Deliverable 2.5: Piloting reports for coaching and professional development training manual on SWPBS

Romanian report

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Introduction

The purpose of the deliverable "D2.5 Piloting reports for coaching and professional development training manual on SWPBS" is to collect coaches' views on the overall implementation of the SWPBS framework in Cyprus and provide recommendations, especially focusing on the country specific adaptations, for the improvement of the Coaching and Professional Development Manual and future coaches in the country. The report explains in detail the overall aim with regards to the objectives of the project, the followed methodology, the findings that arose and the final conclusions.

This report describes the ADDIR procedure (see the explanation below) followed to pilot test coaching and professional development materials for all partners. As such, Romanian partners, based on the above-mentioned model, developed the current report which includes results from two main source of data: (a) a focus group with the SPWBS external coaches and (b) a questionnaire applied to teachers and school leaders. At the end of the report, the contextual and country-specific adaptations identified as presented to be integrated in all manuals, as well as the main revisions required to finalize the Coaching and Professional Development Manual (D2.3). The mentioned manual explicitly refers to the Tier 1 implementation only.

SPWBS project objectives

The "Building School-Wide Inclusive, Positive and Equitable Learning Environments through a Systems-Change Approach" (SWPBS) aims to establish an inclusive non-discriminatory social culture and necessary socio-emotional and behavioural supports for all children in a school across four EU countries (Cyprus, Finland, Greece, Romania). The project follows the Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) which is an evidence-based approach to enhance the quality of life and minimize individuals' problematic behaviour (Carr, et al. 2002). To achieve that, PBS focuses on the development of individuals' positive behaviours (behaviours that are associated with academic, health, social, recreational, community and family achievement). The project envisions to achieve the following:

1. To build external training capacity at the public authority levels for supporting schools in implementing SWPBS tiers.
2. To build internal training capacity among school staff, and other professionals in SWPBS practices. To acquire a cadre of individuals, who are trained on behavioural and socio-emotional supports inside and outside of schools to provide on-going coaching assistance and progress monitoring for each SWPBS tier.
3. To develop quality resources for SWPBS. To design and develop a user-friendly e-learning environment, e-learning modules, and digital resources and OERs, which will be freely accessible to all interested parties to use and/or adapt in their practice.
4. To improve the overall quality of educational system in the participating countries. To create a cluster of schools in each country and across Europe that have established a common vision, language, and experience around positive inclusive school culture, use of evidence-based practices and school discipline prevention based on the three-tiered SWPBS prevention framework. We aim to engage more than 100 schools, 2000 teachers, 20,000 students, and 40,000 parents. Additionally, to promote legislative changes that emphasize the use of evidence-based practices to support student socio-emotional and behavioural needs through

a continuum of supports and use of positive-based instructional practices rather than reactive, punitive, and exclusionary ones.

5. To raise awareness of the tiered SWPBS logic by sharing project's ongoing progress implementation and results; thus, reaching out to national and European policy makers, education stakeholders, and public at large.

WP2: Designing and Refining School-Wide Positive Behaviour Supports (SWPBS) Tiered Framework

The objective of WP2 is to design a **culturally responsive SWPBS framework** in the Romanian context (as well as the level of the project consortium) following the needs assessment findings, as well as the scientific-based principles and core features of the three-tiered SWPBS problem-solving model, as documented in research literature. In this WP, the SWPBS framework is proposed to be designed, refined, and implemented by public authorities and partners. Hence, the objectives of this WP are:

- Build national SWPBS training capacity for SWPBS tiered implementation
- Develop and refine training materials for SWPBS Tiers 1, 2 and 3
- Develop and refine coaching and professional development training materials.

D2.5 Coaching and professional development manual

This manual is intended for: (a) trainers, coaches, facilitators to support coaching activities related to SWPBS at the school and national level. (b) Coordinators and administrators to provide an overview of the content and process of SWPBS coaching to others.

The manual is organized around the eight SWPBS elements and the role of coaches in the implementation in participating schools. The manual roadmap includes: SPWBS framework theoretical and applied background, overview of coaching in SWPBS, theoretical background of SWPBS for coaches, effective coaching skills, coaching meetings, classroom-based coaching, and non-classroom-based coaching

The ADDIR model

ADDIR (or ADDIE) model has been used for many years as a framework in designing and developing educational and training programmes. ADDIR stands for Analyse, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate. This five-step approach has a circular interactive progression and has been deemed as useful to effectively develop the Coaching and Professional Development Training Manual.

➢ **Analysis**: Comprehensive analysis of the training manual goals and objectives, considering the contextual needs and differences, the audience characteristics, real problems and situational issues, target groups' expectations and preferences.

➢ **Design**: The phase where learning objectives are set, the content is determined, activities are mapped, assessment method is chosen, and final product is visualized.

➢ **Develop**: The development of the manual draft according to the design following iteration method i.e., continuous rounds of feedback.

- ➤ **Implement**: Apply the material in practice considering target groups' reactions, delivery methods, preparation of coaches, achievement of primary objectives.
- ➤ **Revise/Evaluation:** Collection of feedback, evaluation of learning objectives and adjustments / amendments of parts incorporated in the revised versions of the manuals.

Methodology

Focus group with SPWBS external coaches

To draw this report, the Romanian partners collected data from two main sources. First, they led a focus group with 4 local coaches that have contributed to the implementation of the project in Romania (school inspector, school counsellors and psychologists). The overall aim of this focus group was to help partners improve the Coaching and Professional Development Manual (D2.3) and to understand in detail the country-specific adaptations made during the implementation of the SWPBS framework.

The focus group took place online on June 30, 2022 (16.00-17.00). The invitation to participate was addressed to 4 local external coaches who have contributed to the implementation of the SWPBS project in Romania (school counsellors, coaches) and who are very much aware of the project characteristics and aims. The 4 coaches were informed about the purpose of the meeting and received the questions from the form, as well as the manual (D2.3). The coaches offered both their oral and written consent to participate and were informed about their ethical considerations and rights.

The discussion was guided by following questions:

1. Best Practices / Successes

a. What worked well during the implementation of the project with the schools you worked with?

b. What good practices could you recommend to other coaches?

2. Challenges

a. What challenges did you face during the implementation of the project with the schools you worked with?

b. How did you address them?

3. Contextual and country-specific adaptations

a. Which of the challenges / solutions are not explicitly addressed in manual D2.3?

b. What other issues / problems are related to the specific contextual needs and should be covered by the D2.3 manual?

4. Coach support

a. What additional support do you think coaches need, beyond the D2.3 manual?

Questionnaire to teachers / school leaders

As part of the qualitative data from the questionnaire, Romanian partners disseminated a short questionnaire and collected answers from 21 local teachers/school leaders. The main aim of this

questionnaire was to help improve the Coaching and Professional Development Manual (D2.3) based on schools' considerations and recommendations on the implementation of the SWPBS framework in Romania taking into consideration the local context.

In total, **four closed and one open question** provided this information, as shown below:

1. Please note at least 2 things that worked well during the project implementation in your school.

2. Please note at least 2 challenges that you faced during the project development and implementation (excluding COVID-19).

3. What benefits has the implementation of the SWPBS system brought to your school?

4. What suggestions do you have for improving the implementation of the SWPBS system?

5. Other comments:

Results

Focus group with SPWBS external coaches

The answers of the external coaches were collected and analysed to identify the most important topics identified. The answers were analysed and organised within the initial four pillars of questions that the focus group was originally structured around. Overall, the most important answers the participants provided were categorized in the following four pillars.

Regarding the above, it was observed that teachers did not always follow common definitions for inappropriate minor and major behaviours in schools, but individually perceived definitions. This was an important reason why neither direct nor indirect coping strategies in the face of inappropriate behaviour were usually adopted as they should be. Regarding the encouragement of the desired behaviour, it was observed that rewards were not always accompanied by "specific positive feedback" or "behaviour-specific praise", which refers to the verbal statements of teachers given to praise a student's behaviour.

1. Best Practices / Successes

a. What worked well during the implementation of the project with the schools you worked with?

Of the eight main themes (elements) within SPWBS worked well in Romania, as stated by the coaches, starting with the first steps of the SWPBS framework, the development of a common vision and philosophy for discipline was positively accepted by schools. Also, the creation of a school matrix based on the selected values was also among the activities that teachers established directly in their contexts, which illustrates the importance of establishing a common operational and conceptual context both inside and outside school, as well as among educators, parents, and the community. Then, the reward system was considered one of the favourite parts for both children and teachers. The rewards system worked very well (both for individual rewards and for team rewards). Teachers urged to promote and strengthen positive behaviour in school, and students were delighted to be part of the new processes and reward system. Based on the comments, the students enjoyed recognition as well as the rewards that followed.

There were also stages related to the project implementation procedure which received considerable resistance in terms of their execution. For example, recording inappropriate student

behaviour for both minor and major incidents was considered a challenge by most schools. It is estimated that this was due to the substantial lack of processes for tracking and collecting such behaviours, as well as the subsequent use of this procedure. Therefore, decision-making by teachers was not always based on objective data analysis. Coaches also noted a general lack of the scientific field in schools, believing that teachers should also act as researchers who always strive to find solutions to improve their practices and school. In this regard, the mechanisms for data collection, analysis, and visualization of results in schools need to be improved. SWPBS emphasizes that one of the main principles is that decision-making is based on data that is collected and even concerns the school in which the implementation takes place. The involvement of support staff and families in its approach and philosophy has often involved increased effort. This could serve as a barrier to systemic adoption and consistent implementation of school practices. Social skills training is useful and meaningful when it is transferable to other situations and contexts. In some cases, the teaching of social skills and routines was not done by all teachers in the school, or more actively involving support staff (for example, the person in charge of the canteen or cleaning). In conclusion, teachers tend to pay more attention to practices and activities that have a direct effect, rather than those processes that build a ground for long-term change.

b. What best practices could you recommend to other coaches?

➢ Coaches are advised to contact their schools from the beginning, if possible, and prepare the ground for implementation. In schools where there is a school leadership tea (for SWPBS), it is highly recommended to start preparatory activities before the beginning of the school year (for example, during the summer). In other cases, training may require an entire school year as a training period for teachers to engage in training, make educational materials, and arrange all documents before the start of the school year.

➢ Direct and frequent communication: coaches need to maintain close contact with schools and develop positive relationships with teachers. This will help them throughout the process, as trust, respect and good communication will be improved.

➢ SWPBS support provides opportunities to teach psychology: Teachers are not experts in applied psychology or human development (age psychology) and especially in the scientific context of the SWPBS approach. Therefore, coaches should take every opportunity to teach some basics during training and meetings. This will take place during conversations, reflections, and questions, so it will be accompanied by practical and real-life examples, rather than theoretical ones, as in conventional teaching.

2. Challenges

a. What challenges did you face during the implementation of the project with the schools you worked with?

b. How did you address them?

The coaches that took part in the focus group mentioned the situational challenges that arose based on the general or contextual circumstances at each school.

There were also systemic challenges related to the shortcomings of the Romanian education

system.

The most common situational challenge was the COVID-19 pandemic. In all schools' lockdowns were imposed for three consecutive months in the first year. Checking the results of the quantitative data analysis, the coaches mentioned that not only the lockdowns, but also the consequences (e.g., limited time for teaching, limited collaboration between students, disorientation towards the SPWBS project in school) had a big negative impact on SWPBS implementation.

Then, the reluctance of the teachers in implementing the new approach of certain elements of it, was also a considerable challenge for coaches, because they had to get over it and convince them.

3. Coach support

a. What additional support do you think coaches need, beyond the D2.3 manual?

The SWPBS approach offers the school a certain flexibility to establish its own vision, values, social skills, rewards, etc., depending on its profile, and a coach should be very aware of that, responsive, involved, and flexible, at the same time. Such adaptations could facilitate the integration of systems and practices according to the contextual needs of schools and their population. The coaches that participated in the focus group mentioned several steps that could be subject to further adjustments. For example, teaching social skills and routines should be age-appropriate, both in terms of what they are taught and how they are taught. Moreover, they insisted on the idea of cooperation between coaches to get the best results, as well as on the coach's continuous professional development to become more and more insightful into this field.

Questionnaire to teachers / school leaders

A questionnaire with five open-ended questions was administered to 21 local teachers/school principals who participated in the project. As described earlier, the short questionnaire consisted of five open-ended questions which were the following:

(1) **Please note at least 2 things that worked well during the project implementation in your school**
(2) **Please note at least 2 challenges that you faced during the project development and implementation (excluding COVID-19)**
(3) **What benefits has the implementation of the SWPBS system brought to your school?**
(4) **What suggestions would you suggest for improving the implementation of the SWPBS system?**
(5) **Other comments.**

The five questions that are included in the questionnaire focused on the participating teachers' experiences, the strengths of the intervention implementation, the challenges and what benefits they gained from the SWPBS approach. The teachers participating were encouraged to express their opinions honestly, based on their observation of the overall school climate, and to shares their thoughts during the meeting.

The answers the 21 participating teachers provided are grouped and presented below:

Please note at least 2 things that worked well during the project implementation in your school

Students' involvement, behaviour, and response

A positive change in the attitude of students, their socio-emotional development, and a better cooperation within the class

Students become more open and active to cooperate, dropout rate decrease. The students' relationship between them improved, they reacted well, learning to be positive and to work in a team.

Decreasing negative behaviours

Facilitating communication

Students acquired valuable social skills and behaviours during the implementation of the project.

Students' academic achievement has improved as they managed to work better

The inappropriate behaviours in my classroom have been reduced, students observe the rules and are more careful in class.

The reward system was quite appreciated by the students, who were glad to have an immediate recognition of their behaviour.

Routines helped students understand the overall idea of the project and collaborate

Better communication between the students.

Teachers' involvement, behaviour, and response

"The content of the SWPBS project was relevant to my work."

"I developed better relationships with my colleagues."

"I developed better relationships with my students".

"I feel more competent to deal with inappropriate behaviours". This is an interesting statement, and the same idea was present in more questionnaires.

"I was able to apply effectively the SWPBS framework and activities in my work"

"I changed some of my teaching practices, based on what I have learned from the SWPBS framework."

"As a result of my participation in the SWPBS project, I give more attention to the socio-emotional development of my students."

The creation of a school behaviour matrix and philosophy

Implementation of the rules and routines

Trainings & Materials produced

The assistance provided by the school coach for implementing the SWPBS framework and activities was helpful.

The material provided by the coach & research team was of high quality.

The material produced by our school was of high quality.

The trainings provided by the school coach helped me to better implement SWPBS in my classroom.

The activities proposed and performed were effective.

School climate

My school's climate has been improved.

Better communication

A stronger development of teamwork

The mission and vision of the school was useful

Please note at least 2 challenges that you faced during the project development and implementation (excluding COVID-19).

Using **positive** feedback and positive reinforcers on a continuous basis (quite commonly in the Romanian education setting, negative feedback is used. Teachers reported it was difficult at first to use positive feedback)

Time issues (the extra time allotted to the project activities)

Difficulties in implementing the reward system at first at school level – teachers were initially reluctant to use the same system of reward.

Parents showed some resistance to changing philosophy for discipline

The difficulty to cope with students with SEN

Difficulties in assessing some behaviours and identifying the appropriate preventive or intervention technique

Always searching for adequate rewards that could motivate students.

What benefits has the implementation of the SWPBS system brought to your school?

The implementation of SWPBS has focused teachers' attention on strengthening behavioural support, which has shifted from the individual educational responsibility of the teacher to that of the school community, targeting all students in the school for support and all staff for their guidance.

The mission and vision of the school were reviewed, following which a matrix of expectations was elaborated, from which a set of representative values for our school emerged. It aimed to ensure a positive social climate, by forming non-conflicting behaviours and developing skills that avoid discrimination.

Immediate project results on students' behaviours

Acquisition of solutions for behavioural children in the school where they teach

Improvement of school climate

Concrete examples of good practice.

Teachers' skills in managing problematic behaviours were other benefit identified through teachers' responses. They mentioned to be more able and prepared to manage difficult behaviours. Teachers now share a common policy for discipline within the school and bring together different ways of managing inappropriate behaviour.

Parent involvement

Involvement of support and non-didactic staff

A school where students are more responsible and where the rules of behaviour are well-known and respected by students

What suggestions do you have for improving the implementation of the SWPBS system?

Provision of more practical examples of how to manage inappropriate behaviours in classrooms.

As a recommendation, the program should be implemented from the preparatory class

Availability of all the materials and of other best practices online

Face-to-face training sessions (during the COVID-19 pandemic, they were organized online, and online communication is perhaps not as efficient as the face-to-face one).

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A provision on a stronger involvement of parents in the process of managing inappropriate behaviours to strengthen   school-family cooperation, which is a common issue nowadays. More stories, applications, and interactive ways for children to understand the consequences of their behaviour.
Other comments:
The quality of the project was very good. The implementation of the project was done according to the framework, the activities being received with great enthusiasm by the children.

Overall, the feedback retrieved from the teacher questionnaire was positive, they appreciated the implementation of the project, some feedback on the quality of the training delivered and the coach support was received, as well as some valuable recommendation to improve the training materials.

Data analysis

Good practices

Our findings report some positive aspects identified by teachers during the SWPBS project implementation. The recurrent area reported by teachers as a positive change was the attitude of students, their socio-emotional development, and a better cooperation within the class. Students become more open and active to cooperate, dropout rate decrease. The students' relationship between them improved, they reacted well, learning to be positive and to work in a team. Most teachers appreciated the change in attitudes of students, that become more aware of their emotions, more tolerable towards others. Secondly, the SWPBS framework was evaluated a well-structured approach by the teachers, which had an impact on decreasing negative behaviours, facilitating communication, changing the school climate. Teachers valued the training and continued support by their external coaches. They mentioned that their schools developed a resource point, with strategies, tools to manage behaviours. The coach support was also highly appreciated, as well as the financial support provided for schools.

Challenges

Some teachers reported that they did not notice any changes during SWPBS implementation. Some challenges expressed by them was the difficulty to cope with students with SEN, difficulties in assessing behaviours and identifying the appropriate preventive or intervention technique. Other aspects identified was the Shift to online education that disconnected the program implementation and brought the need to adjust the SWBS implementation. At first, some teachers were reluctant to SWPBS principles, based on reward system, engaging all staff in the SWPBS project implementation. Teachers added certain challenges in engaging people to the new approach and convincing about the long- term benefits. Specifically, new teachers at schools and parents showed some resistance to changing philosophy for discipline and adopting the new practices, related to the social acceptance of the approach.

Benefits to schools

During the implementation of the questionnaires, teachers reported immediate project results on students' behaviours, the acquisition of solutions for behavioural children in the school where they teach, improvement of school climate, concrete examples of good practice. Teachers' skills in managing problematic behaviours were another benefit identified through teachers' responses. They mentioned to be more able and prepared

to manage difficult behaviours. Teachers now share a common policy for discipline within the school and bring together different ways of managing inappropriate behaviour. A few teachers reported only minor benefits or no benefits at all.

Suggestions to improve the implementation

When it comes to suggestions and recommendation to improve SWPBS implementation, teachers shared some needs regarding the provision of practical examples of how to manage inappropriate behaviours in classrooms. The coach support and the financial resources was mentioned as necessary to a beneficial project implementation. Regarding the training and support, teachers mentioned the preference for face-to-face sessions, the involvement of parents in the process of managing inappropriate behaviours and strengthen school-family cooperation. Last, they added that the SWPBS framework is crucial to create a positive and inclusive school climate.

Conclusion

Summary results

The objective of "D2.5 Piloting reports for coaching and professional development training manual on SWPBS" was to collect coaches' and teachers' views on the overall implementation of the SWPBS framework in Romania and provide recommendations, especially focusing on the country specific adaptations, for the improvement of the Coaching and Professional Development Manual and other manuals. More specifically, our objectives were to:

- Build national SWPBS training capacity for SWPBS tiered implementation
- Develop and refine training materials for SWPBS Tiers 1, 2 and 3
- Develop and refine coaching and professional development training materials

This report follows the ADDIR procedure to pilot test coaching and professional development materials for Romania. Based on the ADDIR model steps (analysis, design, development, implementation, and refinement) we conducted a focus group with 3 external coaches in Romania and distributed a questionnaire to 96 primary teachers and school leaders who participated in the project. The data analysis revealed several strengths and suggestions to further improve the manuals and achieve the abovementioned objectives.

Focus group with SPWBS external coaches - summary

Of the eight main themes (elements) within SPWBS worked well in Romania, as stated by the coaches, starting with the first steps of the SWPBS framework, the development of a common vision and philosophy for discipline was positively accepted by schools. Also, the creation of a school matrix based on the selected values was also among the activities that teachers established directly in their contexts, which illustrates the importance of establishing a common operational and conceptual context both inside and outside school, as well as among educators, parents, and the community. Then, the reward system was considered one of the favourite parts for both children and teachers. The rewards system worked very well (both for individual rewards and for team rewards). Teachers urged to promote and strengthen positive behavior in school, and students were delighted to be part of the new processes and reward system. Based on the comments, the students enjoyed recognition as well as the rewards that followed.

There were also stages related to the project implementation procedure which received considerable

resistance in terms of their execution. For example, recording inappropriate student behavior for both minor and major incidents was considered a challenge by most schools. It is estimated that this was due to the substantial lack of processes for tracking and collecting such behaviours, as well as the subsequent use of this procedure. Therefore, decision-making by teachers was not always based on objective data analysis. Coaches also noted a general lack of the scientific field in schools, believing that teachers should also act as researchers who always strive to find solutions to improve their practices and school. In this regard, the mechanisms for data collection, analysis, and visualization of results in schools need to be improved. SWPBS emphasizes that one of the main principles is that decision-making is based on data that is collected and even concerns the school in which the implementation takes place.

Regarding the above, it was observed that teachers did not always follow common definitions for inappropriate minor and major behaviours in schools, but individually perceived definitions. This was an important reason why neither direct nor indirect coping strategies in the face of inappropriate behaviour were usually adopted as they should be. Regarding the encouragement of the desired behaviour, it was observed that rewards were not always accompanied by "specific positive feedback" or "behaviour-specific praise", which refers to the verbal statements of teachers given to praise a student's behaviour.

The involvement of support staff and families in its approach and philosophy has often involved increased effort. This could serve as a barrier to systemic adoption and consistent implementation of school practices. Social skills training is useful and meaningful when it is transferable to other situations and contexts. In some cases, the teaching of social skills and routines was not done by all teachers in the school, or more actively involving support staff (for example, the person in charge of the canteen or cleaning). In conclusion, teachers tend to pay more attention to practices and activities that have a direct effect, rather than those processes that build a ground for long-term change.

In point of challenges, the coaches that took part in the focus group mentioned the situational challenges that arose based on the general or contextual circumstances at each school. There were also systemic challenges related to the shortcomings of the Romanian education system. The most common situational challenge was the COVID-19 pandemic. In all schools' lockdowns were imposed for three consecutive months in the first year. Checking the results of the quantitative data analysis, the coaches mentioned that not only the lockdowns, but also the consequences (e.g., limited time for teaching, limited collaboration between students, disorientation towards the SPWBS project in school) had a big negative impact on SWPBS implementation. Then, the reluctance of the teachers in implementing the new approach of certain elements of it, was also a considerable challenge for coaches, because they had to get over it and convince them.

In point of coach support, the Focus group participants stated that the SWPBS approach offers the school a certain flexibility to establish its own vision, values, social skills, rewards, etc., depending on its profile, and a coach should be very aware of that, responsive, involved, and flexible, at the same time. Such adaptations could facilitate the integration of systems and practices according to the contextual needs of schools and their population. The coaches that participated in the focus group mentioned several steps that could be subject to further adjustments. For example, teaching social skills and routines should be age-appropriate, both in terms of what they are taught and how they are taught. Moreover, they insisted on the idea of cooperation between coaches to get the best results, as well as on the coach's continuous professional development to become more and more insightful into this field.

Questionnaire summary results

Positive aspects identified by teachers during the SWPBS project implementation. The recurrent area reported by teachers as a positive change was the attitude of students, their socio-emotional development, and a better cooperation within the class. Students become more open and active to cooperate, dropout rate decrease. The students' relationship between them improved, they reacted well, learning to be positive and to work in a team. Most teachers appreciated the change in attitudes of students, that become more aware of their emotions, more tolerable towards others. Secondly, the SWPBS framework was evaluated a well-structured approach by the teachers, which had an impact on decreasing negative behaviours, facilitating communication, changing the school climate. Teachers valued the training and continued support by their external coaches. They mentioned that their schools developed a resource point, with strategies, tools to manage behaviours. The coach support was also highly appreciated, as well as the financial support provided for schools.

Some teachers reported that they did not notice any changes during SWPBS implementation. Some challenges expressed by the, was the difficulty to cope with students with SEN, difficulties in assessing behaviours and identifying the appropriate preventive or intervention technique. Other aspects identified was the Shift to online education that disconnected the program implementation and brought the need to adjust the SWBS implementation. Some teachers were reluctant to SWPBS principles, based on reward system, engaging all staff in the SWPBS project implementation. Teachers added certain challenges in engaging people to the new approach and convincing about the long- term benefits. Specifically, new teachers at schools and parents showed some resistance to changing philosophy for discipline and adopting the new practices, related to the social acceptance of the approach.

During the implementation of the questionnaires, teachers reported immediate project results on students' behaviours, the acquisition of solutions for behavioural children in the school where they teach, improvement of school climate, concrete examples of good practice. Teachers' skills in managing problematic behaviours were other benefit identified through teachers' responses. They mentioned to be more able and prepared to manage difficult behaviours. Teachers now share a common policy for discipline within the school and bring together different ways of managing inappropriate behaviour. A few teachers reported only minor benefits or no benefits at all.

When it comes to suggestions and recommendation to improve SWPBS implementation, teachers shared some needs regarding the provision of practical examples of how to manage inappropriate behaviours in classrooms. The coach support and the financial resources was mentioned as necessary to a beneficial project implementation. Regarding the training and support, teachers mentioned the preference for face-to-face sessions, the involvement of parents in the process of managing inappropriate behaviours and strengthen school-family cooperation. Last, they added that the SWPBS framework is crucial to create a positive and inclusive school climate.

Contextual and country-specific adaptations

The implementation of the SWPBS programme has been a fruitful and very complex endeavour, with a great diversity of activities which makes it natural to have to adapt it to the specific needs of each country to get the best results. As commonly expected, the implementation of an intervention program in different educational systems from different countries usually requires some forms of cultural and contextual adaptations regarding its implementation. In the Romanian educational setting, some cultural adaptations were implemented, which are described in what follows.

Perhaps the strongest and the most significant adaptation that had to be done in the Romanian case, as well as at the level of the project consortium, was related to the outbreak of COVID-19 and its consequences at all levels of society, education included. Starting with March 2020, all schools closed in Romania and education was moved online, with no previous significant preparation for that. As a result, all the activities to be carried out in the SWPBS project were also moved online starting with the second term of the 2019-2020 school year. There was a similar lockdown happening in the first term of the 2020-2021 school year, which also finally led to performing project activities online. Despite this unfavourable situation, there was a constant contact and interaction between the coaches and the schools thanks to the help provided by the Arges School Inspectorate.

Another adaptation was to provide flexibility regarding the whole school staff training, and having them organized according to teachers' schedules, as mostly primary teachers work in the morning shift and secondary teachers in the afternoon shift. Coaches in Romania engaged with schools individually once a month for a meeting with each school for which he/she was directly responsible for. Note should be made that, as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 sanitary crisis and of several other external factors (among which we could mention the long distances between the schools, which made it rather hard for the coaches to reach every single school in due time; time interval l overlapping), in the first year of implementation the external coaches' support for the whole school staff training was not always provided physically, in person. There was, nonetheless, a constant cooperation and dialogue between the School Leadership Teams and the Romanian external coaches, thanks to which the staff trainings were conducted under best circumstances.

Coaches in Romania met at least once every month (online and face to face) to discuss all issues related to the implementation of the SWPBS project, the progress recorded by the schools involved and discuss everything with regards to implementation together. During the first year of implementation, the interventions were held face-to face till March 2019 when, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, in Romania schools were closed and remained this way until the end of the school year. During the second year of implementation, all meetings and trainings had to take place online instead of face-to-face due to safety measures imposed because of COVID-19. Although the context was quite challenging, all meetings and trainings were performed under best terms.

Moreover, several adaptations had to be done into the implementation design and delivery of the intervention to ensure an efficient project implementation as well. The organization of the Romanian educational system is different than that of Greece, Cyprus, and Finland. Primary school in Romania starts from grade 0 to the 4th grade, and for the implementation of this project students from the 3rd and 4th grade were selected to participate in the first year of the intervention. At the end of the 1st year of implementation, students from the 4th grade completed the primary school level and moved to secondary cycle. As a result, since starting from the secondary cycle, students were to move to different classes, and their teachers were to change, in order to keep track of the project sample and for the purposes of project implementation continuity, in the second year, the students from the 4th grade were withdrawn from the project sample, and the project intervention continued with the 3rd grade students (in the 1st year of the project implementation, and in 4th grade during the second year of the project intervention) and students from the 3rd grade entered in the second year of the project implementation.

At the same time, a very important aspect for the school intervention was the availability and the engagement of the principal and management board in the project implementation. The selection of schools

in the sample group was based on the availability and willingness of principals and teachers to commit to the project activities. One difficulty encountered was the appointment of new school principals during the school year, as Romanian educational system imposes high staff turnover rates each year. Therefore, another essential aspect is to have the support of County School Inspectorate to ensure continuity, motivation, and empowerment for the project sustainability. Then, in general terms, trainings and coach support should be delivered at the beginning of the school year and when is required due to the teachers' flow during the academic year.

Annexes

Annex 1: Consent forms

All consent forms are signed from the participants and are available at the D2.5 folder in the Dropbox folder of the SWPBS.

Annex 2: Attendance list

Name	Email	Role	Affiliated organization
External coaches			
Cristina Dumitru	cristina.dumitru@upit.ro	External coach	University of Pitesti
Florina Biculescu	florina_biculescu@yahoo.com	School Inspector	Arges School Inspectorate
Andreea Lupu	deeea_mihaela@yahoo.com	School Counsellor	George Marinescu Middle School, Draganu, Arges
Ancuta Ciurumel Vasilcioiu	vasilcioiu.georgiana@yahoo.com	School Counsellor	Cotmeana Middle School, Arges
Researchers			
Valentina Stinga, University of Pitesti			