

2024

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Integrating Theoretical and Practical Perspectives**  
Promoting educational innovation through combining theoretical insights with real-world applications enhances educational policies and elevates the quality of initial teacher training programmes.
- Co-Created Practices for Balanced Power Dynamics**  
Embracing co-created practices fosters equitable power dynamics among young people, educators, policymakers, and academia.
- Empowering Young People in Educational Development**  
Recognising young people as proactive agents in research and educational design is essential for addressing ELET.



## POLICY BRIEF

# PROMOTING SOCIAL INCLUSION: PROMISING EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES FROM COSI.ed

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This policy brief seeks to upscale successful practices and European common values, by outlining a set of promising practices, based on those implemented by the partners countries, to foster social innovation, inclusion, and equality within educational institutions across Europe. Anchored in three key political and pedagogical dimensions – **co-creation, indirect approach, and equality literacy framework** – COSI.ed project builds pathways to address ELET among partner countries: Denmark, Norway, Poland, Portugal, and Spain.

## WHAT'S AT STAKE?

The project COSI.ed aimed to upscale successful practices from the MaCE - Marginalisation and Co-created Education project implemented in 2017 in response to youth unemployment rates in the EU and ELET. The COSI.ed model is based on the idea that practitioners and young people co-create knowledge as part of a community of practice. The model integrates three dimensions: **Co-creation, Indirect Approach (IA), Equality Literacy (EQL)**. These dimensions establish a communication platform between educational stakeholders and youth, by effectively identifying and addressing vulnerabilities. The COSI.ed project was implemented, between 2020-2024, in different institutions, including preparatory basic education and training institutions in Denmark, vocational upper secondary schools in Norway, public primary schools in Poland, second chance schools in Portugal, and non-governmental organisations in Spain.

## PROMISING PRACTICES AND INSIGHTS

**Co-designed Training sessions** and staff continuous professional development (CPD) by teachers, educators, and university researchers, enhances engagement and more meaningful education. This collaborative approach builds strong connections, fostering mutual learning among all participants. Through this process, experts gain insights into real-world challenges and practical solutions, while local practitioners develop a deeper awareness of their own teaching practices.



Image 1 – Training Session in Denmark.



Image 2 – Assembly in E2OM, Portugal.

### Co-created diary

In Poland, practitioners and young people collaborated on a co-created diary to document individual goals, strategies, and progress over the academic year through personalised meetings. This collaborative effort fosters a balanced approach to managing expectations and aligning educational perspectives and goals.



Image 3 – Co-created diary in Poland.

### Collaborative Competence Groups (CCG)

These groups are comprised by young people, political advisors, researchers, and stakeholders, advise project development, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and alignment between academia, practice, policy and community. They play a crucial role in improving projects by developing tools, discussing findings, and making policy recommendations at the local and regional level.

Besides contributing to the reflective development of the project and its instruments, CCGs support and promote intergenerational and interprofessional communication and dialogue, and the practice of reflecting about the practice.

### Co-participated Assemblies

In Portugal, the second chance school (E2OM) holds monthly assemblies organised by one teacher and two students, open to all practitioners and young people. These assemblies aim to democratically discuss school issues and provide feedback on ongoing work, allowing every member of the educational community to express their opinion. Activities are proposed and decided upon collaboratively by young people and practitioners, determining which activities will be carried out and how.

## Informal and personal conversations

Encouraging informal conversations in schools promotes open dialogue and active listening between practitioners and young people, fostering mutual trust and understanding. These interactions offer personalised support, allowing educators to closely follow young people's pathways and establish balanced relationships. They are powerful moments in establishing a balanced relationship.



Image 5 – Personal conversations, in Denmark.



Image 4 – Informal conversations during workshop together with county policymakers in Norway.



Image 6 – Collage exercises in Denmark.

## Photovoice and Collage exercises

These activities encourage individuals to express themselves using visual media, fostering deeper understanding and empathy through shared stories and captured moments. In Norway, practitioners used photovoice, while in Denmark, collage exercises were employed. Both tools, along with the indirect approach, provided valuable insights into young people's lives and experiences, facilitating innovative teaching in daily practice.

## Indirect Interviews

Conducting indirect interviews with young people, aims to highlight the pupils' own stories to better personalise their education and/or professional plans. In Denmark, FGU used three possible pathways to guide the conversation with pupils based on them sharing their stories. These conversations are informal and indirect yet help guide the young person towards a personalised plan. For this purpose, the teacher/counsellor can make use of the model's instructions which are based on three possible pathways for the conversation

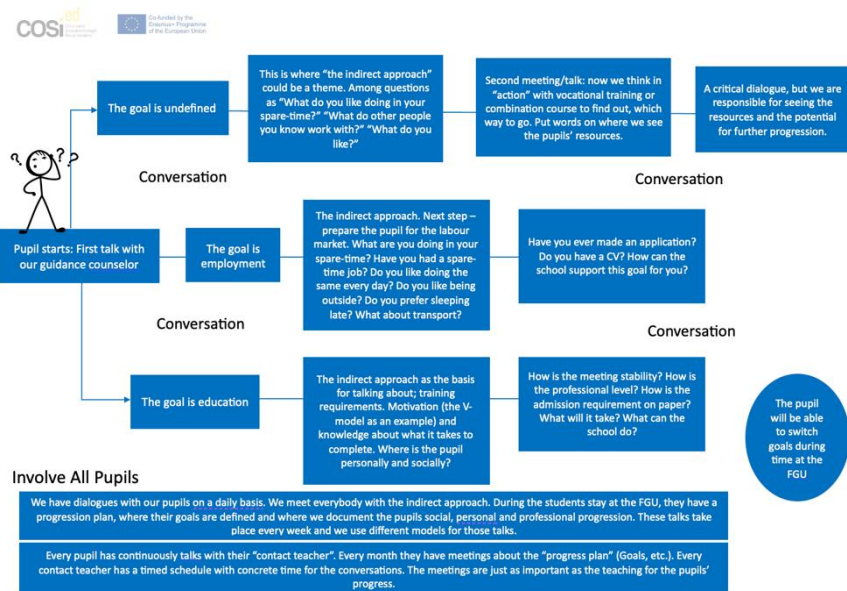


Image 7 – Indirect approach model in Denmark.

## Drawing exercises

Drawing exercises is a dynamic tool to support young people in articulating their life narratives, encompassing their educational trajectories, through visual representations depicting various phases, individuals, circumstances, and obstacles they have encountered. This provides young people with a means to introspect on the influence of past experiences on their present circumstances and academic performance, understanding the context they are in.

In turn, for practitioners, this practice brings invaluable insights and a deeper understanding of young people's lives and challenges, fostering empathy and prompting critical reflection on the suitability of current educational practices for the diverse needs of young people.

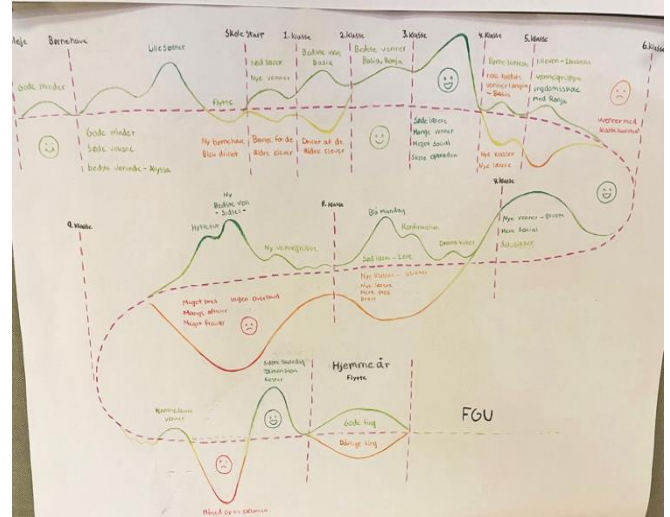


Image 8 – Example of drawing exercise in Denmark.



Image 9 – “Burn of Judas” by young people of E2OM, in Portugal.

## “Burn of Judas”

A promising practice involves reconsidering the transferability of educational practices across contexts, drawing from young people's experiences and traditions. In Portugal, E2OM repurposed a traditional Easter celebration called "Burn of Judas," where young people share and symbolically release their fears, challenges, and negative experiences by creating and burning a puppet. This transformed the tradition into a reflective and meaningful exercise.

<sup>1</sup>“Burn of Judas” is a catholic and orthodox tradition, where a puppet, representing Judas, the traitor, is burned as a symbol of society's evil. In the case of E2OM, this tradition is adapted to provide a moment of reflection for young people, during which they burn a “Judas”, representing their fears, insecurities, issues, and tragic experiences.

## Sikkhona card method

It is a method to facilitate the learning process by improving interpersonal communication and the establishment of relational bonds. This was implemented in Spain, Palma de Mallorca, where practitioners implement it with immigrant young people. Through images and direct/indirect questions, young people felt free to express their feelings and talk about their experiences. This practice allows young people to feel more comfortable and less awkward in sharing their stories, because they are in a trustworthy environment; and allows practitioners to improve their pedagogical practice by implementing new methods.



Image 10 – Sikkhona card method in Spain, Palma de Mallorca.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Practices based on Co-Creation

What is recommended?

#### Establish Bottom-Up Partnerships

Foster partnerships between schools and external institutions, such as universities, in a bottom-up approach. Use existing resources to identify common objectives and collaborate on educational initiatives, mainly in the co-design and implementation of training processes.

#### Engage Families and External Actors

Extend the practice of co-creation beyond the classroom by involving young people's families and other relevant stakeholders outside of the school environment.

#### Foster Positive Relationships

Facilitate the development of positive relationships among young people through engaging group activities, collaborative projects, and shared leisure pursuits. Strengthening interpersonal connections enhances the co-creation process and promotes a supportive learning environment.

### Practices based on Indirect Approach

What is recommended?

#### Improve the access to educational toolkits

Empower and support school practitioners in their daily interactions with young people.

#### Create safe school environments

Encourage natural and informal conversations by employing the indirect approach.

#### Revise teacher training

Strengthen practitioners' skills, both in initial and ongoing teacher development training, particularly in interpersonal and communication skills, while also prioritising career counselling and guidance services.

#### Enhance communication channels, empathy and affection

Expand activities and resources that promote dialogue and communication between practitioners and young people.

#### Promote Community Collaboration

Encourage cooperation among diverse stakeholders within the community to co-create strategies aimed at fostering meaningful educational practices throughout the educational and research processes.

#### Encourage Self-Monitoring

Empower practitioners and educators to self-monitor their practices and remain flexible to adapt as circumstances evolve. Continuous reflection and adjustment are essential for effective co-creation.

#### Implement Collaborative Competence Groups (CCG)

Encourage the involvement of young adults as co-researchers in various processes and as a powerful contribution to rethink **academic roles** in vulnerable contexts.

### Practices based on Equality Literacy

What is recommended?

#### Develop individualised support programmes

Tailor educational practices according to specific needs of young people requiring additional assistance.

#### Expand extracurricular activities

Explore and develop young people's interests and passions, throughout different school activities.

#### Implement preventive and compensatory measures

Enhance public and education systems' responses to ELET by assessing and evaluating the risk of educational exclusion among young people, enabling proactive measures to address potential challenges.

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The long version of this Policy Brief can be consulted here:



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