Let's care

BUILDING SAFE AND CARING SCHOOLS
TO FOSTER EDUCATIONAL INCLUSION
AND SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT

D1.6 Reports of the policy makers interaction, incl. PMAB meetings & workshops (1)

Funded by
the European Union

Horizon Europe research and innovation programme
project number 101059425

Funded by the European Union under grant agreement of the project 101059425. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

DELIVERABLE ID

Deliverable No.	D1.6	Work Package No.	WP1	Task/s No.	Task 1.5
Work Package Title		LET'S CARE: Building up a community			
Linked Task/s Title		*LET'S CARE Policy Makers Advisory Board (PMAB) formalization*			
Dissemination level		PU	*(PU-Public, SEN-Sensitive)*		
Due date deliverable		2024-12-15	Submission date		2024-12-10
Deliverable name		Reports of the policy makers interaction, incl. PMAB meetings & workshops (1)			

DOCUMENT CONTRIBUTORS

Deliverable responsible	CIDALIA
Contributors	**Organisation**
Eva Bajo Marcos	COM
Nuria Lores	CID
Giulia di Lisio	COM
María Martín López	COM
Reviewers	**Organisation**
Olatz Miranda	ZIC
Carolina Simón	ZIC

DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Date	Comments
1	2024-26-09	First draft version
2	2024-12-02	Second draft version
3	2024-12-10	Final version

Funded by the European Union

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description
COS	Community of Schools
EU	European Union
ESL	Early School Leaving
REA	European Research Executive Agency
PMAB	Policy Makers Advisory Board
WP	Work Package
SPOT	Self Peer Observation Tool

Executive summary

The LET'S CARE Policy Makers Advisory Board (PMAB) is a consultive body created to support scaling the project's policy and programmatic relevance. This report presents the PMAB's interim assessment of the theoretical impact of the Safe Education Theoretical Model.

The PMAB has extensively reviewed the LET'S CARE project, delving into its achievements and impacts across technical, economic, and social dimensions. The analysis spans the project's theoretical framework, assessing its implications and effectiveness. Furthermore, the PMAB has examined the project's influence on related deliverables, providing a comprehensive overview of its outcomes and contributions to the field.

The document discusses the interaction between policy makers and their involvement in the European LET'S CARE project, aimed at improving educational inclusion and reducing school dropout rates. This project develops a theoretical framework called the "Safe Education Model," which seeks to intervene at individual, relational, community, and political levels. The report includes technical, economic, and social evaluations of the project, as well as feedback from the PMAB. In their feedback, the PMAB highlights:

- The LET'S CARE project has been positively evaluated in its technical, economic, and social aspects. Its theoretical model has proven to be robust and applicable to various European educational systems.
- PMAB recommendations focus on ensuring sustainability, transparency, and scalability for the project.
- The project has achieved significant social impact, creating an inclusive network involving over 9,000 teachers and 471 schools.
- Future actions should focus on optimizing the theoretical model's connections, improving strategic communication, and ensuring tool usability in diverse contexts.

Concluding their review, the PMAB offers overall recommendations (full feedback available for consultation in Annex III):

Theoretical Model:

- Strengthen the connections between the model's pillars: Safe Learning, Safe Teaching, Safe Schools, and Safe Education.
- Prioritize key indicators to enhance practical implementation.
- Ensure that the model is accessible and adaptable to low-resource educational contexts.

Technical and Operational Aspects:

- Merge the LET'S CARE Hub with its website to improve user experience.
- Standardize tools and products, such as the "Safe School Label," to ensure applicability across different cultural and systemic contexts.

Policy and Dissemination:

- Enhance communication strategies to involve policymakers from the early stages.
- Translate academic findings into practical and accessible policies.

Social Action:

- Expand engagement with a broader range of stakeholders, including underrepresented regions.
- Monitor long-term impacts to refine the implemented policies and tools.

1. The Policy Makers Advisory Board (PMAB)

Establishing the PMAB is strategically designed to convene a diverse panel of experts with extensive experience spanning the European region and beyond, encompassing insights from non-EU contexts. These individuals are carefully selected based on their demonstrable capacity to provide valuable input on the project's technical, economic, and social advancements. Their pivotal role lies in facilitating engagements with policymakers at national, regional, and European echelons, thereby advancing the dissemination of the Safe Education approach across diverse policy-making arenas.

The LET'S CARE PMAB was established in M6 of the project (March 2023). However, due to changes in the partners' composition of the LET'S CARE Consortium, a need to reestablish the PMAB emerged by M22 (July 2024). At the moment of this report elaboration, the PMAB is comprised of four members who are actively engaged with the project and the present assessment (Table 1); however, a new member is in the process of formalise their incorporation, making up a total of five experts involved.

The composition of the current PMAB stands out for:

- Its balance in gender composition. There are currently 2 women and 2 men in the PMAB.
- Its multidisciplinarity in the fields of education, employability, vulnerability and European context.
- Its geographical location is from four different member states, which, in turn, adds diversity to the countries already present in the LET'S CARE consortium, adding from PMAB the knowledge of countries such as Ireland, France, Spain and Italy.

Table 1. PMAB members

Member	Professional profile
Deirdre Horgan	Professor of Education (Early Years and Childhood Studies) in the School of Education, University College Cork
Noemí García Arjona	Professor at the UFR APS of the University of Rennes 2 (Associate Professor, PhD)
Ismael Sanz Labrador	Professor of Applied Economics URJC. FUNCAS and Visiting Senior Fellow. Department of Social Policy. London School of Economics (LSE)
Renato Maria Girelli	Policy Officer, Unit A1, DG Education, Youth, Sport & Culture

The roles encompassed by the team are diverse, offering annual insights that span the project's technical, economic, and societal dimensions. The PMAB performs a continuous assessment of the project's implementation. These insights are pivotal for gauging the initiative's advancement and the

critical adjustment and fine-tuning of theoretical frameworks, ensuring the practical application of the project's solutions. Additionally, the PMAB is key in identifying and engaging essential stakeholders, broadening the project's influence and reach. The PMAB also contributes to shaping policy recommendations, aiding in creating a green paper that facilitates the progression of policy initiatives. This engagement is crucial for motivating educational personnel and institutions to embrace and implement the findings of the LET'S CARE project throughout its duration and beyond, ensuring a widespread uptake of its results. In addition to these tasks, this board is pivotal in maintaining a dialogue with other policymakers at various levels, ensuring the project's achievements are recognised and adopted across a broad spectrum.

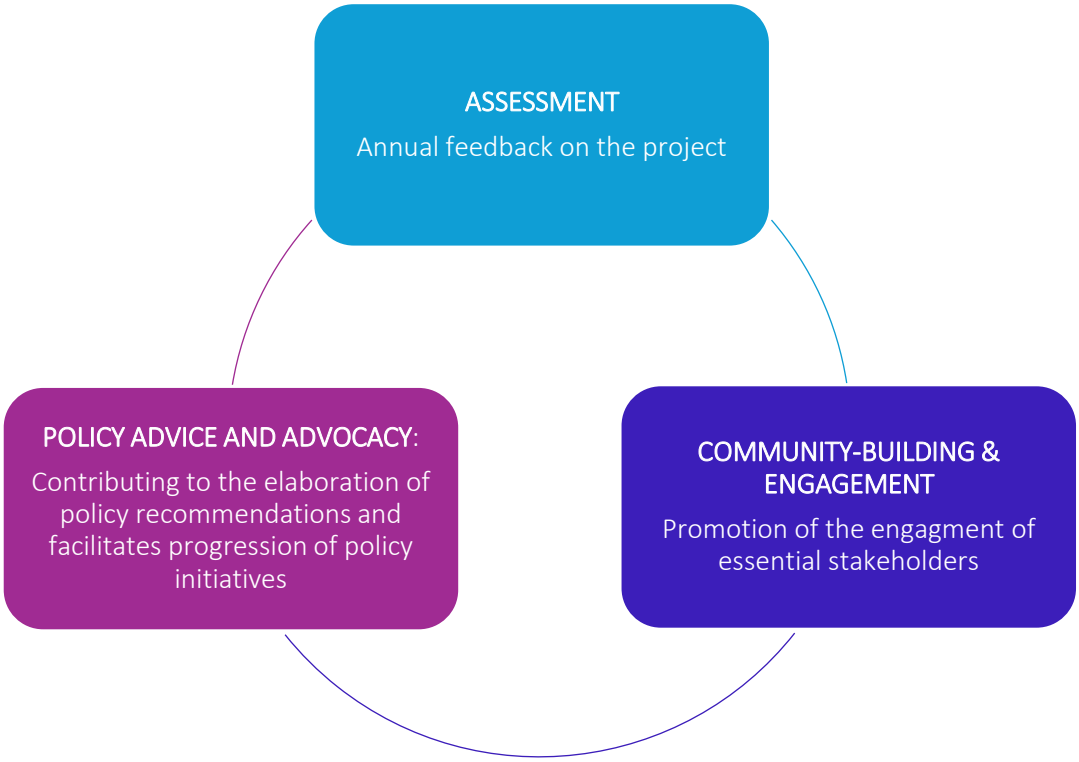

Figure 1. PMAB roles

Meetings play a crucial role in the PMAB's operations, with internal meetings allowing the group of experts to offer feedback on the project's achievements annually. These sessions also serve as a platform for co-creation and participatory approaches, further enhancing the project's effectiveness. External meetings focus on engaging educational staff and institutions, convincing them of the benefits of adopting and applying the LET'S CARE project's results, thereby ensuring a wider impact and greater success in adopting the project's outcomes.

The methodology used to date has been:

- Bilateral meetings with each of the PMAB members, with the participation of COMILLAS, CIDALIA and each PMAB expert individually.
- Joint group meeting of the four members of PMAB, COMILLAS and CIDALIA (3rd October 2024).

- Creation of a shared folder in the cloud where all the necessary documents have been uploaded for the PMAB's review of the products mentioned above.
- Creation of a mail group in which PMAB members have collectively asked their questions and issues.

A PMAB meeting with other key partners and stakeholders is planned for the coming months.

2. PMAB's feedback about the LET'S CARE project achievements

The PMAB is responsible for evaluating the project's achievements in technical, economic, and social aspects. Additionally, the board must assess the impact of the theoretical model design (WP2) on other deliverables in M27 (December 2024) in this report, as well as provide their feedback on policy advocacy (WP6) in M46 (July 2026) within D1.7.

The following sections present the feedback of the current PMAB on the technical, economic, and social aspects made up to M24 (September 2024) and the assessment of the theoretical model's impact on the deliverables submitted.

2.1. Technical, economic, and social aspects

The reference documentation provided to support the PMAB's evaluation included summaries of the project's progress from months 1-12 and months 13-24. Additional optional materials were also made available, such as the full report from the first reporting period (RP1), the REA's evaluation of RP1, and supplementary documents (Dvs).

The feedback process followed a structured approach. Initially, all relevant documentation and materials were shared with the board members. Each member conducted an individual review to form their preliminary assessments. Subsequently, these individual insights were analysed. The major exhaustive comments of PMAB are:

- *Technical:* The project demonstrates a robust theoretical model, validated through a rigorous three-stage process including ecological and cross-cultural studies. Tools like the LET'S CARE Hub and SPOT (Safe Peer Observation Tool) are effectively fostering collaboration and practical application. These tools highlight cost-effective strategies to develop replicable solutions. However, it is critical to ensure that tools like SPOT are fully utilised in diverse educational environments to maximise social outcomes. In this sense, the project shows impact through its Community of Schools (CoS), engaging a broad range of schools and policymakers to ensure the inclusivity of interventions. Nevertheless, there is still a need for enhanced integration of the online platform with dissemination efforts to maximize usability and stakeholder engagement.
- *Economic:* As concerns the economic aspects, the careful adjustment of resource imbalances and strategic redirection of effort demonstrate proactive project management. Resource optimisation strategies are evident, but challenges in initial overspending and inconsistent

financial reporting across deliverables highlight the need for improved financial controls. This is critical for maintaining long-term sustainability.

- *Social:* The project has successfully created a broad network involving over 9,000 teachers and 471 schools, achieving notable inclusivity. However, full utilisation of tools like SPOT in diverse educational contexts is needed to ensure equitable benefits.

2.2.Theory impact assessment

Assessment of the theoretical model

The reference documentation provided to support the PMAB's evaluation included D2.3 Safe Education theoretical model and a Theoretical Model Design Evaluation Grid (Annex II). Each member conducted an individual review to form their preliminary assessments, and then a joint analysis allowed them to develop comprehensive feedback. The major exhaustive comments of PMAB are:

- The theoretical model provides a comprehensive framework with clear validation processes, making it adaptable across varied educational systems. The Safe Education Theoretical Model is conceptually robust, aligning key socio-emotional and systemic factors to mitigate Early School Leaving (ESL). Grounded in frameworks such as Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective and attachment theory, it offers a strong theoretical foundation. The development of the Safe Education theoretical model and its empirical validation align with high-quality research standards, showcasing robustness through systematic literature reviews and cross-cultural validation.
- Its four pillars—Safe Learning, Safe Teaching, Safe School, and Safe Education—are interconnected but need explicit operational guidelines. Specifying the connections between model dimensions (e.g., teacher well-being and student security) and a prioritisation of indicators are areas for further refinement to enhance practical implementation Moreover, addressing disparities in ESL under different socio-economic conditions should be prioritised for enhanced impact.
- The Delphi study used to validate the model ensures that it is not only theoretically sound but also contextually applicable across varied European education systems. Nonetheless, the model's operationalisation for quantitative analysis should ensure that it addresses disparities in underachievement and early school dropout in a nuanced manner, particularly in underprivileged contexts.

Impact on other deliverables

The reference documentation provided to support the PMAB's evaluation included *D2.2 Policy paper: economics of early school dropout: impact assessment and policy Recommendation* and a document with an overview of future deliverables directly influenced by the theoretical model. Each member conducted an individual review to form their preliminary assessments, and a joint analysis was conducted. The major exhaustive comments of PMAB are:

The model serves as a foundation for several key deliverables, including the Safe Teaching training program and policy advocacy frameworks. Its interdisciplinary application underscores its relevance;

however, specific guidance on scaling these tools across resource-constrained contexts is critical to maximise accessibility and implementation.

For instance, its influence on the pedagogical tools in WP4 indicates that the model is already shaping educational practices. Similarly, the alignment of the theoretical model with WP6's dissemination strategies reflect its centrality to the project's communication and advocacy efforts. However, ensuring that all derived tools and resources remain accessible to disadvantaged communities will be essential to achieving the project's overarching goals.

3. Overall recommendations

Overall, the progress of the LET'S CARE project in its technical, economic and social aspects has been assessed in positive terms. The PMAB supports the soundness of the Theoretical Model for Safe Education and recognises its impact on the development of practical tools and products. However, it is recommended that the consortium address the suggestions for improvement raised by PMAB in order to maximise the efficiency of the project and ensure the long-term impact of its results.

From an economic perspective, the consortium's efficient resource use was praised, but initial overspending and gaps in financial reporting raised concerns about sustainability and transparency. Socially, the project's inclusivity efforts were highlighted, with extensive engagement from disadvantaged populations and the establishment of a broad network of schools and stakeholders. Enhanced communication and community involvement were also recognised as notable successes.

The PMAB provided strategic advice to enhance the project's effectiveness. First, it recommended deepening the connections between the theoretical model's four pillars (Safe Learning, Safe Teaching, Safe School, Safe Education) to clarify how these elements interact and reinforce each other. Prioritising and weighting the model's indicators was also emphasised to focus on the most impactful factors.

Improving strategic communication is critical to translating research findings into actionable policies while ensuring the scalability and practicality of the "Safe School Label" across diverse educational contexts. Operational adjustments are needed to standardise the label and tailor it to the cultural and systemic nuances of EU member states. Additionally, the evaluation timeline for the theoretical model's impact on deliverables should be reassessed to allow more meaningful integration and feedback.

While there was broad agreement on the project's progress, some differences emerged among PMAB members. Certain members advocated for increased stakeholder involvement in the development of policy recommendations to ensure broader buy-in and applicability. One member questioned the timing of the evaluation of the theoretical model's impact, suggesting it might be premature and risk creating unnecessary disruptions to ongoing project activities.

Technical Improvements:

- Merge the LET'S CARE Hub and website for better user experience and visibility.
- Enhance dynamic interaction on the Hub for real-time monitoring and co-creation of outputs.

Economic Adjustments:

- Establish the necessary readjustments once the consortium has been restructured and these two first years have been executed to meet the expected budget.

Social and Theory-Driven Actions:

- Clarify interdependencies within the theoretical model to guide practical interventions.
- Develop operationalized and standardized indicators to ensure scalability across diverse educational environments.

Policy and Advocacy:

- Strengthen dissemination strategies to engage policymakers and ensure practical integration into national frameworks.
- Focus on deliverables like the Green Paper to solidify the project's long-term policy impact.

4. Concluding remarks

Overall, the progress of the LET'S CARE project in its technical, economic and social aspects has been assessed in positive terms. The PMAB supports the soundness of the Theoretical Model for Safe Education and recognises its impact on the development of practical tools and products. However, it is recommended that the consortium address the suggestions for improvement raised by PMAB in order to maximise the efficiency of the project and ensure the long-term impact of its results.

This feedback reflects the collective insights of the PMAB and aims to guide the next phases of the LET'S CARE project towards achieving its objectives effectively and inclusively:

1. Strengthen Policy Advocacy: Focus on aligning theoretical insights with actionable policy recommendations by engaging policymakers early in the evaluation process. This can enhance the practical applicability of findings and increase the likelihood of their adoption.
2. Expand Stakeholder Engagement: Increase efforts to involve a broader range of educational stakeholders, including those in underrepresented regions, to ensure that the interventions address diverse needs.
3. Emphasize Accessibility: Ensure that all tools and recommendations, particularly the Safe Education model, SPOT, and Teacher's Workbook, are adaptable and usable in low-resource educational contexts.
4. Sustain Dissemination Efforts: Leverage the LET'S CARE Hub to maintain momentum in outreach and dissemination, especially in translating academic findings into accessible formats to practitioners and policymakers.
5. Monitor Long-Term Impacts: Establish robust mechanisms to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of implemented policies and tools, ensuring continuous refinement based on empirical evidence.

Annex I: Model of Non-Divulgation Agreement

NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT FOR NON-CONSORTIUM PARTICIPANTS BEING GRANTED ACCESS TO LET'S CARE INFORMATION

BETWEEN:

Universidad Pontificia Comillas, with registered seat at C/Alberto Aguilera 23 28015 Madrid (Spain) with company number R2800395B, legally represented by Enrique Marazuela Cejudo as Head of Finance & Resources (hereinafter "**Disclosing Party**") and under its role as Project Coordinator of the LET'S CARE Project,

AND:

[name], under [his/her] role as [add role/expertise] in the [name and country of organisation of employment of the expert] (hereinafter "**Receiving Party**") In the present case, the Receiving Party participates in the Policy Makers Advisory Board, an external group of experts invited to give their feedback about LET'S CARE project achievements (technical, economic, social aspects) on annual basis.

Universidad Pontificia Comillas and [name] are hereinafter referred to individually as either "Disclosing Party" or "Receiving Party" or jointly as "**Parties**"

Whereas this Agreement sets out rules with regards to the non-disclosure of Confidential Information, as defined in Article 2, which is shared with the Receiving Party in the course of their specific interaction with the Project, as described in Article 1, and/or its partners, and the appropriate use of said information.

Whereas nothing in this Agreement shall be construed to constitute an agency, partnership, joint venture, or other similar relationship between the Parties.

IT IS HEREBY AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

ARTICLE 1. DEFINITIONS

1.1. **"Confidential Information"** shall have the meaning set forth in Article 2.

1.2. **"Non-disclosure Agreement"**: this non-disclosure agreement and all its annexes.

1.3. **"Project"**: LET'S CARE is a project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement No. 101059425. LET'S CARE aims to comprehensively understand and improve the caring dimension of educational inclusion and school success. The project main objective is to identify determinants affecting student security as a root cause of underachievement, disengagement, and school dropout, at 4 different levels: individual, relational, community and political. LET'S CARE will create a theoretical and practical framework to foster Safe Learning,

Safe Teaching, Safe Schools and Safe Education in each level as an approach to break the chain of transgenerational transmission of educational and social exclusion.

ARTICLE 2. CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

2.1. Any documents, data and information relating to the Project and its definition and development, including partner details, structure, set-up, technology, work, work products, tools, methodologies, data, outputs, deliverables, etc., in any format and medium, complete or incomplete, disclosed or made available by the Disclosing Party to the Receiving Party, whether orally or in writing, in connection with the Project, are considered confidential ("Confidential Information").

2.2. The Confidential Information shall not include information which the Receiving Party can clearly demonstrate in writing: (i) belonged to the public domain on the date of signature of this Non-disclosure Agreement, (ii) entered the public domain through no fault of the Receiving Party after the date of signature of this Non-disclosure Agreement, (iii) was already known to the Receiving Party at the time it was received from the Disclosing Party, (iv) was developed after the date of signature of this Non-disclosure Agreement on behalf of the Receiving Party by its employees or agents who did not have access to any protected the Confidential Information or (v) was received from a third party that has the right to disclose such information to the Receiving Party without breaching any obligation, direct or indirect, to the Disclosing Party

2.3. Nothing in this Non-disclosure Agreement will be construed as transferring or granting any license on any rights on the Confidential Information, without prejudice to the right to use it within the framework of this Non-disclosure Agreement. The Receiving Party will refrain from claiming or registering anywhere in the world any intellectual or industrial property or other rights on or related to the Confidential Information or seek any similar protection.

ARTICLE 3. LIABILITY

3.1. The Receiving Party bears the sole responsibility for complying with the provisions of this Agreement, in particular the confidentiality obligation contained in Article 4. In case of disclosure of Confidential Information by the Receiving Party in breach of the provisions of the present Agreement, the Disclosing Party has the right to the seek full compensation of all damages incurred.

ARTICLE 4. OBLIGATIONS OF THE RECEIVING PARTY

4.1. The Receiving Party will treat the Confidential Information as strictly confidential and will not directly or indirectly disclose or make it available to any third parties without the prior, explicit, written and signed consent of the Disclosing Party. The Receiving Party also agree that the Confidential Information will only be used in as far as strictly necessary for the interaction they have with the Project, and to not use it for their own purposes and/or benefit without the prior written consent of the owner of that information, namely the Project or any or several of its partners, as the case may be.

4.2. In the event that the Receiving Party is asked to communicate the Confidential Information to any judicial, administrative, regulatory authority or similar or obliged to reveal such information by mandatory law, it shall notify promptly Project partners of the terms of such disclosure and will collaborate to the extent practicable with Project Partners in order to comply with the order and preserve the confidentiality of the Confidential Information.

4.3. Corresponding duties of care and confidentiality shall be contractually imposed on all persons under the control of the Receiving Party, if any, who have access to the Confidential Information. The

Receiving Party will only on a strict "need-to-know" basis disclose and make available the Confidential Information to those of its contractors and affiliates, if any (i.e. any entity that directly or indirectly controls, is controlled by or is under common control with a third party) who are directly concerned by the Project and provided that they are bound in writing to the same obligations as those of the Receiving Party set forth in this Non-disclosure Agreement.

4.4. The Receiving Party shall immediately notify upon becoming aware of any breach of confidence by anybody to whom they have disclosed the Confidential Information and provide all necessary assistance in connection with any steps which the Disclosing Party may wish to take in order to prevent, stop or obtain compensation for such a breach or threatened breach.

4.5. The Receiving Party will not directly or indirectly use any Confidential Information or any advantages or knowledge derived from it in its own business or affairs, nor for providing or commercializing any goods or services or engaging in direct or indirect competition with the Disclosing Party, unless pursuant to a new agreement between the Parties.

ARTICLE 5. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

5.1. This Agreement does not grant any licences or other rights, no matter of which kind, to the content protected by intellectual property rights (e.g. copyright, patents, models, designs, trademarks, trade secrets, etc.) or similar rights contained in, or referenced in, the Confidential Information. Equally, this Agreement does not grant any right to the Confidential Information itself.

ARTICLE 6. RETURN OF THE CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

6.1. The Receiving Party shall promptly return or destroy all copies (in whatever form reproduced or stored), including all notes and derivatives of the Confidential Information provided by the Disclosing Party, upon the earlier of (i) the completion or termination of the Project activities/events in which the Receiving Party participates/collaborates; (ii) or the termination of this Agreement; (iii) or at the time the Disclosing Party requests the Receiving Party to do so. The Receiving Party shall certify in writing that they no longer have such copies in its possession, custody or control.

ARTICLE 7. DURATION

7.1. The Receiving Party's duty to hold the Confidential Information confidential shall remain in effect for five (5) years after the end of the Project, save otherwise agreed.

This Non-disclosure Agreement enters into force as from its signing date, mentioned at the end of this Agreement.

ARTICLE 8. VALIDITY AND AMENDMENT

8.1. If any provisions of this Agreement are invalid or unenforceable, the validity of the remaining provisions shall not be affected. The invalid or unenforceable provision shall be replaced by a valid and enforceable provision that will meet the purpose of the invalid or unenforceable provision as closely as possible.

8.2. All amendments and addendums to this agreement shall require a written form in order to be legally valid.

ARTICLE 9. APPLICABLE LAW AND COMPETENT COURT

9.1. This Non-disclosure Agreement is interpreted and governed exclusively in accordance with Belgian law, to the exclusion of any conflict-of-laws rules which would cause the laws of another jurisdiction to apply.

9.2. Any dispute related to this Non-disclosure Agreement, which cannot otherwise be settled to the mutual satisfaction of the Parties, will be adjudicated exclusively by the Belgian courts in Brussels.

Signed on [signature date] in two (2) originals, each Party acknowledging receipt of one original.

Universidad Pontificia Comillas:	[name]:
Signature:.....	Signature: .....
Name: Enrique Marazuela Cejudo	
Capacity: Head of Finance & Resources	

Annex II: Safe Education Theoretical Model Design Evaluation Grid

Safe Education Theoretical Model Design Evaluation Grid

Dear PMAB members,

We are providing you with the indicators that can be used to evaluate the design of the Safe Education Theoretical Model. The indicators are organized according to the model design's three main phases, each with specific sub-phases.

1. **Phase 1: Identifying key elements** - This phase has two stages: one focused on defining the variables and the other on setting the domain limits.
2. **Phase 2: Model Proposal** - This involves building the relationships that form the model and the collaborative co-creation of the model.
3. **Phase 3: Content and cross-cultural validation** – The final phase focuses on validating the model across different contexts and cultures.

The indicators have been derived from two key studies: Wacler (1998) and Schwaninger & Grösser (2008).

Moreover, another set of indicators has been created to assess whether the Safe Education Theoretical Model design aligns with the project's objectives and co-creation purposes.

Feel free to adapt the evaluation grid as needed. The objective is for the PMAB members to hold discussions about the Theoretical Model design and to evaluate it using reliable criteria. The expected outcome is a report summarizing the results of your meetings, which will constitute the D1.6.

Should you need any additional information or clarification, please feel free to reach out at any time.

Kind regards,

LET'S CARE Team.

Phase 1

MODEL DESIGN PHASE	
Indicators	***Identifying key elements:*** ***a. Definition of variables*** ***b. Limiting the domain***
Uniqueness	*It is applied to differentiate one theoretical model from another. It applies to definitions since they are the most elemental building blocks in theory.*
Conservatism	*This implies that when a new theoretical model is proposed, it is because all other models lack some virtues.*
Generalizability	*The more areas that a theoretical model can be applied to, the better the theory.*
Precision and clarity	*The hypotheses can easily be developed from the theoretical model.*
Comprehensiveness	*The model covers the area of interest completely or broadly.*

Phase 2

MODEL DESIGN PHASE	
Indicators	***Model proposal:*** ***a. Relationship (model) building*** ***b. Co-creation of the theoretical model***
Fecundity	*The theoretical model expands the area of investigation into new conceptual areas.*
Parsimony	*Other things being equal, the fewer elements, the better.*
Internal consistency	*The model has identified all relationships and elements and relationships are internally compatible using symbolic, logic or mathematics.*
Abstraction	*It is independent of time and space.*
Operationality	*Specific enough to be testable and measurable.*

Phase 3

Model design phase	
Indicators	***Validation:*** ***a. Content*** ***b. Cross-cultural***
Reliability	*It refers to the consistency and stability of the measurements over time.*
Fruitfulness	*Statements are insightful and lead to the development of new knowledge.*
Practicality	*The model provides a conceptual framework for practice.*

Other proposed indicators

	Identifying key elements	*Model Proposal*	*Validation*
Alignment with Project Objectives			
Relevance to the European and international standards			
Applicability to Target Informants			
Coherence with Model Phases			
Inclusivity in Co-creation			
Cross-cultural sensitivity			
Theoretical rigor			

Funded by the European Union

Scalability			
Ease implementation			
Innovative contribution			
Long-term impact			

Evaluation Grid Proposal

	Identifying key elements		Model proposal		Validation	
	Definition of variables	Limiting the domain	Relationship (model) building	Co-creation	Content	Cross-cultural
Uniqueness						
Conservatism						
Generalizability						
Precision & clarity						
Comprehensiveness						
Fecundity						
Parsimony						
Internal consistency						
Abstraction						
Operationality						
Reliability						
Fruitfulness						
Practicality						
Alignment with Project Objectives						
Relevance to the European and international standards						

Funded by the European Union

Applicability to Target Informants						
Coherence with Model Phases						
Inclusivity in Co-creation						
Cross-cultural sensitivity						
Theoretical rigor						
Scalability						
Ease implementation						
Innovative contribution						
Long-term impact						

*This is a proposed table where the X marks the project phases that can be evaluated using the specified indicators.

References

Schwaninger, M., & Grösser, S. (2008). System dynamics as model-based theory building. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science: The Official Journal of the International Federation for Systems Research*, *25*(4), 447-465.

Wacker, J. (1998), A definition of theory: research guidelines for different theory-building research methods in operations management, *Journal of Operations Management.* 16(4); 361-385. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0272-6963(98)00019-9.

Annex III: PMAB's detailed feedback

Technical, economic, and social aspects

García Arjona, Noemí	The LET'S CARE project reports highlight reliable outcomes across technical, economic, and social dimensions, with certain areas requiring improvement to fully meet quality standards. For the first area, the development of the Safe Education theoretical model and its empirical validation align with high-quality research standards, showcasing robustness through systematic literature reviews and cross-cultural validation. The incorporation of tools like the LET'S CARE Hub meets usability and accessibility standards, fostering collaboration and data dissemination. As concerns the economic aspects, the careful adjustment of resource imbalances and strategic redirection of effort demonstrate proactive project management. However, overspending on initial tasks raises concerns about sustainability in later stages. In fact, most of the partners needed to adjust or relocate funding to achieve the WP objectives, specially regarding personnel and staff costs (see for example on Brief report M1-12, Partner 11, UCP on reporting fellowship's costs). Also, second brief report M12-24 lacks detailed information on the « use of resources »; in contrast to the comprehensive data provided in the first report. This omission undermines transparency and oversight in financial accounting, which are critical pillars of financial management. Addressing these gaps is essential to maintain compliance with financial quality standards. Overall, while resource optimization and adjustments are evident, tighter financial controls and more consistent reporting are required to prevent disruptions and ensure the project's long-term financial sustainability. As for social aspects, LET'S CARE provides very positive results in two dimensions: First: inclusivity and impact, when focus on vulnerable populations, with a target of involving 60% of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and objective, measurable impact on community, with the creation of an active network of schools and stakeholders (471 schools and over 9,000 teachers involved to date), promoting safe and quality education. The second successful dimension would be dissemination and awareness, with a significant increase in communication activities (268 activities in the second year), including campaigns to enhance project visibility and encourage participation.
Girelli, Renato	The complexity of the overall structure of the Let's Care project is well represented by the graphical representation of the interconnection among the WPs, it helps in following the various steps of the research, it outlines the different activities, and summarizes the outcomes and the dissemination actions. Both the community and the Hub are correctly set and fully operational. Technically, a merger between the website and the Hub Platform could benefit the visibility and give more clarity to the end users. All partners of the project should make the Hub platform a real «work in progress tool» to allow more interaction and monitoring/review of the outputs; a strong coordination role for making the platform attractive and dynamic is paramount.
Horgan, Deidre	THE PMAB as constituted in Autumn 2024 met for the first time on 3rd October with the Comillas and CIDALIA teams of the LET'S CARE Consortium. There were very clear presentations

	on the state of progress to date and a discussion on our role as PMAB. Full documentation was provided to enable us complete this feedback. However, given that this is our first sight of the documentation and the feedback is required within one month there may be issues which are not addressed in this first PMAB report. The report on M1-12 demonstrates appropriate progress regarding the development of a broad LET'S CARE community able to engage the different stakeholders into the project's implementation and co-creation (WP1), desk research setting the theoretical and empirical bases and the definition of the LET'S CARE theoretical model (WP2 and 3). The overspend is noted related to the costs of qualitative research elements in the first reporting period. There is some lack of information regarding the first PMAB, however, which could be clarified. The report on M12-18 document that WP's 1 and 2 and the first phase of qualitative data collection in WP3 were completed by the Consortium in this reporting period. These have informed and substantiated the development the LET'S CARE Safe Education theoretical model. This model has been through a DELPHI method with external experts and also cross- cultural workshops to ensure ecological validation. There were key advances in the empirical aspects in this period Recruitment of educational stakeholders does not appear to have progressed since the first report (M1-12). The M12-18 report sets out that 20 schools per country or 80 of the targeted 120 schools are already involved, and the strategy and implementation of the CoS expansions are unfolding. While the early recruitment is impressive, the Consortium should look to obtaining the full sample early in the next reporting period.
Sanz Labrador, Ismael	The LET'S CARE project has made notable progress in its second year (M12-M24), particularly in the theoretical and empirical domains. The completion of qualitative data collection and the establishment of the theoretical Safe Education model reflect significant achievements. For example, the collaborative use of Delphi methods and cross-cultural workshops to validate and adapt the model showcases a robust methodological approach. Furthermore, the project has effectively leveraged its online platform, the LET'S CARE Hub, to integrate stakeholders, facilitate training, and enhance dissemination efforts. However, challenges such as the need for more robust stakeholder engagement in policy recommendations were observed, necessitating enhanced strategic communication to translate findings into actionable policies. From an economic perspective, the project demonstrates value by optimizing resources through collaborative design approaches, such as the Teacher's Workbook and SPOT (Safe Teaching Observation Tool). These tools highlight cost-effective strategies to develop replicable solutions. Socially, the project shows impact through its Community of Schools (CoS), engaging a broad range of schools and policymakers to ensure the inclusivity of interventions. However, it is critical to ensure that tools like SPOT are fully utilized in diverse educational environments to maximize social outcomes.

Theory impact assesment

Assessment of the theoretical model

García Arjona, Noemí	The Safe Education Theoretical Model demonstrates high conceptual and strategic pertinence by addressing critical elements of educational safety and inclusion. Its translation into the Safe School Label offers practical pathways for fostering safer educational environments. However, its full impact depends on resolving operational challenges, such as clarifying measurement criteria, ensuring scalability, and integrating it effectively into policy frameworks. While the model is conceptually robust, certain aspects of its application and evaluation raise questions about procedural coherence, operational clarity, and alignment with the project's timeline. One critical observation is the interconnectedness between the model's four pillars—Safe Learning, Safe Teaching, Safe School, and Safe Education. Each pillar reflects a nested level of influence, emphasizing the importance of relationships, institutional practices, and systemic policies on educational outcomes. However, the pathways that link these levels could be made more explicit to demonstrate how changes in one domain cascade into others. For instance, teacher well-being, highlighted under Safe Teaching, significantly impacts classroom relationships and, consequently, students' socio-emotional security under Safe Learning. By clarifying these pathways, the model would not only strengthen its theoretical rigor but also provide clearer guidance for practical implementation. The prioritization and weighting of indicators within the model is another area that warrants attention. While the model includes a broad range of variables, such as mental health, teacher training, and leadership, it does not clearly identify which indicators carry the most influence in achieving safety and inclusivity. What literature tell us about the importance of all these indicators? Do all have the same importance? This would help to establish hypothesis (ex. In Pillar 2, Safe teaching: how relationship with students is connected to his or her own professional background? In general terms, it is difficult to understand why an evaluation of the theoretical model is requested at this stage of the project, while WP2 Theorization and characterization is already completed, and even some sub-indicators from WP3 (fieldwork and analysis) are already finished. It can create an artificial feedback loop where no meaningful changes can be implemented without disrupting dependent and/or ongoing deliverables.
Girelli, Renato	The path to conceptualize and design the theoretical model is clearly explained, and the three steps of the process (definition via the two levels of research, proposal with the agreed variables and validation via experts and stakeholders) are a solid basis for reaching the expected result. The four pillars and the related measurements appear coherent and well grounded. The validation by a consistent number of experts confirms the value of the result.The theoretical model represents a relevant tool for enhancing the actions aimed at countering educational underachievement and early school leaving. At this stage, it is important to go further and co-create, with all the partners involved, the instruments/tools and with the specific content so as to enhance the test phase with the largest possible number of beneficiaries in all the participating countries.
Horgan, Deidre	The LET'S CARE project has a well developed theoretical model. The Safe education theoretical model developed by the Consortium has followed a rigorous three stage development and validation process. Firstly, the identification of the key concepts and

	measures to be considered in a theoretical model first draft of what is meant by Safe Education. This was achieved through desk-based economic analysis of strategies to address early school leaving; a literature review of the key concepts relating to how children's socio-emotional security, teacher-student engagement and school climate impact on the child's academic engagement, achievement and ESL in literature; and qualitative research comprising in-depth interviews with families, life histories with NEETS, focus groups with teachers. Secondly, compilation of the four identified variables (safe learning, safe teaching, safe school and safe education each with a range of dimensions) and conducting a pre-validation with LET'S CARE communities to co-create and refine a first model proposal. The model is informed by and based on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological perspective, attachment theory (Bowlby, 1982; Pianta et al., 1995) and frames education from an inclusive perspective (Ainscow, 2014, 2016). Thirdly, ecological and cross-cultural validation of the model was conducted. Ecological validation of the measurement instrument comprising 138 measuring instruments grouped into four dimensions: Safe Learning, Safe Teaching, Safe School, and Safe Education took place through a Delphi study with 51 experts. Cross-cultural workshops were facilitated to ensure that the theoretical concepts were accurately measured and applicable in the 6 fieldwork countries of the LET'S CARE project. A committee based translation framework - TRAPD - was utilised to ensure culture specific tailoring of the questionnaires. Once the final pre-tested versions of the questionnaires were ready, a phase of cognitive interviewing with children has been included for testing. My reading of the documentation to date indicates that the importance of the societal and economic aspects of disadvantage and disengagement from the education system are central in this model. This would align with the main finding from the policy review that the access to education is a critical lever in lifting individuals out of poverty and mitigating economic disparities. It should therefore be really central to all aspects of instrument design and data analysis going forward.
Sanz Labrador, Ismael	The Safe Education theoretical model presents a significant academic contribution by systematically connecting socio-emotional insecurity to underachievement and early school dropout. This model is grounded in extensive research, including systematic literature reviews and exploratory qualitative methods, which add rigor and reliability to its framework. The Delphi study used to validate the model ensures that it is not only theoretically sound but also contextually applicable across varied European education systems. Nonetheless, the model's operationalization for quantitative analysis should ensure that it addresses disparities in underachievement and early school dropout in a nuanced manner, particularly in underprivileged contexts.

Impact on other deliverables

García Arjona, Noemí	The Safe Education Theoretical Model underpins the conceptual and empirical foundation of deliverables, ensuring consistency across methodologies, tools, and policies. Its influence extends from data collection to practical applications, fostering evidence-based

	interventions for safer and more inclusive educational environments. Closely related to previous remark, while the theoretical alignment is clear, the deliverable lacks specific guidance on how the pillars will be operationalized into measurable indicators. For example, how will "socio-emotional security" or "teacher self-efficacy" be quantified and standardized across diverse educational settings? Also, the comprehensive nature of the label may pose challenges in scalability and implementation, particularly in resource-constrained schools. Balancing ambition with practical feasibility is crucial.
Girelli, Renato	While the correlation between ESL and economic performance has already been part of a few EU and international papers, the D2.2 Policy Paper provides a comprehensive analysis of EU national policies and an interesting, new and useful set of policy actions proposed for each dimension that may be easily referred to the Let's Care pillars. The analysis and process for identifying the most effective policies to include in the Safe Education Database are clear and could result in the development of future strategies and specialized instruments and tools. The positive cooperation among the partners and the extended network of participants are promising. The implementation of actions based on the validated theoretical model may lead to new knowledge, a set of reliable indexes, and training programmes for teachers and managers eventually prompting structured safe education experiences. It is of paramount importance to reach out to the policy level in the concerned countries. The theoretical model outcomes in WP6 (starting from the conclusions of the (D6.7) Policy Scoping Report) should arrive to produce a strong enough (D6.8) Green Paper allowing Let's Care partners to meet and open a dialogue with the national decision makers so to enhance a dynamic leading to define and implement Safe Education rules.
Horgan, Deidre	Limitations have been identified by the LET'S CARE Consortium. Of these the most critical needing attention, from a policy perpsective, is that role of (in)security as a root cause of early dropout in a multilevel perspective had not yet been completely theorised and characterised (p.55 D2.2)
Sanz Labrador, Ismael	The model's integration with deliverables like the Safe Teaching training program and observational tools such as SPOT underlines its interdisciplinary application. For instance, its influence on the pedagogical tools in WP4 indicates that the model is already shaping educational practices. Similarly, the alignment of the theoretical model with WP6's dissemination strategies reflects its centrality to the project's communication and advocacy efforts. However, ensuring that all derived tools and resources remain accessible to disadvantaged communities will be essential to achieving the project's overarching goals.

Overall recommendations and concluding remarks

García Arjona, Noemí	LET'S CARE project demonstrates strong progress in technical aspects (innovation and analytical tools), economic aspects (strategic budget use and identification of impactful resources), and social aspects (inclusion and creation of educational networks). However, the implementation of practical tools and the final impact on educational policies are still

	underway and will depend on validation and scalability in the coming years. Also, deliverable D4.3 on relation to implement theoretical model into deliverables like Safe School Label should be more operationalized and standardized for all stakeholders and countries, as cultural or educational models can vary from between UE member states. In summary, these adjustments would enhance both the efficiency of the project and the long-term impact of its outcomes.
Girelli, Renato	While the correlation between ESL and economic performance has already been part of a few EU and international papers, the D2.2 Policy Paper provides a comprehensive analysis of EU national policies and an interesting, new and useful set of policy actions proposed for each dimension that may be easily referred to the Let's Care pillars. The analysis and process for identifying the most effective policies to include in the Safe Education Database are clear and could result in the development of future strategies and specialized instruments and tools. The positive cooperation among the partners and the extended network of participants are promising. The implementation of actions based on the validated theoretical model may lead to new knowledge, a set of reliable indexes, and training programmes for teachers and managers eventually prompting structured safe education experiences. It is of paramount importance to reach out to the policy level in the concerned countries. The theoretical model outcomes in WP6 (starting from the conclusions of the (D6.7) Policy Scoping Report) should arrive to produce a strong enough (D6.8) Green Paper allowing Let's Care partners to meet and open a dialogue with the national decision makers so to enhance a dynamic leading to define and implement Safe Education rules.
Horgan, Deidre	Significant work has been undertaken and milestones reached within the first 18 months of the project. This is important work with the potential to contribute to a greater and more nuanced understanding of levers of educational equality.
Sanz Labrador, Ismael	*Not provided*