# D3.4

# Second Mentoring Workshop Report

31 May 2022

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[1] Nature: R = Report, P = Prototype, D = Demonstrator, O = Other
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PU = Public
PP = Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services)
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# Introduction

Deliverable 3.4 of the MenSI project is a report on the second mentoring workshop for school leaders and teachers of the six partner countries that have been participating in the MenSI school pilot.

The tasks defined by Work Packages 3 and 6 include the organisation of a face-to-face workshop for the Mentor School coordinators and a representative group of Mentee Schools towards the end of the main mentoring period with the aim to exchange and reflect on the results of the mentoring activities implemented within each cluster.

The workshop, which could not be organised face-to-face in Brussels due to the Covid-19 restrictions, took place online on 17th-18th May 2022.

This document presents a short description of the workshop plan and results achieved.

## 1.1 Rationale

The second mentoring workshop was organised during the second half of the school mentoring activities for a mix of mentor and mentee school representatives from Flanders (Belgium), Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy and Portugal, where a network of 24 mentor schools (4 per country) and 96 mentee schools (16 per country) have been experimenting innovative approaches to school networking and peer-to-peer learning since September 2021.

The session aimed to provide an opportunity for the mentor schools' coordinators and a representative group of the mentee schools to get together with the aim to exchange on the different mentoring practices, discuss the initial findings from the WP5 analysis of how the school clusters have been operating and support the finalisation of the Whole-School Mentoring MOOC, scheduled for November 2022.

The workshop objectives and the agenda took into account feedback and suggestions made by the MenSI schools, the project partners and the project Advisory Board Members.

# 2 Workshop Plan

## 2.1 General information

**Workshop Title**      MenSI Second Mentoring Workshop for Mentor and Mentee Schools – Lessons learnt and future perspectives on whole-school mentoring

**Attendees**      36 representatives of the 24 Mentor Schools and 65 of the Mentee schools operating in the six MenSI countries (Belgium-Flanders, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Portugal)

6 MenSi National Coordinators

5 EUN member

1 guest speaker

**Dates**      17$^{th}$ and 18$^{h}$ May 2022

**Venue**      Online - via EUN MS Teams platform

**Aims and Objectives**      The aim of the workshop was to provide participants with an opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences on lessons learnt from the mentoring activities and practices carried out within the school mentoring clusters, as well as to discuss strategies and actions required to ensure the project sustainability.

The workshop had four objectives:

1. Evaluate the project status in terms of overall impact of whole-school mentoring for school improvement: actions implemented and achieved goals.

2. Share the first findings and experiences of best practice in school networking and peer-to-peer-learning within the MenSI clusters.

3. Discuss and share ideas on how to ensure the continuity of the project over time and further expand the network of partner schools.

4. Learn about the dissemination tools to document successful whole-school mentoring experiences and promote active

contribution to the MenSI online community and the final MOOC.

A collaborative approach was developed with support from national coordinators who moderated the breakout discussions on EUN MS Teams platform. Considering the high number of expected participants, a pre-workshop online brainstorming tool was shared ahead of the workshop to facilitate communication and discussions in the virtual rooms during the workshop. Participants were thus encouraged to exchange ideas about the achieved impact of whole-school mentoring for school improvement and the strategies and actions put in place to achieve the expected goals. Breakout room sessions were followed by a plenary during which each group shared their findings.

| Workshop agenda | **Day 1 – MenSI from theory to practice: Lessons learnt in whole-school mentoring** |

14.30   Welcome & Introduction - Anna Laghigna, EUN pedagogical consultant

14.45   MenSI in progress: overall impact of MenSI for school improvement: achieved goals, actions implemented / National Coordinators' reports

15.20   Examples of effective mentoring activities for school improvement and best practice / Mentor & Mentee school representatives

15.45   Break

16.00   Breakout room discussions – MenSI: from theory to Practice. Sharing ideas on Lessons Learnt in Whole-school Mentoring

16.40   Plenary to wrap up breakout room session - Q/A

17.00   Documenting successful whole-school mentoring experiences: interviews, video reports, cluster diaries – Prof. Philip Garner, London Brunel University

17.20   Questions & Answers

17.30   End of day

**Day 2 – MenSI future perspectives: actions and ideas to ensure project sustainability over time**

14.30  Welcome & Introduction - Anna Laghigna

14.45   FLC workshops in parallel sessions

Session 1: Introduction to European Schoolnet Future Classroom / Efi Saltidou, EUN

Session 2: Active Learning Scenarios and resources from the Novigado Project / Bart Versvijvel, EUN

15.45   Break

16.00   MenSI dissemination tools:  website and blog articles, video reports / Sonia Curzel, EUN

16.30    Future perspectives for MenSI / Enrique Martin, MenSI Project Manager

16.40  Breakout room discussions: Sharing ideas on how to sustain the project

17.10  Plenary to wrap up breakout room sessions - Q/A

17.30  End of day

Assessment              An anonymous survey was carried out after the workshop (feedback questionnaire).

## 2.2 Workshop focus and activities

### 2.2.1 MenSI from theory to practice: Lessons learnt in whole-school mentoring

The first part of the workshop focused on the reports by the MenSI National Coordinators about the project status in the six partner countries and the overall impact of the mentoring activities for school improvement.

The MenSI national communities have been supported by the National Coordinators through regular online meetings with the Mentor school coordinators with the aim to:

1. Coordinate the local communities of practice to promote transferring of knowledge and scaling of educational progress within each school cluster.
2. Offer professional development opportunities for Mentee schools' teachers.

In all six countries, a variety of approaches to whole-school mentoring, both top-down and bottom-up, have been experimented at national level. Mentoring and peer-to-peer learning at cluster level have focused on teachers' capacity development, covering topics and areas of technology-enhanced teaching and learning that have varied from country to country, such as:

- Digital innovation for teacher empowerment

- Personalization of learning

- Flexible learning spaces

- Digital makerspaces, coding and robotics

- STEM talent nurturing

- Digital Formative Assessment

Most school clusters have developed mentoring activities following a blended approach, both online and on-site. The restrictions to travel and assembly due to the pandemic have significantly limited the number of face-to-face meetings, especially in the initial part of the mentoring period, so that most of the mentoring activities had to be carried out online.

The MenSI school clusters have developed their regional hubs and Communities of Practice using different online platforms (e.g., Moodle, MS Teams, Google Classroom, etc.) with the aim to provide continuous support, sharing of good practice, collaborative problem solving, mutual feedback.

A series of training events were organised both at national and local level, in the form of online courses and webinars, whole-day workshops, expert talks, teachmeets, school visitations, observations in mentee and mentor schools.

Most of the teachers involved have appreciated the opportunities offered by the project to:

- learn about innovative pedagogical approaches and technology-enhanced teaching practices,

- collaborate with other colleagues within school clusters,

- test new lesson plans and get feedback from peers,

- exchange ideas and best practices to learn from one another.

Among the challenges that had to be faced, the National Coordinators mentioned:

- the difficulty to customize the Mentoring Operational Plans to the specific needs of each school in the cluster,

- the difficulty to support inter-school collaboration,

- the limited number of live meetings and workshops because of the pandemic

- time management and extra workload for the teachers involved in the mentoring activities,

- the efforts to motivate a greater number of teachers per school,

- the time required to integrate the new "Mensi practices" in the whole-school system.

After the National Coordinators' reports, some examples of effective mentoring practices directly from the school clusters were presented by five representatives of Mentor & Mentee schools, who shared the following video contributions and presentations (see Figures 1-3):

- Organization of a regional hub meeting in the Czech Republic

- Mentoring with a bottom-up approach in a Croatian school cluster

- Working together: A live experience with students in Portugal

- Mentoring through hub meetings in Belgium-Flanders

- Whole-school mentoring experiences in an Italian cluster

- the digital capacity of each Mentee school's learning community.



*Figure 1: A school cluster in the Czech Republic organised their hub meeting as a small-scale "Bett show"*



*Figure 2: First direct experiences of whole-school mentoring in a video by a Croatian cluster*
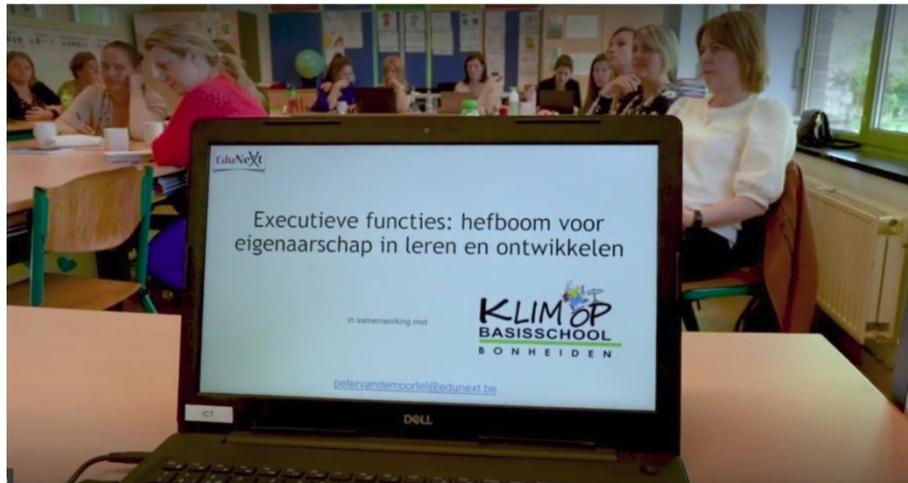
*Figure 3: Video reportage about first face-to-face hub meetings in Belgium-Flanders*

The second part of the day focused on the strategies that can make whole-school mentoring work and support Mentee schools on their transformational journey.

In the following breakout discussions, participants could work in smaller groups and exchange ideas and experiences with their peers about the lessons learnt so far in whole-school mentoring.

In preparation for the workshop discussions that were to take place in virtual rooms, and considered the high number of registered participants, a Pre-workshop Padlet had previously been shared among the Mentor and Mentee schools' representatives with the aim to facilitate communication and the brainstorming of ideas around a set of key questions about whole-school mentoring models and practices implemented in the school clusters.

During the workshop breakouts, discussions in the six groups were moderated by the national coordinators with the help of a template provided by EUN containing the following key questions:

- What has worked in whole-school mentoring?

- What has not worked?

- What challenges had to be faced?

- What solutions have been implemented?

- What incentives have been offered?

The findings of each group were shared in the subsequent plenary session.

A summary of contributions was later compiled and the final document was shared with all participants and project partners. You can see the full document here.

## 2.2.2 Documenting successful whole-school mentoring experiences

The last part of the day focused on the activities that have been carried out to document the most significant mentoring experiences during the pilot.

Professor Philip Garner from Brunel University London, illustrated the principles and methods of evidence collection that have been implemented in the project analysis so far:

- 1:1 Dialogues or group conversations,

- School observation visits,

- On-line surveys,

- Cluster diaries,

- Information from the SELFIE reports,

- Existing school-focussed literature.

The Mentor schools have been encouraged to use cluster diaries as a tool to document the activities and progress made within clustered schools.



*Figure 4: Example of a cluster diary in Hungary*

Although the documenting process is still in progress and interviews will continue over the next months, the following key findings have emerged from the survey so far:

- The MenSI advanced schools have developed a mix of mentoring approaches, both top-down and bottom-up.

- A shared vision is the starting point to effective mentoring, whereby advanced schools aim to remain 'invisible' and act as critical friends.

- School improvement is happening, but to be sustainable school transformation needs to happen gradually through slow change.

- All schools have their own 'champions'. Therefore, the status and expertise of advanced practitioners need to be recognised also in the mentee schools, so that these teachers can take up a leading role in the mentoring practices. This way knowledge transfer and mentoring can happen not only from mentor to mentee schools, but also the other way round through peer-to-peer learning.

- After the initial stages of familiarisation with the project objectives, the use of digital tools in the teaching practices starts to be perceived as 'traditional'. A more personalised approach to mentoring is then required in order to meet the different exigencies of each school context.

- Mentoring supports both interpersonal and intrapersonal peer-to-peer learning, and becomes more relevant to teachers when it involves multidisciplinary & inter-disciplinary areas, including formal and informal curriculum or European policy agenda projects (Green, Vocational, Transferrable Skills, etc.)

## 2.2.3 Future Classroom Lab workshops

The first part of Day 2 started with two online workshops run in parallel by the Future Classroom Lab (FCL) team of European Schoolnet. As the Second Mentoring Workshop could not be organised face-to-face in Brussels, these two FCL online sessions were offered as complementary events of how the FCL experience in Brussels would look like.

To facilitate dialogue and online interactivity, participants were divided in two groups that could attend the parallel sessions in breakout rooms. The sessions were then repeated with the other group.

In Session 1, participants could get familiar with the concept of flexible learning spaces in the Future Classroom Lab, while in Session 2, they could learn about the active learning approaches and open resources that have been made available on the Novigado project website.

The workshop continued with a short session about the project dissemination tools and the features of the MenSI website, which hosts a blog section dedicated to stories of best practice in school-to-school mentoring and networking in the MenSI clusters. National Coordinators, mentor and mentee schools were invited to post their contributions and experiences, such as cluster

diaries, practical descriptions, school experiences, opinion pieces, video reportages, etc. Some of these resources may be selected to become part of the final MOOC scheduled for November 2022.

All participants were invited to continue contributing to the MenSI online community, also by posting about project activities and updates via the MenSI Facebook group, or on Twitter using the hashtag **#MenSI-Schools**.

## 2.2.4 Future perspectives for MenSI

The final session of the MenSI workshop focused on the strategies and actions that can ensure the sustainability of the whole-school mentoring concept through peer-to-peer learning and school networking in the long run.

Participants got acquainted with the project's exploitation strategy to further expand the MenSI network and achieve the following objectives:

- At least 1,000 teachers, school leaders, ICT coordinators and advisers to be involved in the MenSI Community of Practice to exchange best practices.

- 5,000 Schools to be reached (e.g. receiving project outputs) through project dissemination activities described in WP6

- Continued Professional Development (CPD) to be offered at national and international level

- The Community of Practice and the Mentoring Policy Exchange to be further sustained.

Among the project dissemination actions, a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) dedicated to Mentoring for School Improvement will be launched in November 2022. The MOOC will be hosted on European Schoolnet Academy platform and will be structured as a professional development course that is:

- Open to teachers and school leaders across Europe (and beyond)

- Designed with the MenSI school contributions

- Focused on models and strategies for whole-school mentoring to help participants understand how 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches work

- Offering practical advice and guidelines to build and sustain school networks and communities of practice in which advanced schools in the use of technology for education assist less advanced schools in adopting innovative teaching and learning practices.

Further initiatives to support the project future sustainability were also discussed with the school representatives and linked to the following interactive session of the workshop.

In the final breakout discussion, participants had a further opportunity to exchange with their peers about what activities and strategies can be implemented to sustain the MenSI project in the long run. Discussions in the four groups were moderated by the national coordinators with the help of the following guiding questions:

- What actions and strategies can ensure the project sustainability?

- How to expand the MenSI network to include further schools?

- What resources and incentives would be required to continue the project?

The findings from each group were shared in the subsequent plenary session. A summary of all contributions was later compiled and shared with all participants and project partners. You can see the full document here.

# 3 Workshop results

## 3.1 Feedback from participants

The results of the survey questionnaire sent to all participants following the workshop indicate that it was generally appreciated as an opportunity to share ideas and experiences about the first findings of mentoring and peer networking activities in the MenSI school clusters. 42 participants completed the survey, of whom 23% attended the workshop in representation of a Mentor school and 77% of a Mentee school.

Overall, the survey showed that that 71% of the attendees were secondary teachers, 7% school leaders, 10% primary teachers and the remaining 12% had other roles such as ICT coordinators, school psychologists or pedagogical coordinators.

All respondents agreed that the online tools facilitated interaction between participants and 82% agreed that there were very good opportunities within the meeting to express themselves freely. 97% found the content of the workshop very useful and indicated that the workshop fully matched their expectations.

Mentor and Mentee school representatives appreciated the opportunity to discuss and share the first results of their mentoring activities with colleagues of the MenSI international community. The European dimension of the project has been generally perceived as a strong incentive for teachers and stakeholders in the MenSI schools to get engaged in the mentoring practices. Most participants would therefore welcome the opportunity to further develop the networking activities through international meetings and exchanges among Mentor and Mentee schools from the six partner countries.

## 3.2 Workshop outputs & other documents

- Workshop Padlet where all resources, presentations and video recordings have been shared with participants and project partners.

- Lessons learnt from whole-school mentoring - Summary of contributions

- MenSI future perspectives: action and strategies to sustain the project over time - Summary of contributions

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