachers decided to adopt positive reinforcement, speak individually outside the room and contact with parents of said student, teachers and/or child protection commission. In Ireland, individual plans were created for at-risk students with teachers having access to

these documents. In Greece, timetables with defined set of outcomes were created and a number of small changes were implemented to help students during this pilot: for example, changes in the students' position in the classroom were made. In the UK, students from the partner school are permanently excluded or at risk of exclusion; therefore, the individual plan is fundamental to put the interests and motivations of the student at the centre of the learning process and to evidence individual areas rather than the disciplinary ones. In Italy, students of concern included on one side, people over the age of 16 completing compulsory education; on the other, foreign students, who after the literacy cycle, namely the first five years of education, attend the first didactic period which allows them to obtain the diploma to get into secondary school.

## **Family and Community**

As part of a holistic process, families and communities were involved through the use of interviews to collect information about the students and their household, the characteristics of the family, their hobbies for example and the family's level of commitment to assist, help and collaborate when necessary. This means that, what was made in the school, was made "at home" too. Teachers – according to the student-centred approach – were searching for more individual information to evaluate weak and strong personal points in order to build an individual learning plan.

In Greece, all the participating teachers contacted each student's family to discuss the methodology that would be implemented to support their child. An attempt to develop a strong relationship between the parents and the school was found to be positive: teachers and parents joined forces to ensure that all the children received help, supervision or monitoring, every time this was needed. For Ireland, families could clearly see that a pro-active approach was made to better involve them in the decision making of the child with integration of the community also. In Portugal, at the beginning of the academic year, all the parents and the guardians were invited to a meeting by the school, to better familiarise themselves with the initiatives offered or promoted during this pilot: for example, a social store to help the school community with questions related to clothing. In Romania, there were very different types of families

with various material and emotional needs. Working offline and online, all the parents recognised the activities and the proximity to school as an opportunity for them to cooperate with their children's school.

## Results

In general, students became more interested in learning and they improved their academic results and classrooms' behaviour and objectives were generally achieved. The individual plans and the activities were implemented in both offline and online format (with the beginning of Covid-19) and the general feedback from students, teachers and parents was very positive. The biggest changes were observed in relationships between the actors surrounding the student-learning process.

A Greek teacher recognised the possibility that the establishment of an individual plan adds value to the understanding of student's behaviour. The teacher was more attentive to small details regarding the individual behaviour and attitudes (*"When she is alone, she pays enough attention. When she is even with one more child, she likes to have fun, to sing"*). In Portugal, it was observed that the students failing some of the objectives were those with problems relating to assiduity; otherwise goals were achieved. In Romania, the pilot revealed that the relationship between students and teachers had also improved because students felt that teachers had been more engaging and closer to them (*"students became more involved in class when they realized that teachers were concerned about their progress"*).

In Ireland, the study showed that it was necessary to create a specific space/room where students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) could feel more comfortable and learn in an environment which was conducive to their needs, in terms of material and human resources.

In the UK, this methodology has been applied for a long time and students are getting used to this way of working and taking responsibility for their education; and teachers answer students' needs in a more effective way. Finally, in Italy, where students were adults and with a certain ease of school dropouts, the practice of a disciplinary approach was fundamental because it leveraged the student's commitment and responsibility to adhere to this project.

## The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic created huge challenges making the project implementation process more complex in some of the partner countries. Schools that were already working according to the student-centred learning approach held the appropriate tools to facilitate a new learning process in this situational change of working (e.g. study from home) due to Covid-19, inevitably creating stronger bonds between the parents and the school. However, schools faced other issues: there were students – especially from more vulnerable families (Roma students in Romania, for example or more disadvantaged families in Portugal) – without telephones, no internet access or a single computer for a whole family. For these students, it was extremely disheartening time because, having gained motivation up to that point, they were no longer able to work with their teachers. Many parents could not check their emails and/or could not be reached on the phone. The pandemic had become a huge barrier to the completion of the community aspect of this project. However, in those situations where these problems were not a barrier, teachers felt that online interactions provided more opportunities and some students responded very well, with high levels of concentration and attention. In Ireland, for example, a teacher used a specific technological system (a system called *VShare*) to communicate with parents or guardians which proved effective during the pandemic. Although the impact of the pilot implementation was positive, participants believed that the results would have been better had the “online format” become unavoidable.

## Discussion

After the pilot implementation in the classrooms, all the teachers involved believe that implementing this approach in the next years could bring many benefits. The beginning presented some difficulties because of the amount of planning and the bureaucratic work – related to data analysis, surveys, and interviews. Also, for some teachers this was a completely new and a different way of working.

All teachers involved in the pilot implementation of the methodology agreed on its added value, benefiting both teachers and students. In fact, placing students at the centre of the whole-school approach can be a motivational for both. Teachers felt they were working more efficiently according to specific individual needs with tools and activities made accessible to them.

Results will be more positive with students and families recognising that this whole process aims to better know and understand them. Teachers have a greater control in the planning of classes and individual progression of each learner. Students, on the other hand, feel that they are in a nurturing, caring and more comfortable environment; they recognise the support of teachers and schools to meet their needs.

The teachers involved were satisfied with the project and willing to use its applications in the future and without restrictions (online). Some teachers also felt that they made a huge impact on specific students by providing them support tailored to special needs.

Despite the additional work – at the beginning of the process, related to the collection of information about the students, their learning process, their families – teachers recognise that a good planning structure for the learning process can also maximise success in the classroom.

The classes became more inclusive with an atmosphere of trust and inclusion with space for diversity and, at the same time, with a better understanding students' specific needs. It is imperative to point out that the success of the programme is a result of a very intense collaborative work between learners, families, school members and communities. This is the real implementation of the "whole-school approach".

# 4. Recommendations

In order to contribute to changing the European Educational System, in the educational experience and in the learning process itself, we present several recommendations that may inspire the different actors in the learning process, giving them a series of tools that will contribute and advocate for a “whole-school approach”.

The purpose of this publication is to offer a set of recommendations for schools, parents and policy makers in order to change the focus in schools putting the learner – their abilities, interests, backgrounds, perspectives – in the centre. To achieve this is to reinforce the role that the teacher must play as an essential driver for success; to improve the individual learning processes and experiences in order to achieve a school involvement that will contribute to the reduction of risk behaviours, early school leaving and low attainment.

These recommendations are the result of previous publications of the project and they aim to play a part in setting a path that brings the Learning Outcomes Approach (LOA) into compulsory education, to support young people who are at risk of leaving education or have already done so.

In the next pages, three toolsets target the following audiences: policy makers, teachers and other practitioners and parents and community members.

## 4.1. For policy makers

### Key messages

- The student is at the heart of the learning process.
- The learning programmes must be flexible and comprehensive to the needs of the learners.
- The teaching process should be student-centred and not teacher-centred.
- Learning curriculums should be designed to include individual experiences and a problem-based approach.
- Students should be involved in the decisions about curriculum content.
- Committees to evaluate quality outcomes and the use of credits should be introduced in the learning process.
- Evaluation of criteria should be correlated with the learning outcomes and must contemplate different aspects of knowledge and learning, as for example, communication, reading, writing, calculation, problem solving, but also personal attitudes and values.

### Practical suggestions

- Implement changes and innovations in teaching and learning methods, in the organisations of studies and in the study system.
- Establish a learning process based on learning outcomes focusing on the learner's skills achieved rather than on the contents or the subjects.
- Promote active learners' participation through collaborative and meaningful activities.
- Promote active parents' participation through collaborative and meaningful consultations.

- Organise a curriculum with content and activities around subjects that are meaningful to the students.
- Give students enough time to integrate and assimilate cognitively the information and connect the new knowledge to real life.
- Recognise the role of the teacher in the learning process to motivate him/her/them.
- Encourage teachers to engage in personal growth programmes, exchange of good ideas and discussions about additional workload.
- Improve schools with innovative and pedagogical tools.
- Empower the school managers and the teachers and other professionals about the adoption of the new technologies in the classroom.

## Benefits

With the involvement of all parts towards shared goals, the possibilities for success in the Educational Systems are enhanced: for schools, for teachers, for families but, above all, for learners. The commitment from teachers, learners, and parents (or legal guardians) with the learning process allows them to develop a sense of ownership, belonging and identification with all the processes and with the outcomes established. In this way, a strong motivational justification grows from all the parties and this will impact positively students' behaviours, scholarly achievements and well-being. The positive engagement of students is still related with a reduction of risky behaviours, early school leaving and low attainment, which has a direct positive impact on the school environment; in this way, a healthy experience for each learner is guaranteed.

## Challenges

Across Europe, a structural way of learning and teaching is used and a change of mindset should be pursued to address the contemporary behavioural challenges. Student-centred learning has to be compulsory

implemented in our European Education Systems in order to change from a Traditional Education Model for a Learning Outcomes Approach:



	Traditional Education Model	Learning Outcomes Approach
<b>Educational Experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encompasses the intellectual, social, emotional, physical, spiritual and academic growth of the child</li> </ul>
<b>Student Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build by receiving teacher-led knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build through a personal meaning</li> </ul>
<b>The role of the teacher</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The expert teacher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitator of learning</li> </ul>
<b>Learning Paradigm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"How teachers teach"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"How students learn"</li> </ul>

## 4.2. For teachers and other practitioners

### Key messages

- The student is at the heart of the learning process.
- The learning programmes must be flexible and comprehensive to the needs of the learners.
- The learning process is contextual.
- The teaching process should be student-centred and not teacher-centred.
- Teachers should motivate students rather than deliver content-based courses.
- Competence and confidence of each learner should be developed by teaching and learning.

- Teachers should have a holistic thinking and practice to integrate different subjects, cultures and points of view and take into consideration, at the same time, local and global perspectives.
- Evaluation of criteria should be correlated with the learning outcomes and must contemplate different aspects of knowledge and learning, as for example, communication, reading, writing, calculation, problem solving, but also personal attitudes and values.

### **Practical Suggestions**

- Consider the knowledge, beliefs, prejudices and fears of your students.
- Have a holistic view from your students about their: perspectives, backgrounds, interests, capacities and needs.
- Individualise the learning to the personal needs of your students and make it relevant to them – define a profile of the learner.
- Give autonomy to your learners.
- Provide feedback to your students.
- In the classroom, be yourself, be a facilitator and a resources provider.
- Have flexible lesson plans to adapt to the needs of the learners.
- Discuss with students the activities that could motivate them and make them achieve good results.
- Organise activities that help students understand and improve their own viewpoints.
- Give students enough time to integrate and assimilate the information cognitively and connect the new knowledge to real life.
- Implement innovative teaching methods.
- Promote positive interactions with peers, teachers and other school members.

- Promote global, interdisciplinary and complementary activities.
- Improve your own abilities to: work in a team, communicate with national and international colleagues, prepare the materials for different classrooms, provide distance learning possibilities, participate in scientific activities.

### **Activities to implement in the classroom**

- Problem-based activities
- Group project work
- Use of the case studies
- Role plays
- Workshops
- Group presentations
- Energising activities for personal and interpersonal knowledge
- "Student assembly"
- Web-conferencing environment - in distance education or to share knowledge with practices with other classrooms

### **Benefits**

With the involvement of all parts towards shared goals, the possibilities for success in the Educational Systems are enhanced: for schools, for teachers, for families but, above all, for learners. The commitment from teachers, learners and parents (or legal guardians) with the learning process enables them to develop a sense of ownership, a sense of belonging and a sense of identification with all the process and with the outcomes established. In this way, a strong motivational justification grows from all the parties and this will impact positively students' behaviours, scholarly achievements and well-being. The positive engagement of students is still related with a reduction of risky behaviours, early school

leaving and low attainment, which has a direct positive impact on the school environment; in this way, a healthy experience for each learner is guaranteed.

A motivated, self-confident student, enlightened about the personal goals to be achieved at school is a collaborative student (“co-defined” with him/her/them), when he/she/they feels considered as an individual by peers and teachers: in the school and, above all, in the classroom.

## Challenges

Across Europe, a structural way of learning and teaching is used and a change of mindset should be pursued to address the contemporary behavioural challenges. Student-centred learning must be compulsory in our European Education Systems in order to change from a Traditional Education Model for a Learning Outcomes Approach:



	Traditional Education Model	Learning Outcomes Approach
<b>Educational Experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encompasses the intellectual, social, emotional, physical, spiritual and academic growth of the child</li> </ul>
<b>Student Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build by receiving teacher-led knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build through a personal meaning</li> </ul>
<b>The role of the teacher</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The expert teacher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitator of learning</li> </ul>
<b>Learning Paradigm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“How teachers teach”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“How students learn”</li> </ul>

## 4.3. For Parents and Community members

### Key messages

- The student is at the heart of the learning process.

- The learning process is contextual.
- Children learn in relation to what else they know, what they believe, their prejudices and fears.
- The student should enjoy what they choose to study and proceed through the course at their own pace.
- Parents or legal guardians should be committed to the learning plan outlined.
- Family engagement in education helps students to be successful in the school.
- Communities should work together to improve a good and accessible Education System to all the children.

### **Practical suggestions**

- Consider the individual needs of your child, his/her/their motivations, goals and learning style avoiding stressing him/her/them with your own expectations.
- Empower children to value their viewpoints and beliefs.
- Motivate, empower and give confidence to your children.
- Promote positive social interactions with peers, other children and adults.
- Provide feedback and problem-solving activities.
- Provide different opportunities for students to learn.
- Promote different global, interdisciplinary and complementary activities outside the school.
- Push for activities that encourage cooperation and social interaction.
- Promote active participation in scholarly but also in familiar and social life.

- Be engaged in your children learning process, showing them that school matters and that it is a social experience for their life.

## Benefits

With the involvement of all parts towards shared goals, the possibilities for success in the Educational Systems are enhanced: for schools, for teachers, for families but, above all, for learners. The commitment from teachers, learners and parents (or legal guardians) and other community members with the learning process allows them to develop a sense of ownership, a sense of belonging and a sense of identification with all the processes and with the outcomes established. In this way, a strong motivational justification grows from all the parties and this will impact positively students' behaviours, scholarly achievements and well-being. The positive engagement of students is still related to a reduction of risky behaviours, early school leaving and low attainment, which has a direct positive impact on the school environment and in the school experience as a healthy experience for each learner.

The positive involvement of the family and also the community helps to improve not only academic success for the child but also improvements in their behaviour. Motivation provided by the family and a clear recognising of school achievements made by the child from their parents is additionally key in driving such positive academic and behavioural changes. The student learning approach puts the students in the centre, showing them that each person has their own place in the learning process, in the school and – above all – in the society.

## Challenges

To achieve a successful student-centred learning approach, teachers, learners, motivated parents, families and communities are needed. And one of the major challenges regards the involvement of parents in the learning process – different types of situations could drive parents away from school: a personal past of a difficult relationship with the school; few personal resources to recognise the importance of the school; little time to devote to school; and, for example, the idea that what happens in school

is only the teachers' responsibility. This weak engagement also hinders students' motivation for the learning process.

Another important challenge to a successful student-centred learning process is managing the parents' expectations regarding their children academic successes – in some situations, the parents have expectations for their children related more to their own personal expectations than the child's expectations. Parents cannot forget that the student is at the heart of the learning process and they should consider the student's perspectives, backgrounds, interests, capacities and needs.

Finally, a community with a strong social efficacy can give to all their children an equal opportunity to learn and to access all resources available in order to promote their academic achievement without forgetting the wellbeing and their mental health.

## 5. Dissemination

To disseminate 2SMILE outcomes and results, the partnership should use social media channels and the mailing list of relevant stakeholders and participants in the diverse activities during the project implementation.

The dissemination target are policy makers, teachers and other practitioners; but also school's members, parents, families and the community. This means that everyone who can influence public policies and/or promote the training or the recommendations developed and everyone with a role in the children's learning process should be reached by this dissemination strategy.

The recommendations have specifically been written to help each group considered in the project and will help them implement the innovative learning approach.

# 6. Conclusion

Education dropout is a multifactorial phenomenon, a complex process that requires a strong cooperation between different stakeholders across the school, the family, and the community. The still high dropout rates mean that all the interventions, programmes and policies have failed during the years. The 2SMILE project proposes a change in the way of thinking the learning process and the role of each actor in that process. A decrease in education dropouts implies a **whole-school approach** where all stakeholders are involved in the education process in a holistic way of thinking and where **the learner is the heart of the learning process**.

The pilot implementation of this student-centred learning approach is an important step towards the reaffirmation that group work is necessary, to reach a holistic understating of the student and the school. Students, parents, teachers, communities - especially among more vulnerable groups, as students with mental disorders, migrants, or communities as the Roma students – should be listening to each other needs, to find more ideal solutions.

This document was made from the reports, the activities and the results reached in outputs 1, 2 and 3; and it is a document to disseminate and advocate for a change in educational national systems; whilst the issue of dropping out of school may never be solved, it could be contrasted with a student-centred learning approach. Students could then feel that their needs, their interests, their voices are considered and listened thus increasing motivation.

Students *“realise that they can also be protagonists in the realisation and construction of their own learning”* (IO3 Report, Italy).

Following on from this, scholarly achievements and – above all – wellbeing and mental health is likely to improve. With regards to the parents, when involved, their commitment contributes to improving the learning process.

The student-centred learning approach emphasises the importance and the meaning of relationships among students, teachers and parents. If we consider the last year and the challenges that emerged from Covid-19, it can be stated that *“From an academic point of view, little progress has started to appear, but due to the pandemic situation, they cannot be measured. Probably no progress can be made when returning to school, but certainly starting from the good relationship between teacher and student, progress can be made again”* (IO3 Report, Romania).

**The “whole school approach” is not only about school. It is about the relationships, the confidence, the motivation and the engagement and the commitment of students, teachers, families, communities and policy makers in the learning process.**



# 2SMILE

COMMUNITY BASED RESOURCE CENTRE FOR SCHOOL SYSTEM  
TO ADDRESS BEHAVIORAL CHALLENGES



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