

## LETTER CIRCULAR - Institute for Education

**Date:** 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2026

**Ref:** IFE 20/2026

**From:** Janice Darmanin – Erasmus+ Project Manager (DEEP)

**To the attention of:** Heads of Schools: State, Church, Independent Schools.

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**Subject:** Invitation for Schools to Participate: Supporting Democratic Engagement in School Communities (DEEP Erasmus+ Project)

**Application Link:** [Application Form](#)

**Extended Deadline:** 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026

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IfE has partnered with two organisations, one in Greece and one in Catalonia, to work on a new Erasmus+ project focusing on Democracy for Educational Empowerment and Participation (DEEP) within school communities. The aim of the project is to develop a whole-school democratic framework through an action research approach. We are looking for partner schools with whom the framework can be developed.

Schools who are interested to apply must satisfy the following criteria:

- A general consensus to take part in the project is the result of a pre-consultation with the school community.
- Agree to a commitment of participation for the 3 year project (2026-2028).

The DEEP Erasmus+ project team will be providing guidance and support throughout all stages of the project process. Following the expression of interest, we shall be undertaking a process to select a partner school on the basis of the project criteria that include streamlining of school characteristics between the international partners.

We look forward to working with you as a school and embarking on a journey to nurture democratic values, critical thinking, collaboration, and civic engagement. Any queries about the proposed project should be address to [ife.international@ilearn.edu.mt](mailto:ife.international@ilearn.edu.mt). Should you be interested in becoming a partner school, kindly complete the [Application Form](#) by **Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2026**.

Thank you.

DEEP Team (IfE)



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## DEEP Project Brief

### Objective:

The DEEP project aims to foster a culture of democratic participation and empowerment within school communities by engaging educators, school leaders, students and families. It aims to develop a whole-school framework that nurtures critical thinking, collaboration, and civic engagement. A digital toolkit will be developed to translate the framework into practical resources that enable educators and school leaders to implement participatory decision-making processes effectively in school communities.

### Implementation:

The DEEP project will develop a whole-school democratic framework with partner schools through an action research approach. It will provide guidance for the whole school community, equipping them with strategies to foster critical thinking and participation of all members of the school community. Overall, the project has 5 objectives:

1. Design an Inclusive Whole-School Programme and Toolkit - DEEP will develop a structured framework and toolkit that enables educators, students, and families to participate in democratic school governance. It will be developed, tested and refined in cooperation with the partner schools based on an action research approach, ensuring adaptability and responsiveness to different educational needs.
2. Empower Educators and School Leaders - DEEP will support partner schools and co-create a framework and toolkit that will foster the adoption of democratic education, participatory leadership, and critical thinking to equip educators and school leaders with tools to foster inclusive decision-making and collaborative problem-solving.
3. Strengthen Family-School Partnerships - DEEP will engage parents as active stakeholders in school governance, reinforcing shared responsibility in education. It will develop practical guidelines and resources to support meaningful parent-educator collaboration.
4. Promote Intercultural Awareness and Social Inclusion - DEEP will implement activities that foster dialogue, respect for diversity, and social cohesion. It will ensure participation of students from underrepresented backgrounds, creating equitable opportunities for civic engagement.
5. Ensure Replicability and Sustainability - The project will develop digital toolkits, training resources, and policy recommendations that can be adapted by other schools across Europe. It will also support partner schools in developing effective practices and sharing their experiences.