

From Pilot Project to Public Policy Model for Children's Emotional Well-Being

BARCELONA, SPAIN, July 9, 2026

/EINPresswire.com/ -- Romania is facing a reality confirmed by data and lived daily in practice: the system is not equipped to meet children's mental health needs. According to UNICEF Romania, 1 in 4 students is at risk of experiencing a mental health problem, one in three reports frequent anxiety, and 1 in 4 has thoughts or behaviours related to self-harm. Against this backdrop, the [EMBRACE](#) project - Empower and Build Resilience at Children - set out to build a concrete, tested, and scalable response: a school-based intervention model for the emotional well-being of children in vulnerable communities in Romania's Northeast region.

18 months. One consortium. One model.

Implemented between January 2025 and June 2026, with a budget of €465,667.67 funded by the European Commission through the CERV-CHILD 2024 program, EMBRACE was coordinated by the Fundatia Serviciilor Sociale Bethany (FSSB) <https://bethany.ro/>, Fundatia de Sprijin Comunitar (FSC) <https://fsc.ro/>, Asociatia "Bună Ziua, Copii din România" (BZRO) <https://www.bunaziuacopii.ro/>, Federatia Organizatiilor Neguvernamentale pentru Copil (FONPC) <https://fonpc.ro/>, and Evolutionary Archetypes Consulting SL (EAC) <https://ea.consulting/>, with support from associate partners: the County School Inspectorates of Iași and Vaslui, CJRAE Iași and Vaslui, DGASPC Bacău, local authorities in the pilot communities, and the 10 pilot schools across Iași, Bacău, and Vaslui counties.

Over the 18-month implementation period, the project developed and tested a curriculum built around five modules dedicated to emotional well-being - physical health, cognitive well-being,



emotional regulation, values and identity, and relationships and social integration - with 15 sessions tailored to each school level: elementary (ages 6–10), middle school (ages 11–14), and high school (ages 15–18).

Program impact figures:

528 children completed all five modules across 10 schools in small urban and rural communities.

374 parents took part in emotional literacy sessions.

140 professionals were trained in supporting children's mental health, well-being, resilience, and protection.

The EMBRACE resource toolkit comprises 45 mental health education lessons and more than 60 multimedia materials for all school ages.

38,000+ people reached through social media outreach and the #KnowEmotions online campaign.

Well-being awareness campaigns led by students, carried out across all 10 partner schools.

EMBRACE Children and Youth Forum - Bucharest, October 2025

One of the project's most significant milestones was the EMBRACE Children and Youth Forum - <https://embrace-future.eu/forum-2025/>, held in Bucharest on October 17–18, 2025. More than 130 children and young people from Iași, Bârlad, Bacău, Brașov, Petroșani, and Bucharest came together to address the growing challenges surrounding youth mental health.

The event, a genuine mechanism for civic participation, concluded with an open letter from the children to the President of Romania, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Education and Research, and the Minister of Health, putting forward four key proposals:

A three-year national plan for children's mental health in schools, with a dedicated budget, clear responsibilities, and measurable targets

Four minimum guaranteed measures for this year: teacher training, access to counselling, a functioning anti-bullying procedure, and at least one mechanism for active child participation

An annual public report from the Prime Minister on what has been done, where, and with what results

Ongoing child participation in monitoring and improving policy - children are not just beneficiaries, but agents of change.

EMBRACE Regional Conference - Iași, May 14, 2026

On May 14, 2026, the EMBRACE Regional Conference was held at Hotel Unirea in Iași - an open dialogue space dedicated to children's emotional well-being in Romania. More than 100 specialists from education, mental health, child protection, academia, and the nonprofit sector took part in structured panel discussions, alongside representatives from central and local authorities and young people themselves.

The conference identified three major systemic fractures:

The absence of an integrated national strategy for children's emotional well-being

Insufficient preparation of teachers for their role as the first line of support

A school culture that does not treat emotional safety as a precondition for learning

The most powerful message of the day came from the young people in the room: "We don't just want to be heard - we want to be truly listened to."

From Pilot to Public Policy

EMBRACE is not a one-off intervention. It is a coherent framework, designed to move from pilot to public policy, with concrete recommendations addressed to the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, local authorities, and European partners, organised around four directions: institutional recognition, sustainable funding, child participation, and a cross-sector approach.

"A child's emotional well-being doesn't belong to a single sector and cannot be built by a single actor. EMBRACE has shown that the experience, the practices, and the solutions already exist - in schools, in organisations, in communities. What's missing is the shared framework to connect them, and the institutional will to turn them into sustainable public policy." - Beatrice Darie, Director of Programs, Bethany Social Services Foundation.

Resources developed under the project - educational materials, guides, and tools for teachers, counsellors, and parents - are available at www.embrace-future.eu.

Press contact:

Beatrice Darie — Director of Programs, Bethany Social Services Foundation
beatrice.darie@bethany.ro | +40 742 208 223

Funding Agency: EACEA - European Education and Culture Executive Agency
Learn more about EMBRACE: embrace-future.eu

Project: 101190161 — EMBRACE — CERV-2024-CHILD

Disclaimer: Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

Katharina Haberl
EA Consulting
+34 93 309 7909

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[LinkedIn](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

[YouTube](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/925513756>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.