



PILOTING REPORT

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Introduction

The piloting phase of the StrongerYouth project aimed to test the materials developed within Work Package 3. The piloting involved each mentor-mentee pair (6 pairs for each country in total) implementing at least five selected activities from the toolkit, under the guidance of three supervising educators. In addition to evaluating the practical application of the tools, a brief assessment was conducted to gather feedback from participants regarding their initial expectations, their experience during the testing process, and their overall satisfaction with the activities.

WP4 – Piloting phase Report

<i>Piloting phase with mentors, meentees and educators – Report table</i>	
<i>Partner organisation</i>	University of Évora (UE), Portugal
<i>Dates of implementation</i>	May/June 2025
<i>Venue of implementation</i>	Escola Secundária Rainha Santa Isabel, Estremoz, Portugal
<i>Profile and number of participants</i>	<p>The group of participants consisted of educators, mentors and mentees, each with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>1. Educators - coordinators of the process. Three educators from Rainha Santa Isabel Secondary School, Estremoz, Portugal, were involved</p> <p>2. Mentors – four young people from 10th grade.</p> <p>3. Mentees - four young people from 7th and 8th grades in the process of personal development.</p> <p>In total four mentor-mentee pairs were involved although six pairs of mentors/mentees were initially planned.</p>
<i>List of implemented activities from Set</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication (x8) - Empathy (x3)

<i>of Tools (at least 5 per pair)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conflict resolution (x1) - Stress management (x1) - Another activity (chess game) (x1)
<i>Implementation description</i>	<p>The school team created a questionnaire to combine with the OSAT, following the instructions in Chapter 2 of the educational guide.</p> <p>Two initial training sessions were held respectively for teachers and mentors who would participate in the pilot implementation of the mentoring process. This training was conducted by two members of the Stronger Youth project PT team, and by the teacher and the two teenagers who participated in the training in Palermo.</p> <p>The StrongerYouth pilot mentoring activities were carried out by Rainha Santa Isabel Secondary School, Estremoz.</p> <p>The mentoring activities involved testing the project's Toolkit with three educators and four pairs of mentors and mentees, each of whom was supposed to have tested at least five activities (total activities implemented: 30), which was not possible to achieve. Thus, the number of activities tested varied from pair to pair, depending on their availability, with a total of fourteen (14) activities being implemented.</p> <p>Each participant completed a pre- and post-activity evaluation questionnaire.</p> <p>Pre and post questionnaires were administered to measure participants' skills progress.</p>
<i>Experience, best practices and lessons learned</i>	<p>Evaluation: What was the participants' feedback?</p> <p>1. Educators</p> <p>Regarding the identification of mentors: Educators considered the OSAT questionnaire to be moderately effective for identifying mentors, but insufficient on its own and therefore requiring to be accompanied by another form of assessment, as recommended in the Chapter 2 of the Educators</p>

Guide.

During the supervision of mentor-mentee pairs, some challenges arose related to the limited time available for the pilot phase, the necessary preliminary procedures (e.g., authorization from parents or guardians; finding a compatible schedule between peers), and the lack of time to complete the previously indicated number of sessions was another challenge mentioned. It was suggested that when implementing a project of this nature, preparations should begin before the start of the school year, with a meeting held before the school year to start preparing in advance the approach to project activities dissemination, implementation, and evaluation.

The presentation of diverse activities in the Educator's Guide were seen as useful in supporting teachers in their task of supervising peers during the pilot phase. However, due to the large number of activities in the Set of Tools, mentors had some difficulty in choosing which ones to use. Therefore, it was suggested that the Set of Tools could have a simplified, more concise version that would be easier for mentors to use. It was also noted that mentors need more help in choosing and applying activities to their peer mentees.

The tools, activities, and information for intervening when necessary were considered sufficient and presented a satisfactory degree of clarity.

The educators mentioned that when they needed support (e.g., technical, emotional, or organizational), they could count on the school psychologist and other colleagues already involved in the project, as well as members of the team from the University of Évora.

2. Mentors

The mentors mentioned that their work as mentors

allowed them to acquire some important skills and learnings, including self-reflection, active listening, increased empathy, compassion for others' problems, and the ability to manage stress.

The mentors used mostly interactive activities of the the Set of Tools. They reported feeling somewhat unprepared and insecure at the beginning of the program, but this feeling disappeared as the program progressed.

The teacher/supervisor was considered helpful throughout the process, providing guidance, suggesting activities, and clarifying any questions that arose.

According to the mentors, the mentoring experience revealed some strengths related to interaction, communication, interpretation, attention to detail, active listening, and empathy.

All mentors said they really enjoyed the experience, considered it very useful for both sides, and expressed their desire to continue participating in the mentoring program in the next school year.

3. Mentees

They mentioned that during the sessions they developed self-confidence, learned how to hold a conversation, and deal better with stress. The important lessons learned in this context also involved school content.

Mentees did not identify any specific activity or conversation that helped them the most. However, they mentioned that they felt support and understanding from their mentor, as well as registered mentors' gestures of sympathy and kindness.

They felt that participating in mentoring activities had improved their confidence and ability to interact with other people, which influenced how they felt about themselves, others, life, and school. The mentoring relationship was considered valuable or special by the mentees because: it

enabled contact with older colleagues; there was a good understanding between the pair; and it was a relationship that also allowed them to receive help in learning new things.

All mentees said they enjoyed the experience very much and expressed their desire to continue participating in the mentoring program in the next school year.

In summary,

All participants considered the mentoring program valuable and useful.

Teachers reported difficulties in identifying mentees in a timely manner and in coordinating schedules among all stakeholders.

The teachers considered that the constraints encountered in implementing the project were essentially due to the fact that there was little time between the training meeting (April 23) and the end of the school year (June 13) to achieve the proposed objective of five peer mentoring sessions. They also considered that mentoring implementation period coincided with the final phase of the school year, when students, mentors, and mentees have a high number of assessment activities, which may partly explain the constraints that were observed, to a greater or lesser extent, by all pairs.

Although few sessions were held among the pairs that were active, the overall assessment of the experience was considered positive.

Educators, mentors, and mentees expressed their desire to continue the mentoring program in the next school year.

The school intends to continue this mentoring project in the next academic year.

Did you get any new ideas or tips?

1.Educators

	<p>The project was perceived as being very important, so it is considered that it should be implemented throughout the school year.</p> <p>It should also be better publicized in the school and in other schools. The gaps and difficulties in its piloting implementation would be improved over time.</p> <p>2. Mentors</p> <p>They mentioned that the mentoring experience could be improved by exploring activities more fully and not sticking too closely to them; finding the type of activities in which both mentor and mentee feel most comfortable.</p> <p>3. Mentees</p> <p>They considered that the mentoring experience could be improved by increasing the number and duration of sessions, as well as extending it to the entire school year.</p>
<i>Proof of Activity</i>	The related documents are available in the project's PT folder
<i>References/source</i>	<p><i>Set of Tools</i></p> <p><i>Guide for Educators</i></p> <p><i>National Report</i></p> <p><i>Piloting Strategy</i></p> <p><i>Piloting Template</i></p>
<i>Comments or remarks, if applicable</i>	<p>The teacher in charge considers that the mentors were very committed, but that they needed some guidance in choosing the activities to be carried out, as the Set of Tools is very extensive, which makes it difficult for 15/16-year-old students to use.</p> <p>All participants in the pilot project considered that the project should run throughout the school year.</p>