



PILOTING REPORT

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Introduction

The piloting phase of the *Stronger Youth* project (Work Package 4) aimed to test, validate, and refine the materials developed in WP3 — the *Set of Tools for Mentors and Mentees* and the *Guide for Educators*. Each partner conducted national pilot activities involving **six mentor–mentee pairs and three supervising educators**, who implemented **at least five activities per pair**.

The main objectives of the piloting phase were to:

- assess the **usability and adaptability** of the mentoring tools in different contexts;
- evaluate the **impact** of the materials on young people's communication, empathy, emotional regulation, and self-awareness;
- collect **feedback** from educators, mentors, and mentees to inform future improvement and sustainability.

Piloting took place between **March and August 2025** in six countries: Spain, Italy, Portugal, Czech Republic, Romania, and Poland.

Implementation Overview by Country

Spain – Asociación Valencia Inno Hub

Period: April–June 2025

Participants: 3 educators, 6 mentors (16–18), 6 mentees (14–16)

Venue: Valencia, Spain

Activities tested:

Self-Discovery Map, Building Empathy Through Storytelling, Public Speaking Challenge, Minute Breathing Exercise, Save the Egg, Mirror of Emotions

Highlights:

- *Strong improvements in empathy, communication, and self-confidence.*
- *Mentors developed leadership and listening skills; mentees appreciated creative, interactive exercises.*
- *Educators found the toolkit comprehensive and adaptable but recommended a longer mentoring cycle and more preparatory training.*
- *The pilot confirmed peer mentoring as an effective method for inclusion and emotional growth.*

Italy – PRISM

Period: March 2025

Participants: 3 educators, 6 mentor–mentee pairs

Venue: Caltanissetta/Palermo

Activities tested:

30+ total across communication, empathy, self-regulation, conflict resolution, goal setting, teamwork, mental health, and self-awareness.

Highlights:

- *Participants developed key social skills such as public speaking and empathy.*
- *The Set of Tools was praised for its diversity and practical application.*
- *Suggested improvements: involve more adult facilitators and repeat effective activities.*
- *All participants received Youthpass certificates, highlighting recognition of non-formal learning outcomes.*

Portugal – University of Évora

Period: May–June 2025

Participants: 3 educators, 4 mentor–mentee pairs

Venue: Rainha Santa Isabel Secondary School, Estremoz

Activities tested:

14 activities focusing on communication, empathy, conflict resolution, stress management, and reflection.

Highlights:

- OSAT tool was helpful but needed to be complemented with other assessment methods.
- Mentors improved empathy, self-reflection, and active listening; mentees gained confidence and social skills.
- Challenges: limited time, scheduling, and end-of-school-year constraints.
- Teachers, mentors, and mentees expressed the wish to continue mentoring in the next academic year.
- Recommendation: run the program across the whole school year and simplify the toolkit for younger users.

Czech Republic – Jazyková Škola PELICAN

Period: May–August 2025

Participants: 3 educators, 6 mentors, 6 mentees

Venue: Brno, Czech Republic

Activities tested:

Empathy Through Music, Storytelling, Minute Breathing Exercise, Vision Board, SWOT Analysis, STOPP Technique, Stress Mapping, and others.

Highlights:

- *Hybrid implementation (online and face-to-face) enabled flexibility during holidays.*
- *Mentors gained confidence, emotional intelligence, and leadership skills.*
- *Mentees strengthened self-expression, emotional awareness, and stress management.*
- *Educators stressed the importance of motivation and trust.*
- *The pilot fostered empathy and resilience and inspired continuation in local youth programmes.*

Romania – CPIP (Centrul Pentru Promovarea Învăţării Permanente)

Period: May–June 2025

Participants: 3 educators, 6 mentors, 6 mentees

Venue: “Grigore Moisil” High School, Timișoara

Activities tested:

Empathy Through Music, Storytelling, Mirror of Emotions, My Point of View, STOPP Technique, Therapeutic Journaling, Save the Egg, SWOT Analysis, Self-Discovery Map, Shared Challenges.

Highlights:

- *Educators found the materials relevant and adaptable; flexibility was key to success.*
- *Mentors grew in confidence and emotional intelligence through reflection*

and non-directive dialogue.

- *Handling emotional topics was a challenge, reinforcing the importance of educator supervision.*
- *Mentees valued being heard and supported; activities like journaling and breathing exercises had a deep emotional impact.*
- *All participants expressed satisfaction and interest in continuing mentoring activities.*

Poland – FRAME

Period: April–June 2025

Participants: 3 educators, 6 mentors, 6 mentees

Venue: 2nd High School, Radomsko

Activities tested:

Self-Discovery Map, Visualization of the Day, Public Speaking Challenge, Murder Mystery Game, Weekly Planner Creation.

Highlights:

- *Unified set of five activities for all pairs allowed consistent comparison and evaluation.*
- *Strong engagement and positive feedback across all exercises.*
- *Self-Discovery Map and Visualization proved effective for reflection and resilience.*
- *Public Speaking Challenge built confidence and cooperation.*
- *Murder Mystery Game enhanced teamwork and creative problem-solving.*
- *Participants recommended repeating exercises cyclically and extending the program duration.*

Cross-Country Findings and Best Practices

All partners confirmed that the *Set of Tools* and *Guide for Educators* are **practical, user-friendly, and adaptable** across cultural and institutional contexts. Activities successfully fostered: Empathy and emotional awareness; Communication and listening skills; Confidence, resilience, and teamwork; Stress regulation and self-reflection.

Development of Mentors

Mentors consistently reported enhanced **leadership, communication, and empathy**. Many began uncertain but grew confident through guided practice and educator support. Reflection sessions proved vital for personal growth.

Empowerment of Mentees

Mentees described feeling **heard, safe, and supported**. They reported improved confidence, emotional expression, and social connection. Creative and interactive exercises were most appreciated.

Role of Educators

Educators played a crucial role as facilitators and emotional anchors. Their guidance ensured psychological safety, structure, and adaptation of activities to local realities. Collaboration between teachers and mentors was key to success.

Common Challenges

- **Limited timeframes** (often end of school year) restricted session numbers.
- **Scheduling and recruitment difficulties** in schools.
- **Toolkit length and complexity** required clearer guidance for mentors.
- **Emotional topics** required strong educator oversight.

- **Need for continuity:** all partners suggested running mentoring for a full semester or academic year.

Overall Impact

The *Stronger Youth* piloting confirmed that peer mentoring using the project's tools is a **powerful method for youth empowerment and inclusion**.

Across all six countries, the process led to:

- increased self-confidence and emotional intelligence;
- improved communication and empathy;
- stronger mentor–mentee relationships and peer support networks;
- new motivation among educators to integrate mentoring into regular school and youth programs.

Participants viewed mentoring not as a formal exercise, but as a **transformative human experience** that built trust, understanding, and resilience among adolescents.

Conclusions

The piloting phase demonstrated that the *Stronger Youth* methodology is: **Effective** – proven to strengthen socio-emotional competences in diverse contexts; **Flexible** – adaptable to formal and non-formal education environments; **Sustainable** – capable of integration into existing educational frameworks.

The piloting experience across six European countries confirmed that *Stronger Youth* successfully equips young people with essential life skills — empathy, communication, and emotional awareness — while empowering them to become active agents of inclusion and mutual support.

The partners unanimously expressed their commitment to **continue and expand**

peer mentoring initiatives inspired by the Stronger Youth approach.

