



Needs-assessment and action-planning report

Romania

Project Title: SWPBS

Project Number: 606687-EPP-2018-CY-EPPKA3-PI-POLICY

Programme: Erasmus+

Activity Code:	D1.3
Title:	Needs-assessment and action-planning report per partner country
Estimated Start Date:	01/06/2019
Draft due to WP leader on:	30/06/2019
Estimated End Date of WP1:	31/07/2019
Activity Leading Organisation:	CARDET

Task Description

This task is a follow-up activity to the literature review (see D1.3) and its focus is to prepare a research report per country that

1. Identifies the current local needs on schoolwide discipline prevention and student socio-emotional supports based on survey and focus group interview data
2. Develops an action plan around schoolwide discipline prevention and student socio-emotional supports

Below, you will find a structure and template with guidelines for report development. As soon as you compile the research report, please email it to us.

Thank you!

Report Structure

Needs-Assessment Analysis and Action Planning

PART A: Needs-Assessment Analysis (questionnaires and focus group interview)

1. Need-Assessment Methodology

Describe in one paragraph (8-10 lines) the steps you took to conduct a needs assessment in your local context. Refer to the scope and administration process based on the two tools (interview, questionnaire) as well as the recruitment efforts with your participants in each case.

2. Needs-Assessment Results

2.1 Survey Results (Report main survey results using the parameters below. For the last open-ended question, you may report it under each of the following sub-headings including some participants' quotes.)

- 2.1.1. Short description of response rate and sample demographics (include Table 1)
- 2.1.2. Current views on schoolwide discipline prevention
 - 2.1.2.1. Behavioral incidences (include Table 2)
 - 2.1.2.2. Written school discipline (include Table 3)
 - 2.1.2.3. Effectiveness of existing discipline practices and policies (include Table 4)
 - 2.1.2.4. Professional development training (include Table 5)
- 2.1.3. Current limitations on promoting positive learning environments (include Table 6)

2.2 Focus Group Interview Results (Report 2-3 thematic categories identified in the focus group interview based on these parameters (refer the reader to D1.2b for a more detailed description)

- 2.2.1. Main priority school needs for promoting positive and preventative learning environments
- 2.2.2. Existing practices for supporting schoolwide discipline prevention and positive learning environments
- 2.2.3. Important teacher training topics for promoting schoolwide prevention and stronger socio-emotional supports

3. Main Conclusions

Describe main conclusions on the existing needs of your context based on the above findings as well as the literature review conducted in D1.1 (see last question) (1 page)

PART B: Action Reporting

1. Complete the table to document your next action steps in the project for promoting positive learning environments

Needs-Assessment Analysis and Action Planning for ROMANIA

PART A: Needs-Assessment Analysis (questionnaires and focus group interview)

1. Need-Assessment Methodology

Describe in one paragraph (8-10 lines) the steps you took to conduct a needs assessment in your local context. Refer to the scope and administration process based on the two tools (interview, questionnaire) as well as the recruitment efforts with your participants in each case.

The assessment exercise was jointly prepared and organized by UPIT and ISJ Argeş. While the assessment tools (questionnaire and interview guide) were translated and multiplied, we elaborated a first draft of the participants lists (one for participants in the questionnaire administration and the other for the Focus Group participants). We refined the lists in order to fit better the assessment features & needs and to increase our chances to (i) obtain relevant answers/contributions and (ii) collect back questionnaires as complete as possible. ISJ Argeş organized several meetings with potential respondents (due to the large number of questionnaires that we intended to apply – over 100, it was not possible to inform/discuss with all potential respondents at once). After finishing this stage in which potential respondents have been contacted (153 in total), ISJ administrated the questionnaire and collected 114 filled in pieces. For the Focus Group, from an initial list of 10 potential stakeholders, we narrowed it to 5 who in the end effectively took part in discussions and debates. The Focus Group was organized by ISJ at its premises.

2. Needs-Assessment Results

2.1 Survey Results

2.1.1 Short description of response rate and sample demographics

In total, 114 questionnaires were sent to key stakeholders to invite them to take part in the study. We received 114 responses, which gave us a response rate of 100%. Further details of the demographic characteristics can be found in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic characteristics for key stakeholders (N= 114)

Variable	n (%)
<i>Gender</i>	
Female	75 (65.79)
Male	39 (34.21)
<i>Age (years)</i>	
Median	46.42 (range 29-71)
<i>Professional background</i>	
School principal of primary school	24 (21.05)
Inspector of primary school	10 (8.77)
Other	80 (70.17)
<i>Years of experience in this current job</i>	
<1 Year	1 (0.98)
1-2 Years	5 (49.01)
2-5 Years	25 (24.50)
5-10 Years	20 (19.60)

>10 Years

51 (50)

Work experience in Education

Median

5 (range X-X)

Level of formal education

Bachelor degree

44 (39.63)

Master's degree

65 (58.55)

Doctoral degree

1 (0.90)

Other

1 (0.90)

School community

Village, or rural area (fewer than 3 000 people)

64 (56.14)

Small town (3 000 to about 15 000 people)

7 (61.40)

Town (15 000 to about 100 000 people)

9 (7.89)

City (100 000 to about 1 000 000 people)

34 (29.82)

Large city with over 1 000 000 people

0 (0)

Missing values: Years of experience in this current job, n = 12; Level of formal education, n = 3

2.1.1 Current views on schoolwide discipline prevention

2.1.1.1 Behavioral incidences

An overall mean score for the sample was calculated for each item. Further details of the scores can be found in Table 2. Overall, the trend in scores demonstrated that the subscale items with the lowest scores were “Student substance use” and “Physical abuse of teachers”. Items with the highest scores were “Verbal

conflicts between students (e.g., swearing, calling names, comments related to racism/sexual orientation)” and “Physical conflicts between students (e.g., hitting, pushing, fights)”. However, one may notice that the scores per items were all smaller than 3, which proves a relatively safe/clean school environment.

Finally, a total behavioral Incidents score (severity of behavioral incidents) for each respondent was obtained by summing the scores of individual items. Out of a possible score of 5, indicating a higher perceived level of behavioral incidents frequency, the mean \pm SD score was 3.6 ± 0.8 .

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics on Behavioral Incidents

Subscales	N	Mean (SD)
<i>Physical conflicts between students (e.g., hitting, pushing, fights)</i>	104	2.22 (0.93)
<i>Verbal conflicts between students (e.g., swearing, calling names, comments related to racism/sexual orientation)</i>	104	2.75 (0.98)
<i>Psychological conflicts between children (e.g., exclusion of a student from the team, spreading negative rumors)</i>	104	1.89 (0.95)
<i>Cyber bullying by using technological means (e.g., mobile phones, computers, social media, etc.)</i>	104	1.67 (0.82)
<i>Student tardiness (arriving late in school, coming late from break)</i>	104	1.97 (0.98)
<i>Student absenteeism (being absent from school)</i>	103	2.01 (0.88)
<i>Student substance use</i>	103	1.08 (0.3)
<i>Showing disrespect to teachers and peers (e.g., talking back, refusing to work, making negative comments)</i>	104	2.01 (1.04)
<i>Physical abuse of teachers</i>	102	1.09 (0.35)
<i>Disruption during instruction (playing with objects, talking with others, not waiting his turn)</i>	104	2.14 (1.1)
<i>Severity of Behavioral Incidents</i>	104	3.6 (0.8)

Response range 1–5.

2.1.1.2 Written school discipline

The frequency of having a written school discipline was initially assessed. For the cases who reported to have a written school discipline, an overall mean score was calculated for each of the additional items. Further details of the scores can be found in Table 3. Overall, the trend in scores demonstrated that the subscale item with the lowest scores was the one regarding the comprehensive of the school discipline policy. Item with the highest scores was the one asking if this school discipline policy is consistently applied. As shown in Table 3, one may notice that all items got scores above 4, which may be interpreted as an indicator of the fact that school discipline policy is quite good (good quality and usability).

Finally, a total quality of written school discipline policy score for each respondent was obtained by summing the scores of individual items. Out of a possible score of 5, indicating a higher perceived level of school discipline policy's quality and usability, the mean \pm SD score was 4.2 ± 1.38 .

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics on Written school discipline

	Yes N (%)	No N (%)
<i>Having a written school discipline policy</i>	98 (96.1)	4 (0.98)
Subscales	N	Mean (SD)
<i>Is it comprehensive?</i>	102	1.04 (0.2)
<i>Is it clear?</i>	96	4.03 (0.99)
<i>Is it consistently applied?</i>	95	4.29 (0.92)
<i>Is it widely publicized among administration team, staff and families?</i>	96	4.09 (0.9)

School discipline policy's quality and usability 102 4.2 (1.38)

Response range for subscales 1–5.

2.1.1.3 Effectiveness of existing discipline practices and policies

An overall mean score was calculated for each of the items. Further details of the scores can be found in Table 4. Overall, the trend in scores demonstrated that the subscale item with the lowest score was “School discipline programs have been in reducing problem behaviors in your school?”. Item with the highest score was “School practices have been in supporting students with socio-emotional and behavioral needs?”

Finally, a total Effectiveness of existing school discipline practices score (items 1, 3, 4) and school discipline policies (item 2) score for each respondent was obtained by averaging each participants’ responses.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics on the Effectiveness of existing school discipline practices and policies

Subscales	N	Mean (SD)
<i>School discipline programs have been in reducing problem behaviors in your school?</i>	101	3.61 (0.92)
<i>Policy discipline guidelines have been in guiding schools to reduce problem behaviors in schools?</i>	101	3.56 (0.92)
<i>School practices have been in reducing problem behaviors in your school?</i>	103	3.81 (0.97)
<i>School practices have been in supporting students with socio-emotional and behavioral needs?</i>	103	3.86 (0.95)

Effectiveness of existing school discipline practices	103	10.13 (X)
Effectiveness of existing school discipline policies	101	3.16 (X)

Response range for subscales 1–5.

2.1.1.4 Professional development training

The frequency of receiving training on school discipline programs was initially assessed. For the cases who reported to receive training on school discipline programs, an estimate the number of in-service training hours was assessed. Further details of the scores can be found in Table 5.

Table 5

Descriptive statistics on professional development training

	Yes N (%)	No N (%)
Receiving training on school discipline programs	37 (38.5)	59 (61.46)
	N	Mean (SD)
Estimated number of hours	30	50 (40.48)

2.1.2 Current limitations on promoting positive learning environments (include Table 6)

An overall mean score was calculated for each of the items. Further details of the scores can be found in Table 6. Overall, the trend in scores demonstrated that the subscale items with the lowest scores were [give examples of items]. Items with the highest scores were [give examples of items].

Finally, a total limitations on promoting positive learning environments score for each respondent was obtained by averaging each participants' 5 responses.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics on Current limitations on promoting positive learning environments

Subscales	N	Mean (SD)
<i>Lack of or inadequate number of personnel with expertise in schoolwide prevention (e.g., school counselors, school psychologists)</i>	104	3.08 (0.81)
<i>Lack of or inadequate teacher training in preventative positive-based classroom practices</i>	104	2.39 (1)
<i>Lack of or inadequate supports within the school to help specific students with socio-emotional and behavioral needs?</i>	104	2.56 (1.02)
<i>Likelihood of complaints from families</i>	103	2.3 (0.94)
<i>Lack of or inadequate time for collaboration among staff</i>	104	2.34 (0.87)
<i>Limitations total score</i>	104	11.54 (X)
Response range for subscales 1–4.		2.31

We got many additional comments from our respondents to the questionnaire, considered important by them for creating positive learning environments with emphasis on schoolwide discipline prevention and student socio-emotional supports. Few of these comments, representing potential measures and actions to address schoolwide prevention, are rendered below:

- *“Encouraging parents to work in partnership with teachers, strengthening positive attitudes towards school and work”.*
- *“Developing partnerships with local institutions - police, gendarmerie and NGOs in order to create safe environments, without danger to the physical and psychological integrity of students”.*
- *“Conducting diverse activities adapted to the school environment, specific to the frequency of events / forms of violent manifestation with direct involvement of pupils, parents, school counsellor in cooperation with NGOs, public institutions.”*
- *“Students to propose measures to be taken when indiscipline acts take place”.*
- *“Extra-curricular activities to raise interest and help them socialize and collaborate. Role games.”*

- *“The disciplinary methods available to teachers are extremely low and conditional on pupils' status. Students have many rights and few duties. The only method of sanctioning is to reduce the note to wearing.”*
- *“Families of more involved students and a constant connection with school.”*
- *“Monitoring student activity, facilitating communication, meetings with representatives of the justice system, and setting up a school intervention group.”*

2.2 Focus Group Interview Results

With a view to identify the current school needs concerning the efforts to prevent school indiscipline and to create a positive school environment, meant to facilitate learning, the interview was attended by 5 people from different backgrounds, respectively 3 school inspectors, who monitor school discipline in various schools, 1 director of a secondary school with students aged between 3-15 years old and a school psychologist.

The people who attended the work group interview are aged between 42 and 55 years old, 4 of them are women and one is a man, they are people with a rich didactic experience who have held throughout their didactic career various roles (director, teacher, head teacher).

The participants have been holding their current position for the following periods:

- Between 2 – 5 years - 2 people;
- between 5 – 10 years - 2 people;
- >10 years – 1 person.

The professional experience in the educational field of the people interviewed is the following:

- Between 5 – 10 years – 1 person
- >10 years – 4 people.

The highest level of formal education the interviewees have attended is:

- 3 people have a Master's degree;
- 2 people have a PhD.

All the participants have their job in a municipality (100 000 at 1 000 000 people), respectively in Pitești city, Romania.

2.2.1 Main priority school needs for promoting positive and preventative learning environments

The main needs that have been emphasized by the participants during the Focus Group are:

- increase the number of school psychologists; a school psychologist takes care of a number of 800 children. The big number of students is the reason for which not all children who have certain issues get to talk with the school psychologist when the situation requires it;
- increase the number of hours regarding school counselling and orientation, increase the number of classes for career orientation;
- organise teacher trainings on topics related to school discipline;
- courses to train parents, a sort of 'Parents school' which involves the collaboration between parents and school, with the active participation of parents in school activities, to help them manage certain situations of indiscipline of their own children;
- involve students in extracurricular activities in the sports field or scientific field in which the students are valued, they learn what tolerance is, what competition is;
- Organise common activities between students – parents – teachers – school psychologist;
- organise educational projects of partnership attended by students together with the local community: school – church – police, etc.;
- at the beginning of the school year or semester there should be a meeting between the head teacher – parents –students in order to choose the topics for the homeroom classes by mutual agreement;
- allow moments of relaxation during classes, especially for young learners.

2.2.2 Existing practices for supporting schoolwide discipline prevention and positive learning environments

Practices that the participants in the Focus Group declared that already exist in their schools in order to prevent school indiscipline and to support positive learning environments are:

- sanctions foreseen as a consequence of indiscipline; such a sanction is to lower the conduct grade at the end of the school year. However, the measure of lowering the conduct grade is not always efficient and it does not lead to the improvement of the inappropriate behaviour of an undisciplined student;
- the actors involved in education should actively assume their roles, internalise such roles;
- the necessity that various educational factors collaborate in order to prevent inappropriate, undisciplined behaviour of students;
- establish some common values of school, which lead to the development of a positive behaviour;
- assertive communication within the classroom in order to know the students as well as possible and to understand what upsets them, which are their frustrations, the reasons which might lead to inappropriate manifestations from them;
- students are explained what they did wrong, what sanctions they risk when they don't comply with the rules and norms;

- students are treated correctly, without discrimination.

2.2.3 Important teacher training topics for promoting schoolwide prevention and stronger socio-emotional supports

During the Focus group discussions, the following topics and themes have been suggested as being necessary and useful:

- efficient didactic communication for teachers which involves modules on assertive communication, empathetic communication – indiscipline is born out of frustrations;
- the psychological-pedagogical training module in faculty is not enough for teachers. It is necessary that this psychological-pedagogical training module be reshaped, comprise a bigger number of hours and more practical applications in this respect for future teachers;
- train the head teachers so that the topics during homeroom classes comprise information from various subject matters of interest for students, adapted to their needs – Biology topics, school legislation, topics belonging to the new education, legal education, education for tolerance, education for and through values, esthetical education, education for democracy;
- exchange of good practices between teachers on topics concerning the prevention of school indiscipline;
- classes to assume the roles of each actor involved in education: student, teacher, head teacher, director, school psychologist;
- courses for teachers on stress management;
- courses for the development of life skills within students;
- courses on information management so that the teachers be updated with the ways to approach indiscipline situations that appear within the classroom and within the school, as organisation;
- a program to prevent school indiscipline, a program to promote a positive behaviour of students;
- prepare an educational portfolio for each student, meant to help the teacher know the student better;
- prepare a head teacher's agenda which contains relevant information about the student, about his/her family situation, about the social-emotional development of students.

3. Main Conclusions

[Describe main conclusions on the existing needs of your context based on the above findings as well as the literature review conducted in D1.1 (see last question) (1 page)]

The school environment in the assessed schools from the Argeş County, evaluated through the opinions and points of view expressed by teachers, school principals and school inspectors who participated in the survey and Focus Group is not severely affected by indiscipline or is not affected by extreme indiscipline. However, the indiscipline deeds exist, their number is high and school indiscipline is a real phenomenon that cannot be denied. Hence the preoccupations at a national level of teachers and school decision-makers to address it efficiently. Therefore, SWPBS is strongly needed and we hope it will support efficiently the involved schools to create a positive school environment and to promote schoolwide prevention and stronger socio-emotional supports.

The stakeholders participating in the Focus Group appreciated that the phenomenon is growing in all Romanian schools, not only in the ones from the Argeş County. Thus, the extension of the SWPBS nationwide (if possible) would be a real benefit for students, teaching staffs, school environment in general and the whole community.

The SWPBS idea and approach have been received extremely well in all schools of the Argeş County where we presented it.

They have provided us with valuable ideas and suggestions on what it should be done to address indiscipline in school and efficiently fight against it, but they have equally pointed out that the actions of the school and staffs are limited by the inflexibility of the curriculum. The most relevant ideas regarding actions and interventions that could improve the current situation (which were the most frequent ideas, as well) are rendered in the following lines:

- There is lack of sufficient funding for teaching materials and consumables for specific (extra) lessons with the envisaged topic (reducing indiscipline and promoting positive and supporting environment in school);
- There is need teachers to acquire specific skills to handle the phenomenon, they must be trained through specialized courses in order to reduce / stop bullying and indiscipline in school; topics of interest could be: family-school and child-school relationships; communication, mutual acceptance, learning tolerance attitudes, how to acquire social skills;
- There should be implemented violence prevention activities in the school environment in partnership with competent institutions, promotion of role models and examples of good practice as a leisure time alternative;
- There is also lack of clear and correct rules applied consistently;
- There should be assured a close/closer collaboration and bond between school with family and also greater responsibility for the family regarding its involvement and empowerment in children's development, in order to prevent indiscipline (creation of the so-called "School-Family Partnership").

- There is a need for students who are undisciplined or commit indiscipline acts/deeds to be counseled and receive emotional support;
- Non-didactic staff and parents should be trained on how to manage/deal with indiscipline cases;

PART B: Action Planning

Action goal (What?)	Action step (Describe the what)	By whom?	When?	Assessment Status: Yes (Y) No (N) In Progress (IP)
Create appropriate conditions to better manage the classes/school in school discipline	Reduce the number of students in class	Ministry of Education	N/A	N
	Hire school psychologist(s) / counsellor(s) (if they do not exist yet in school)	School	Next school year	N
	Reduce the number of pupils assigned to a school counsellor/psychologist (i.e. from 800 to 400 pupils!)	School	Next school year	N
	Involve psychologist/counsellor in preventing indiscipline activities	School	Next school year	N

<i>Develop a schoolwide approach to promote positive learning environments</i>	Involve parents in the counselling process	School	Next school year	N
	Apply a surveillance system (both during classes and breaks)	School	Next school year	N
	Introduce Monitoring Sheet	School	Next school year	N
	Revise the textbooks' content thus to make possible to implement anti-violence activities at class/school level	Ministry of Education	N/A	N
	Improve teacher education in inclusive education	School	Next semester	IP
	Train the teachers through specific courses on reducing problematic behaviours in school	School	Next school year	IP
	Create databases with students committing bullying, students that are part of vulnerable groups and students whose parents left to	School	Next school year	N

	work abroad, to be included in educational activities that would reduce their unwanted behaviors			
	Culturally adapt the tiered SWPBS framework in local context	School	Next semester	IP
	Collaborate with parents/family and build their accountability through clear and enforceable regulations	School	Permanent	Y
	Participate in specific actions alongside competent institutions (police, gendarmerie, NGOs)	School	Regularly	Y

