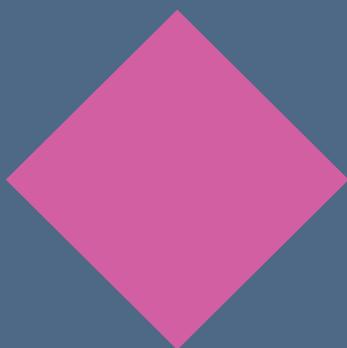




ECO-IN TRUST NETWORK: Memorandum of Understanding on School Inclusion



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The ECO-IN project

The Algorithm for New Ecological Approaches to Inclusion (ECO-IN) project¹ was launched in 2019, under the Erasmus + programme with the aim of developing new assessment system and training activities, able to generate inclusive schools starting from an “ecological” approach. In order to achieve this, the project consortium, comprising the [University of Perugia](#), [FORMA.Azione](#), the [Lithuanian Education Trade Union](#), [University of Urbino](#), [MIRADA LOCAL](#), the [School Inspectorate of Alba County \(Romania\)](#) and [SOLIDAR Foundation](#), ran in-depth research on school inclusion in primary and secondary education in Belgium, Italy, Lithuania, Romania and Spain.

Based on the needs identified across these EU member states, and following further research at the EU level, the project delivers an innovative and digitalized assessment protocol for assessing and monitoring successful inclusion practices, policy recommendations to boost inclusion, and training to prepare all education stakeholders (teachers, school heads, policymakers, educators, external experts, parents, families) to actively participate in the school system following an “ecological approach”.

¹ [ECO-IN project website](#)

Memorandum of Understanding

This MoU aims to identify and indicate, at the European level, values, principles but above all actions and work tools on which to build and consolidate over time participatory alliances between different stakeholders to promote school inclusion according to an “ecological” approach. Most European school systems develop forms of cooperation with local authorities, families, associations, groups of experts, etc., which can often have different expectations and demands. The school system is committed to being a point of connection, dialogue, encounter and synthesis for all these differences.

The school becomes, therefore, a **Center of Prosocial Trust** (EPTC, European Prosocial Trust Center). The EPTC brings together not only educational professionals, but also different actors and different points of view in with the aim of encountering one another and holding a dialogue in a welcoming and inclusive environment.

The following values are central to the EPTCs:

1. PROSOCIALITY: Prosociality includes all positive conducts towards other people, which, without producing material benefits (like money), generate reciprocity. Improving prosocial

actions in schools increase better interpersonal relationships avoiding conflicts and generating positive reciprocity. Moreover, the promotion of prosocial communications in schools leads to appreciation for diversity and empathy. Hence the positive results for the community in which the school operates.²

2. PARTICIPATION: understood as the meeting between diverse actors, their involvement in joint projects, as well as the dialogue between multiple institutional levels, professions, and approaches. Ultimately, the coming together of different perspectives priorities and needs, thus active collaboration to achieve common objectives. This happens in a horizontal way; all inputs from all participants are valued the same, there is no hierarchy. This is what makes participation in EPTC safe: people from different socio-economic backgrounds are not only “valued” but are given a space to be.

3. COMMITMENT/RESPONSIBILITY: understood as the value-driven use of one’s own strengths in carrying out an individual or collective task, minding their dissemination. Responsibility understood as the consistent behaviour that follows up on a commitment. It implies accepting the consequences of one’s choices to carry forward, disseminate and advocate for the value of diversity and inclusion in school and society.

4. QUALITY: The relationship between the quality of inclusion and the quality of the school. Such quality shouldn’t be affirmed through values only, but also measured and assessed.

5. TRUSTINESS (Trust and trustworthiness): The act of relying on someone/something (people or institutions/organisations) that generates feelings of security and allows someone to trust that they can act in our best interests; an unconditional belief as prerequisite for acting prosocially.

Considering that the schools that initiated the process of establishing a EPTC were:

- ◆ participating to ECO-IN transnational training aimed at acquiring knowledge and developing competences on prosociality and the ecological model of inclusion;
- ◆ promoting and participating to ECO-IN local and national training aimed at sharing the ecological model of inclusion to start practicing prosociality and increasing trustiness among the different stakeholder involved;
- ◆ promoting and organizing meetings with local education stakeholders, including policy makers, CSOs, parents in view of the establishment of school as EPTC together with ECO-IN partners

Hereby schools and ECO-IN project partners will

- ◆ work on further engaging their local and national policymakers in relation to the fostering of Inclusive Education.
- ◆ work on spreading the concept of ecological inclusion to those realities that are still struggling to achieve inclusion.
- ◆ support schools to initiate similar processes of establishing EPTC.
- ◆ plan regular meetings among the members of the EPTC network at the transnational level.

The following organisations have initiated and carried out the ECO-IN project, including a set of policy documents. They are the first signatories of this document and they invite all interested stakeholders in inclusive education policies to join this commitment to further promote the evidence-based policy recommendations and tools stemming from the project. If you wish your organisation to join this effort and for any further information, please contact SOLIDAR Foundation.



FORMA.Azione .it



² See e.g. the following definition of prosocial behavior: those behaviors that, without expecting any extrinsic or material rewards, favor other persons or groups according to their criteria or in accordance to objectively positive social goals, increasing the probability of generating a good-quality and joint positive reciprocity in the interpersonal or social relationship, safeguarding identity, creativity and autonomous initiative of the individuals or groups involved. Roche, R. (1995). "Psicología y educación para la prosocialidad". Barcelona: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (1th ed., 3th – 2001), p.16.