



MenSI

Mentoring for
School Improvement

School-to-school mentoring

Transferring and scaling innovation related to digital technologies in school education is an ongoing policy challenge across Europe. At individual teacher level, peer-to-peer networking and mentoring – an experienced teacher guiding and supporting a less experienced one – are effective mechanisms for career-long professional learning. However, at whole-school level, such approaches are less widespread despite the evidence for their potential.

School-to-school mentoring entails **holistic, active collaboration** between two or more establishments for specific purposes, such as professional development, to overcome isolation or overall organisational improvement. Such mentoring often takes place through school networks but there can be large differences in outcomes, depending on factors such as whether participation is voluntary or compulsory, instigated externally or internally, or recognised and supported by education authorities. It is therefore important to understand better how 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches work and to explore different incentives and rewards that can motivate schools to become engaged in whole-school peer learning.

About MenSI

The Mentoring for School Improvement (MenSI) project is a 28-month Coordination and Support Action (November 2020 – February 2023) funded by the European Commission H2020 programme. The project will carry out a pan-European investigation into how different approaches to mentoring can support the mainstreaming of innovative digital teaching practices in primary and secondary schools. It builds on the outcomes and lessons learnt from the earlier EU-FP7 [Living Schools Lab](#) project (2012-2014), and will also leverage the network of learning labs that are part of the current European Schoolnet [Future Classroom Lab](#) initiative.

Involving ministries of education in six countries (Belgium-Flanders, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Portugal), **MenSI will create a network of 24 Mentor Schools working with some one hundred Mentee Schools.** By the end of the project, the network will open up to other schools interested in applying school mentoring approaches to develop innovative pedagogical practice involving digital technologies in teaching and learning.

The key objectives of MenSI are:



To investigate school-to-school mentoring theory and practice including the strengths, weaknesses and related costs of different mentoring and school peer-to-peer learning models.



To create and animate a network of over 100 Mentor and Mentee Schools to pilot a range of approaches to addressing policy challenges.



To analyse the effectiveness of whole-school mentoring approaches applied by network schools to support mainstreaming of ICT and address policy challenges in partner countries.



To offer evidence-based recommendations and guidelines for the cost-effective coordination of school clusters through different approaches (top-down, bottom-up, virtual, etc.).



To create a community of practice and professional development opportunities for a wider group of school staff and an exchange mechanism for policy makers.

Expected results

- 1 An overview of school-to-school mentoring in Europe** – Based on desk research, interviews and surveys, a report on different types of mentoring between schools in Europe, including examples and case studies, with reference to models of digitally supported innovation.
- 2 24 school clusters in six countries** – The participating mentor and mentee schools will work collaboratively on developing digital competence and identified policy challenges (e.g. disadvantaged students), benefiting from customised professional development activities.
- 3 Experimenting with different whole-school mentoring approaches** – Information on regional hub mentoring approaches, including the role of online mentoring and different incentive/reward schemes, and how school clusters have implemented different types of bottom-up, self-organised approaches to cluster management.
- 4 Documentation and analysis of mentoring practice** – A summary on the different types of mentoring clusters with focus on innovative, effective and scalable strategies, practices, processes and digital tools used, and a report on effective whole-school mentoring, as evidenced in the project.
- 5 MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) and community of practice for practitioners** – A MOOC on school mentoring open to teachers and school leaders across Europe and an open community of practice to share, exchange and improve.

Partners



Contact

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