



Universities
Informal
Liaison
Offices
Network

UnLiON BROKERAGE EVENT

26 th January 2026, 11:00-13:30 CET

HORIZON EUROPE

Cluster 2

Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society



**CLUSTER 2: CULTURE, CREATIVITY AND INCLUSIVE
SOCIETY**

**Fernando Fajardo Bullón
University of Extremadura**

**UnLiON Brokerage Event under Horizon Europe Cluster 2 calls on
Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society | 26th January 2026**

**HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-TRANSFO-04: The impact of the use of digital tools outside school
and for communication on educational outcomes and mental health**

Universidad de Extremadura/ University of Extremadura

We are the main public training and research institution in Extremadura region (SW Spain) with **4 university campuses**. It has over **24,000 students** and **2,405 Researchers and Professors**.

According to **Shanghai's ranking**, it is **ranked 593th** amongst universities all over the world (Scimago Institutions Ranking, SIR 2022); and has been awarded

Campus of International Excellence since 2011

in association with two Portuguese universities

It's international well-position is shown in its **coordination of the European University Alliance EU GREEN**, participation in **international networks** such as UnILION, or its coordination and participation in projects within **Horizon Europe** or **Erasmus+**.



Expertise of the research team at University Institute for Educational Research and Foresight (INPEX)- UEx.



Research experience:

- ✓ Horizon Europe
- ✓ Biodiversa
- ✓ COST Action
- ✓ National and regional projects
- ✓ High-impact publications
- ✓ International coordination



Expertise and technical capacity:

- ✓ Interdisciplinary team (Psychology, Sociology, Economics, Communication)
- ✓ Mental health and social inclusion research
- ✓ App development: Mental health risks
- ✓ Problematic internet use
- ✓ Gambling and social exclusion
- ✓ Advanced data analysis



Networks and access to target groups:

- ✓ Secondary schools in Extremadura
- ✓ 10+ years collaboration with Caritas (NGO)
- ✓ Links with tech and AI companies (ICT Business Association)
- ✓ University of Extremadura (32,000+ students)
- ✓ Access to university and adolescent students
- ✓ INPEX Institute: 135+ researchers (Psychology and Education)

Expertise of the research team at University Institute for Educational Research and Foresight (INPEX)- UEx.

The Research team in UEx (Spain) contributes the following:

- Research team experience: **International experience** in **Horizon Europe, Biodiversa, COST Action, national and regional research projects**. High-impact publications and international coordination capabilities. **Interdisciplinary team** (PhDs in psychology, sociology, economics and communication experts) with diverse roles ranging from senior lecturers to young researchers, with a balanced research focus.
- Technical capabilities: We are currently leading a **project on the detection of variables that promote mental health and social inclusion among adolescents in Extremadura through technological applications**. The results of this project may be of interest to the consortium: **development of an app** to detect mental health difficulties, problematic internet use, gambling and social exclusion in **adolescents**. **Data analysis** skills.
- Network of contacts: Access to **secondary education centers** (the team includes teachers and coordinators from the secondary education master's programme that prepares future secondary school teachers). We are in contact with secondary schools in Extremadura. We have been collaborating for more than 10 years with the NGO Caritas, which works to prevent poverty and social exclusion, raising awareness of mental health difficulties and new risks among young people and adolescents. We have relationships with **technological development companies** (Business Association of Information and Communication Technologies of Extremadura) that create technological applications and develop AI.
- Researchers and teachers at the University of Extremadura (Spain): Access to a sample of **university students**. We are researchers at a public university with **more than 32,000 university students**.
- Access to a diversity of researchers according to needs: Fernando is **Director of the University Institute for Educational Research and Foresight (INPEX)**. A research institute with more **than 135 researchers** from the University of Extremadura in the field of **psychology and education, within the area of social sciences**.

Your project idea

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-TRANSFO-04: The impact of the use of digital tools outside school and for communication on educational outcomes and mental health

Main objectives: Analyze and measure the relationship between the use of digital technologies, academic performance, mental health and social exclusion in adolescents and young people.

- ▶ Our research team offers a strong and complementary set of resources to study the relationships between academic performance, problematic internet use, mental health, social exclusion, gambling, and problematic video game use. We provide direct **access to secondary schools** and to a **large university population** of more than 22,000 students at the University of Extremadura (UEX), enabling large-scale and longitudinal research across educational stages.
- ▶ We maintain established collaborations with the **NGO Cáritas**, allowing research in **socially vulnerable contexts** and facilitating the analysis of digital inequalities and exclusion processes. In addition, our partnerships with **technology companies** support the **development and validation of app-based psychological assessment and monitoring tools**.
- ▶ Scientifically, our team contributes strong expertise in **quantitative** data analysis and a **solid publication record in mental health**, screen-related and gaming-related addictions, academic performance, video game use, and social exclusion. This work is embedded within an interdisciplinary research institute in education and psychology, providing access to a network of more than 135 researchers and academic staff at UEX.



Our Project Idea

HORIZON-CL2-2026-01-TRANSFO-04

The impact of the use of digital tools outside school on educational outcomes and mental health and young people



Idea Explained

Problematic internet use, video gaming, gambling, and social media engagement are increasingly linked to negative outcomes, in **mental health, academic performance, and social inclusion** among adolescents and young people. Persistent digital divides continue to exacerbate social exclusion across Europe (OECD, 2023). >>>>>



Our Team's Strengths to Offer:

Direct Access



We provide access to secondary schools and a large university population of over 22,000 students at the University of Extremadura (UEX)

NGO Partnership



We collaborate with Cáritas to research digital inequalities and exclusion processes in socially vulnerable contexts.

Technology Collaboration



We work with technology companies to develop and validate app-based psychological assessment and monitoring tools.

Scientific Expertise



We have strong expertise and a solid publication record in mental health, gaming addictions, social exclusion, and academic performance.



Interdisciplinary Research Network

▶ Embedded in a network of 135+ education & psychology researchers

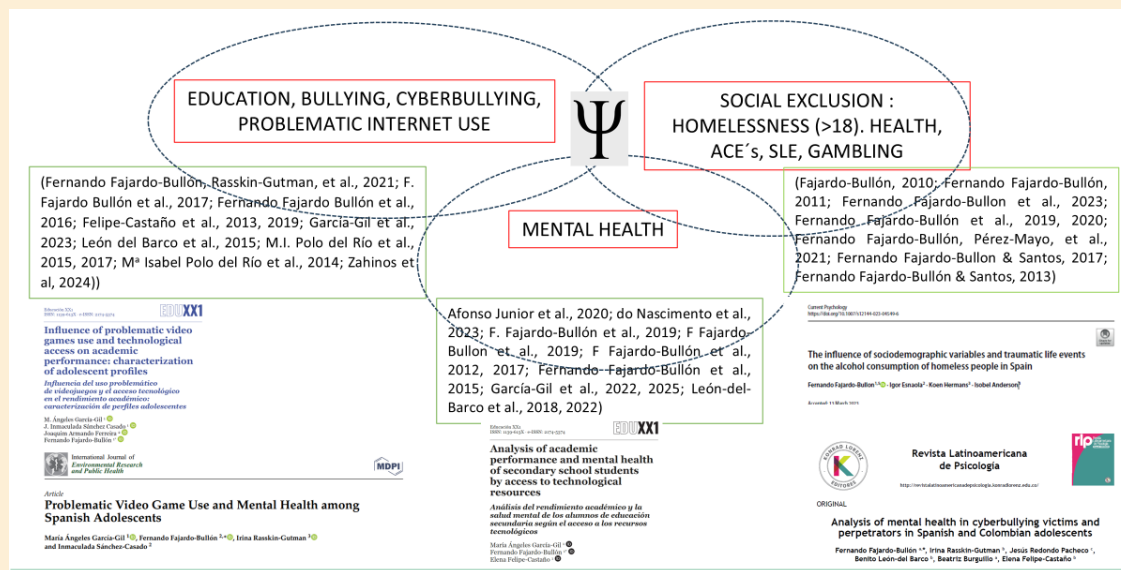
Profile you are seeking and why

Seeks a Consortium/Coordinator.

We are looking for a consortium where our work on **psychology and education** from a social sciences perspective, can be recognized and useful for studying the impact of digital technologies in children and young adults' mental health, academic performance and social exclusion.

We can be a **valuable addition to educational teams**, particularly those linked to academic performance, educational legislation, schools' staff, and other educational perspectives.

OUR PROFILE



Publications related to the topic



<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Fernando-Bullon>

<https://opendata.unex.es/investiga/investigadores/d908e27840c6d01a14674b32243ffa17>

PARTICIPANTS: ADOLESCENTS, UNIVERSITARIES
STUDENTS AND HOMELESSNESS

EDUCATION, BULLYING, CYBERBULLYING,
PROBLEMATIC INTERNET USE



SOCIAL EXCLUSION :
HOMELESSNESS (>18). HEALTH,
ACE's, SLE, GAMBLING

MENTAL HEALTH

(Fernando Fajardo-Bullón, Rasskin-Gutman, et al., 2021; F. Fajardo Bullón et al., 2017; Fernando Fajardo Bullón et al., 2016; Felipe-Castaño et al., 2013, 2019; García-Gil et al., 2023; León del Barco et al., 2015; M.I. Polo del Río et al., 2015, 2017; M^a Isabel Polo del Río et al., 2014; Zahinos et al., 2024))

(Fajardo-Bullón, 2010; Fernando Fajardo-Bullón, 2011; Fernando Fajardo-Bullón et al., 2023; Fernando Fajardo-Bullón et al., 2019, 2020; Fernando Fajardo-Bullón, Pérez-Mayo, et al., 2021; Fernando Fajardo-Bullon & Santos, 2017; Fernando Fajardo-Bullón & Santos, 2013)

Afonso Junior et al., 2020; do Nascimento et al., 2023; F. Fajardo-Bullón et al., 2019; F Fajardo-Bullon et al., 2019; F Fajardo-Bullón et al., 2012, 2017; Fernando Fajardo-Bullón et al., 2015; García-Gil et al., 2022, 2025; León-del-Barco et al., 2018, 2022)

Education XXI
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EDUXXI

Influence of problematic video games use and technological access on academic performance: characterization of adolescent profiles
Influencia del uso problemático de videojuegos y el acceso tecnológico en el rendimiento académico: caracterización de perfiles adolescentes

M. Ángeles García-Gil¹, J. Inmaculada Sánchez Casado¹, Joaquim Armando Ferreira², Fernando Fajardo-Bullón³

International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health

MDPI

Article
Problematic Video Game Use and Mental Health among Spanish Adolescents

María Ángeles García-Gil¹, Fernando Fajardo-Bullón^{2,*}, Irina Rasskin-Gutman³ and Inmaculada Sánchez-Casado²

Education XXI
ISSN: 1139-0125 e-ISSN: 2174-0274

EDUXXI

Analysis of academic performance and mental health of secondary school students by access to technological resources
Análisis del rendimiento académico y la salud mental de los alumnos de educación secundaria según el acceso a los recursos tecnológicos

María Ángeles García-Gil¹, Fernando Fajardo-Bullón², Elena Felipe-Castaño³

Current Psychology
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-023-04549-6>

The influence of sociodemographic variables and traumatic life events on the alcohol consumption of homeless people in Spain

Fernando Fajardo-Bullón^{1,2}, Igor Esnaola², Koen Hermans², Isabel Anderson¹

Accepted: 13 March 2023

Revista Latinoamericana de Psicología

<http://revistalatioamericanadepsicologia.konradlorenz.edu.co/>

ORIGINAL

Analysis of mental health in cyberbullying victims and perpetrators in Spanish and Colombian adolescents

Fernando Fajardo-Bullón^{1,*}, Irina Rasskin-Gutman¹, Jesús Redondo Pacheco², Benito León-del Barco³, Beatriz Burguillos⁴, Elena Felipe-Castaño⁵

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