



# MENTORSHIP FOR A BETTER INTEGRATION

PILOT ACTION ACTIVITY HANDBOOK

## **NEW ABC - Portugal team members**

Isabel R. Pinto

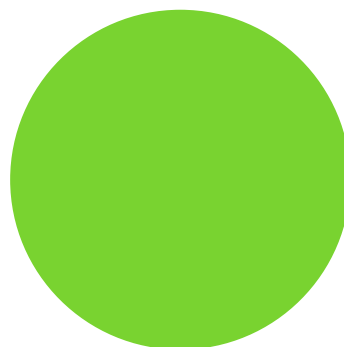
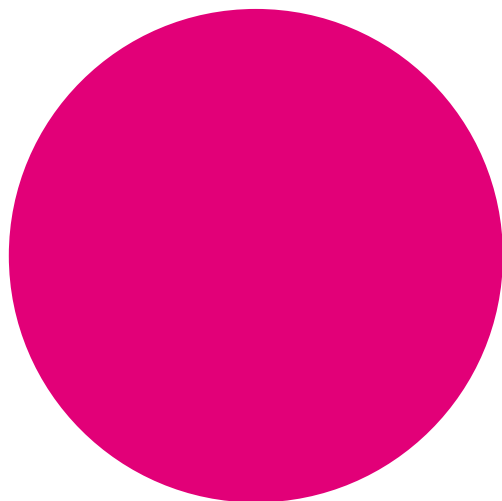
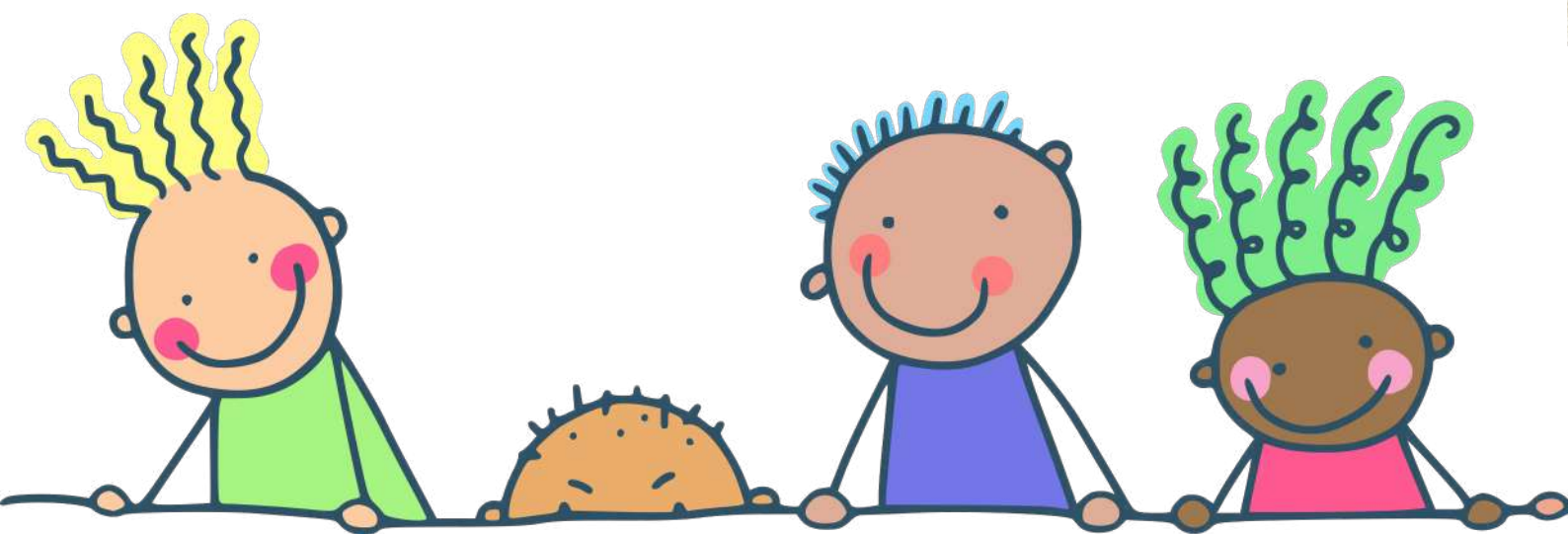
Cátia de Carvalho

Alexander Kpatue Kweh

Mubarak Husein



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# INTRODUCTION

## The NEW ABC project in a nutshell

NEW ABC is a project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme. It draws together 13 partners from nine European countries with the aim of developing and implementing nine pilot actions. All NEW ABC pilot actions (activity-based interventions) include children and young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds, but also teachers, families, communities and other stakeholders in education, as co-creators of innovation to empower them and make their voice heard.

This handbook describes the pilot action *Mentoring for a better integration*, implemented in a school in Portugal.

The core values of the project and of each pilot-action are co-creation, participatory action research, whole-child approach, and care. All are explained below.

If you want to learn more about NEW ABC, this is the link to the project website where you can find information on the other pilot actions too:

[newabc.eu](http://newabc.eu)

## What is co-creation?

Co-creation is a method used to develop democratic partnerships between researchers and local/community stakeholders by promoting their involvement in the design of practices that are tailored to a specific context and responsive to the needs of the community and the participants they serve.

Co-creation is particularly apt in increasing engagement and participation on behalf citizens in policy-making because it:

- 👑 places end-user value at its core,
- 👑 gives particular relevance to the implementation of co-created practices
- 👑 includes broader dissemination strategies as part of the design from inception

All the activities presented in this handbook have been planned and implemented together with pupils and parents, headmasters, and researchers by taking the children's perspective and allowing them to voice their dreams and needs. The motto of this pilot action is "nothing for us without us".

## What is participatory action research?

Participatory action research is an approach that actively involves researchers and all interested parties, such as participants and stakeholders, to conduct research, generate knowledge and implement solutions for problems that affect those involved in this approach. Through this model, stakeholders and the community at large will be empowered and will continue to make their voices heard, taking responsibility for future actions, and making visible both their needs and the solutions created jointly to policymakers and decision-makers. In our pilot action, this approach was useful to regularly assess and monitor its evolution, together with the participants, to make adjustments and adaptations to the activities whenever needed to better respond to children and youth needs and challenges.

## What is whole-child approach?

A whole-child approach takes into account not only academic needs of newly arrived children, but also their emotional and social needs, to achieve each student's full potential. This entails taking a holistic view of education and the student's academic development, but also acknowledging the need to create formal, informal, and non-formal learning environments that focus on other competencies and needs of children, their families, the community and all the stakeholders involved in the educational setting. In this pilot action, this approach was very important to consider all spheres of development of the children and youth and incorporate them in the activities.

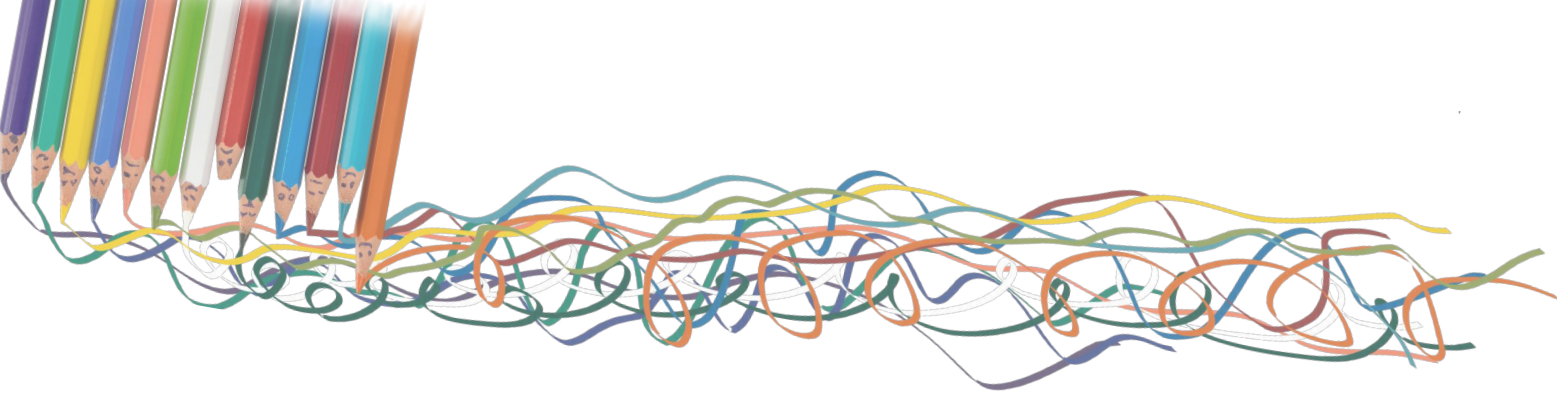
## What is care and compassion?

Care can be defined as attention, concern, and protection for a person. Compassion is sympathy for others' feelings, experiences, and emotions, leading to proactive behaviour to help them.



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## How to use this handbook

This handbook explains in detail the features and activities of the pilot action *Mentorship for a better integration* implemented in a school with children aged between 12 and 15 years old. The aim is for teachers and practitioners who work with newly arrived children and young people to use this handbook to be inspired and to implement activities based on the core teachings and values of this pilot action.

The activities that this handbook aims to promote mentor-mentee relationships in the school context (but can be adapted to other contexts).

For this purpose, this handbook shows you step-by-step how to implement the activities, which you can replicate or adapt according to the needs of your participants and context.

Thus, you can use this handbook as you want – it is up to you. Each context and participant's needs and challenges are different and, therefore, the activities described here are not prescriptive or mandatory. You can adapt, adjust and be flexible as you want when replicating the pilot action. Use it the best way to respond to the needs of your students and give room for creativity and imagination to improve or add new activities to this pilot action. There is not a fixed deadline to finish the activities, therefore you can implement them for as long as needed. Just remember that the ultimate goal is to promote integration of newly arrived students through mentorship, care and co-creation.

### Mentors and mentees:

**Mentors** are young people who have either been generationally settled in Portugal or those who have settled in the country long enough to have a good understanding of the system, the local school and the local life.

**Mentees** are those young people who have recently arrived in the country and in the school.



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## Who is this handbook for

This handbook is for teachers, cultural mediators, social educators, and other practitioners who work with newly arrived children and youth to use. However, given the nature of the pilot action, in order to implement *Mentorship for a better integration*, it is necessary to have both newly arrived and long settled children and young people in your organisation, so that relationships between mentor-mentee can be built. This way, long settled children will act as mentors and peers to facilitate the inclusion of mentees – the newly arrived children. Thus, this pilot action can be replicated in other schools or in different contexts, as long as this feature is maintained.

Another important aspect to bear in mind is that this approach works better with children aged above 12 years old, since concepts, such as mentoring and empathy, can be difficult to explain and implement with younger children. So, if you work in a school, or in an NGO, or in other contexts with newly arrived children, this handbook is for you.



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# LET'S GET STARTED!

## Aims and objectives

The aim of this program is to directly respond to newly arrived children and youth's needs regarding enabling them integrate into the school environment, and simultaneously raise awareness on school actors about their role and responsibility for contributing to newly arrived students' integration in the school. Thus, this program aims to create a social and emotional support network for these newly arrived students in the school environment, ruled by the respect of some relevant values – democracy, solidarity, respect for other, tolerance, empathy, compassion – that guarantees the development of newly arrived students' autonomy, trust in the school institutions and wellbeing, and the support for building multicultural and pro-diversity contexts.

Throughout this program, both newly arrived and long settled children and youth, as well as teachers, are trained in mentoring skills, participate in the planning of activities and are encouraged to reflect in the process of integration of newly arrived students. Training sessions and reflexive meetings contribute to developing these actors' social and civic responsibility and to developing activities that respond to newly arrived students' needs.

Thus, *Mentoring for a better integration* contributes to address the following objectives:

-  To create an environment where newly arrived young people can be welcomed and feel secure to express themselves.
-  To build the identity of a "student", by developing feelings of belongingness to the school, and by developing an emotional support network, based on sharing experiences, collaboration, and trust.
-  To promote pro-diversity and multicultural environments and involve all the school community in the integration process of newly arrived pupils.
-  To raise awareness in the local institutions (namely schools) about their social responsibility in actively contributing to the integrative process of newly arrived pupils and building a culture of solidarity, intervention, and active citizenship.
-  To contribute to improve school and academic skills.
-  To promote institutions' autonomy to continue with this program in the future.

These aims and objectives can be adapted to your context's characteristics and participants.



## What is mentorship?

Mentorship involves the development of a relationship between a mentor and a mentee. Mentors will help the mentee and promote their personal and academic growing. In this case, the mentor is integrated in the school context and will provide support for mentees to also become integrated in the school, through fostering mentoring relationships and mediated by targeted activities.

## Mentors and mentees

Mentorship values the potential and importance that peer relationships can have for promoting integration in the school context and good academic experiences. Thus, this program relies on building and fostering peer mentoring relationships between mentors and mentees.

Mentors are those students that are already included and autonomous in the school environment. This means, that you can have, for instance, mentors who have arrived in the country two years ago, but are now integrated. Their experience as someone who had to go through the process of integration in the school is very powerful for newly arrived students who are yet to become integrated.

Mentors voluntarily commit their time and availability to accompany and support mentees' integration process, by building an emotional support network, based on healthy relationships and democratic practices.

On the other hand, mentees are newly arrived students who are new in the school and in need of support to respond to their needs and to make the integration process a smooth one. Their participation is also voluntary and according to their availability.

In our pilot action (see Chapter 1), mentors were selected and recruited by teachers. They were either students who were born in Portugal or students who settled in the country but are autonomous enough in understanding the school and the local community, as well as fluent in Portuguese. We did not outline a boundary to define mentors (for example, time settled in the school), as we relied on the assessment made by teachers. Our only condition was the integration and understanding of the school, the country and Portuguese.

### What is integration?

Integration is a bi-directional process, and it requires the involvement of both migrant and the local community for it to work well. It also requires the adoption of the host community's culture, values and costumes, while maintaining the original ones. So, it is very important to always respect and value the experiences, the culture and the principles that migrant students have from their original background. However, it is also very important to promote the adoption of the host community's culture, so that integration can be achieved.



Out of these mentor-mentees relationships, friendships will be built, and exchange of cultural experiences will contribute to enlarge students' knowledge and to build respect, empathy and solidarity. Since integration is a bi-directional process, newly arrived and long settled students will learn from each other, thus building a pro-diversity environment in the school.

## Ambassadors

Mentoring relationships, especially with minors, need to be followed up by adults. In this case, by teachers and other school actors, such as cultural mediators, willing to participate. This is important to balance and to prevent problems from arising, but also to help students when mentors are not able to offer support by themselves. For example, sometimes mentoring relationships can be a burden or develop feelings of dependency for one or both of the parties. It is important to have teachers and other school actors aware of these potential issues to prevent them from happening and to solve them, if they occur. For this reason, ambassadors are also trained on mentoring skills and are recruited on a voluntary basis.



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# HOW TO...

## Step 1: prepare and plan the program

Before engaging participants and implementing activities, it is important to prepare for and plan in advance the program. Therefore, it is important to know the context in which you will operate, whether it is a school or other type of organisation, such as a NGO. Thus, it is important to gather as many information as possible regarding the environment: how many newly arrived and long settled children and youth, their age and languages they speak, how many teachers and or other relevant actors, the context and setting in which the activities will be implemented, resources and limitations.

Given that everyone's agendas are always so busy and full, it is important that you prepare the program as a complement to the school activities and an opportunity to add value to the school. Thus, to make the process easy and smooth, you should take the following steps:

1. Prepare a short executive summary that contains the description of the program, the objectives, the planned activities, type and number of participants, and the co-creation process;
2. Find one or more schools or other contexts, such as a NGO, to collaborate and implement the program;
3. Initiate the partnership, by planning with your partner the program's activities, schedule, interested participants, relevant stakeholders, practices already being implemented, and other aspects you might think are relevant;
4. Important to think about ethics: discuss with your partner privacy, ethics, safety and develop an informed consent to be signed by both of you and parents or tutors of minors involved;
5. You're ready to start working!

*If you work in a school or in an NGO and want to implement this program, you should possess a lot of information already and do not need to establish the partnership. So, our advice is for you to start from step 3 until 5.*



## Step 2: develop partnerships

To start the implementation, you need to find partner schools or organisations (an NGO, a local association, charity organisations, youth centres, etc.). For this program, it is crucial that you find partner institutions that work with newly arrived and long settled children and youth. It is also fundamental that they are actively engaged in the program from the beginning, to allow for the immersion in the program and for co-creation to develop responses to needs of newly arrived children and youth.

Thus, it is important that you explain to your potential partner institutions that this program can be beneficial for them on several domains:

- 👤 Support their work in integrating newly arrived children and youth;
- 👤 Help them overcome their own difficulties in promoting integration of newly arrived children and youth;
- 👤 Involve all participants in the co-creation process to develop solutions to the needs and problems of children and youth, according to everyone's schedule and willingness;
- 👤 Contribute to feelings of belongingness, trust, autonomy, and a shared identity;
- 👤 Contribute to improve academic skills and results of newly arrived students.
- 👤 Build other partnerships with other stakeholders that might be important for them in the future.

*As mentioned in the previous step, if you already work in the context where you will implement the program, you do not need to establish the partnership, as you are already in the context, but the points given in this step might be useful for you to explain to and attract the head of your organisation/school and/or your colleagues.*

## Step 3: recruit participants

Recruiting young people to join a program in which they will have to actively be involved might have constraints sometimes. Therefore, it is important to develop strategies that draw young people's attention to them. For this, you should make participants feel welcomed and that they are important agents of co-creation and that their voice will be heard.

One strategy that usually works is to build trust and rapport with them. So, telling stories or sharing experiences with them that might relate to their own experiences can be one way to go. Another strategy important to mention is that you should show them that they will gain

skills, experience, and knowledge by participating in this program. One thing that we implemented was the delivery of a participation certificate in the end of the program and the school officially recognised their participation in their academic process.



*Example of the certificate attributed in the end of the pilot action*

Finally, all these strategies and others that you might want to implement will work better if you count on the already established relationship between students and teachers (or other actors). You can have a previous conversation with them, to get to know the young people, their interests and characteristics, to develop a joint approach to capture their attention and active engagement in this program.

Remember, it is very important and necessary to have the commitment and active engagement of participants for the program to work along the way. So, positive and horizontal relationships based on trust are crucial.

#### **Step 4: keep the flow of program**

Once you have the collaboration of the partner institution, the involvement of participants, and the implementation is ongoing, it is important to maintain the activities flowing and the active engagement of all involved parties. Thus, make sure to:



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- o Enable all participants feel welcomed and supported (see Chapter 1 and 2). For this, you should give voice to their needs, challenges, concerns, but also good practices, experiences and positive views. Newly arrived children and young people not only have needs and challenges to share regarding their integration process, they also have skills, a rich culture and background and positive experiences to share from their countries or culture of origin. Value this as much as you value long settled students' experiences, so that they feel encouraged, heard and motivated. And, remember, integration is a bi-directional process and this practice promotes pro-diversity contexts.
- o Clearly define the role of participants and encourage their equal participation and involvement. For this you should encourage their equal participation by bearing in mind that some students are shy and other may have a more dominant style of conversation. It is important that you pay attention to this kind of dynamic (see Chapter 1 and 2).
- o Remember the motto "nothing for us without us" – involve participants from the beginning, never impose things on them, always discuss every step of the program and activities with them and invite them to co-create and co-develop solutions for their needs (see Chapter 4).
- o For the program to operate smoothly and continuously, engage in frequent reflexive sessions, where positive dialogue and communication of feedback of the activities are encouraged (see Chapter 6). As this program follows the participatory action research, this is important to assess the activities along the way and to make adaptations if needed, as well as to keep the involvement of all participants. However, the participation is voluntary. If someone wants to step out of the program, you should try to understand the reasons and accept their decision.
- o Find a suitable setting for the implementation of the activities, namely the training sessions and the reflexive conversations. In our case, our setting was the library of the school, considered a welcoming and neutral space, where all participants feel equal and on the same level.

## Step 5: ethics, privacy and safety

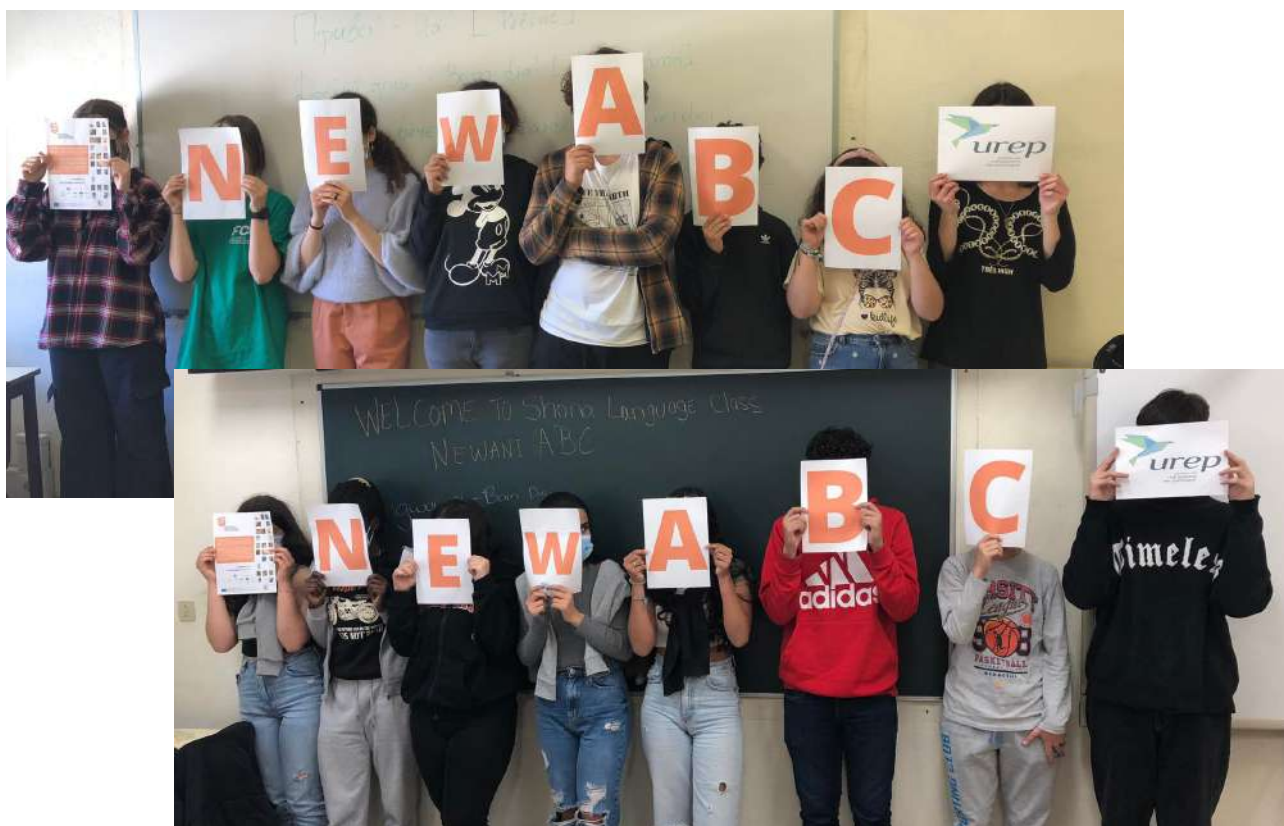
Last but not least, it is important to discuss with your partners some guidelines for safe and ethical implementation of the research component of the program before its implementation. This is important to establish so that children and young people clearly understand what is expected from them and make their independent and democratic decision based on this. For this, it is important to develop an informed consent, and to talk about privacy and safety.

**Informed consent:** before implementing any research activity, you should develop an informed consent that should be signed by all parties involved. If you are working with minors, you should obtain their parents or tutors consent for their participation in the program. For this, you should develop plain language informed consent written in plain language, with as many details as possible about the program, the involvement of participants, and how their data (e.g. photos, videos, audio, written reports, etc.) will be managed, treated and disseminated.

**Privacy:** it is important to discuss with participants what will be researched and how and what for it will be used. You should then explain to participants that their privacy and anonymity will always be safeguarded and you will not disclose anytime their name, or identity – unless they specifically ask for it with the consent of their parents/tutors. So, also explain them that their data will be anonymised and codified before treatment and dissemination.

**Safety:** because this program concerns sharing personal information and the involvement of potentially vulnerable population, it is important to create safe environments for children and youth to feel supported and backed. So, make sure that you can prevent any risk or harm caused by the programs' activities, namely the training sessions and the reflexive conversations. Also make sure that participants never accidentally share their real identity and other indicators of their identity when it is not supposed to do so.

After following all these steps, you are now ready to start implementation. Please, check the following chapters to know how *Mentorship for a better integration* works and to be inspired by some of the activities we developed!



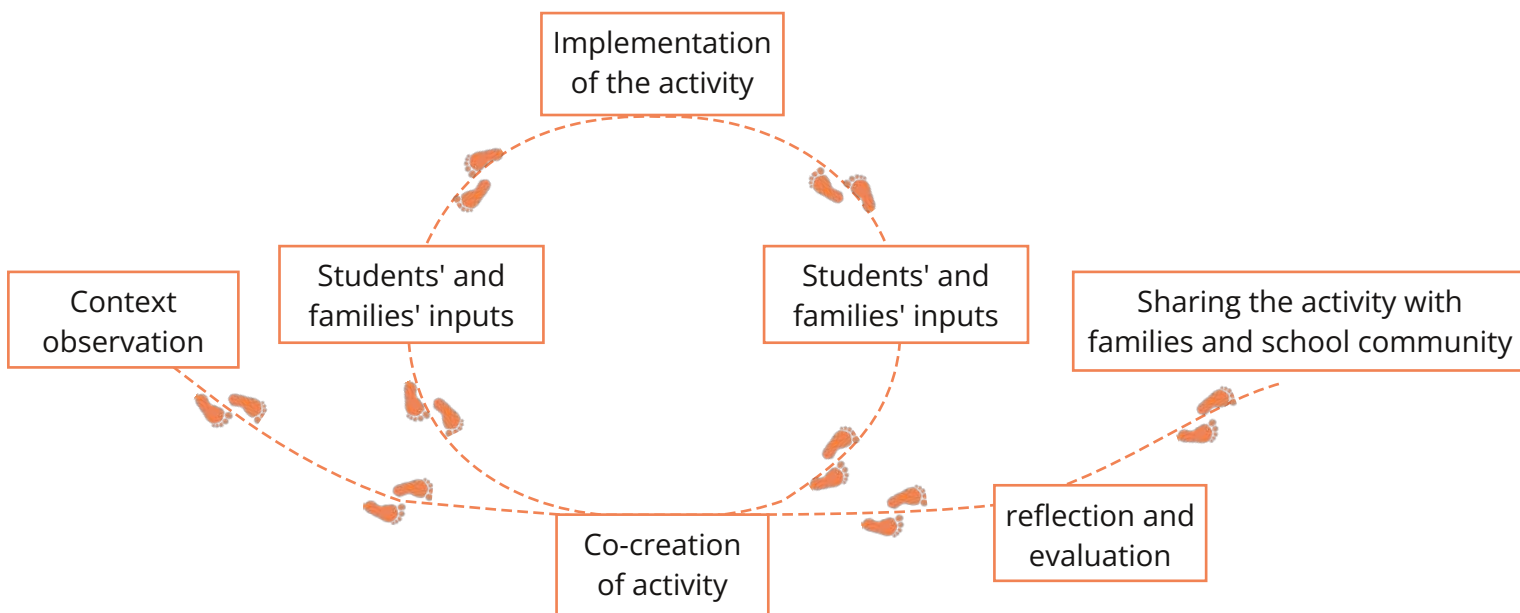
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# BUILDING MENTORSHIP TO PROMOTE INTEGRATION

This section will explain in a detailed manner how mentorship can be built to promote integration of newly arrived students and to build pro-diversity environment in the school (or other contexts you want). Specifically, this section will describe all the activities we implemented in a school in Portugal, its features, limitations and good practices. While some of these activities are essential to build mentoring relationships between mentors and mentees, others are here to inspire you and to give room for you to use your imagination and creativity when replicating this program.

**Join us for a walk through our program!**



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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION SESSIONS

After having picked a school (or other type of institution) and forged a partnership, you should schedule a meeting with the principal of the school and teachers to present the program in detail. If possible, plan the meeting in the setting where you will implement the activities. In this meeting you should discuss ways to implement the activities and the participants (both students and ambassadors) and explain what benefits the program will



*Meeting with teachers and principal in the school*

have for the school, for teachers and students, how the partnership can improve the school's activities, and how students might be involved in the program.

For our own pilot action, we met with the school management and teachers interested in the activities in the school where the activities took place. In this meeting, we explained the activities, how they would be developed, the core values of the pilot action (i.e., co-creation, participatory action research, care and compassion), and how to engage students and teachers. We also explained some of the benefits that this pilot action may have: promote integration of students who are new in the school, encourage positive relationships among students and teachers, foster transversal personal and academic skills, which ultimately can contribute to academic success.







## Step-by-step directions:

**Step 1:** To prepare for this meeting, get to know the context in advance, anticipate any potential questions that teachers may have and responses that satisfy their questions (for example, in our pilot action, teachers asked about the operationalization of their engagement and how many students to involve in the pilot action), and, if possible, use real-life examples to explain how this program can benefit their work. It is also important to know very well how mentorship works and what is required, so that you can give as many details and information as possible. Remember, the program you will present to them should speak to them and for them.

**Step 2:** Once all details are discussed, ask for their help to initially engage students in the program. Teachers and other relevant school actors already have established relationships with students, know them very well and how they can be captivated to participate in this program. In our case, we asked teachers to recruit a group of students (around 20, given that this was a big school with many newly arrived students), aged between 12 and 15 years old (the older the better to understand the underpinnings of mentorship), coming both from different countries and Portugal, being integrated in the school, autonomous and speaking fluent Portuguese. In our pilot action, this task was quite simple to do, as this school had an ongoing project called “Ambassadors for Multiculturality” and teachers recruited among students involved in this project, as they were more sensitive to the issues of integration.

Therefore, we recommend you use teachers’ knowledge and support in recruiting participants and maintain their engagement along the way. For this, if you find it necessary, you could prepare a short leaflet with very simple information about the project, written in plain language, to be given to participants.

**Step 3:** Once students are recruited, draft informed consents with teachers, to be given to parents/tutors of selected students before starting the next activity. They must sign it and return it to you.

**Step 4:** Once you have all participants ready to start, schedule the first introductory session with them.

In this session you will explain students how the program works and what is expected from them. Tell them that they will:





- 👑 Acquire new skills and become mentors of integration of new students in the school, by contributing for new students' integration in the school,
- 👑 Learn about mentorship,
- 👑 Create a network of mentors in the school to contribute for the integration of new students,
- 👑 Make new friends and learn about new cultures and knowledge,
- 👑 Celebrate multiculturalism and diversity in the school.



Give room for students ask as many questions as they have and value their commitment and availability to participate in the program. For this, it is important to implement ice breaker activities to allow them to get to know you (and vice-versa) but also, and very important, to build a relationship based on trust. Since the following steps will require sharing of personal experiences, it is important that this step is well developed.

If you think it is necessary, you can schedule more than one introduction session with students, to strengthen the relationship among you all and to develop a relaxing environment. Once you feel they are ready, you can move on to the next steps of the program.



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## CHAPTER 2: NEEDS AND CHALLENGES

By the end of this activity, you will...

- 👤 Learn a lot and have specific knowledge about the context and participants in which you are working
- 👤 Have a list of difficulties, needs and challenges, as well as proposed suggestions of students and teachers regarding integration of newly arrived children and youth in the school
- 👤 Be ready to move on to the next stage

Now that you are ready to start this step of the program, you will need to schedule more sessions with the recruited students and teachers. But these sessions are different from the previous ones. In these, you will collect the needs and challenges of students, both newly arrived and long settled students, when it comes to promote integration in the school.



As already mentioned, integration is a bi-directional process, and it requires the involvement of both newly arrived and long settled people for it to work well. This is why the involvement of mentors, who are already integrated in the school (and in the country), is very important because they can act as peers and mentors. One of the results of these relationships is pro-diversity and multicultural contexts.

Therefore, both newly arrived and long settled students have different experiences when working on promoting integration of newly arrived students in the school. For this reason, it is important to listen to their needs and challenges, so that this process can be promoted smoothly.



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## Step-by-step directions with examples from our sessions:

**Step 1:** To implement this session (or more, if needed), invite the recruited students (both mentors and mentees) and teachers to a neutral and positive setting, chosen by them. In our case, it was the library of the school. If you have students who do not speak your language, invite someone who can translate. In our case, our team was composed of people who spoke different languages and were able to translate.

**Step 2:** Start the session with an ice breaker activity if needed. You can develop a more complex ice breaker activity, or implement something simpler, as for example asking students about their pets and/or the pets they wished they had, or to tell something funny about themselves. This will create group cohesion and a light environment

**Step 3:** Then explain students the goals and objectives of this session and what is expected from them. It is important to remember them that their participation is voluntary and no one is obliged to participate or respond to all questions.

Thus, ask simple questions, such as:

- *“Can you talk a bit about the difficulties/needs/challenges that you have when you try to help your colleague that has recently arrived?”*
- *“Can you give examples of difficulties/ needs/ challenges?”*
- *“Can you talk a bit about the difficulties/needs/challenges that you experience in the school/ in the classroom/ with teachers/ with colleagues when you arrived in the school?”*
- *“Can you give examples of difficulties/ needs/ challenges?”*
- *“Can you talk a bit about a time you helped your new colleague?”*
- *“Can you talk a bit about a time a colleague helped you?”*
- *“What suggestions do you have to overcome these difficulties/ needs/ challenges based on your experience?”*
- *“What can we do to make your integration in the school easier?”*
- *“What or who has contributed for your integration in the school?”*

In our case, as the majority of students were aged between 14 and 15, these questions were simple to understand and, whenever needed, we gave examples of the answers we were looking for to guide their replies. As the activity evolved, students felt more and more comfortable sharing their experiences. For those students who did not speak Portuguese, teachers and our team members helped with translation.



Feel free to add more questions to this list, to adapt or to use only the ones that suit you and your participants. The aim is to collect an exhaustive description of the difficulties that newly arrived and long settled students experience when promoting integration of the former students. Good practices or positive behaviours and insights are also welcome, as they can be replicated.

### *Some reflections*

It is important that you encourage students' equal participation and involvement. Some students may be more embarrassed and other may want to dominate the conversation. You should have this in mind, and balance their equal participation.

Remember to record or take notes of the responses, with the permission of participants and without identifying them. This will be useful for the next activity.

**Step 4:** Although not direct participants in the mentorship approach, some of these questions should also be asked to teachers, cultural mediators and social educators, because it is important to have their experience and to know their suggestions to improve the process of integration.

**Step 5:** In the end of the session, remember to thank the participants and value their responses, especially students, as they will share personal experiences and trust you to hold them.



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By the end of these activities you will...

- 👤 Have trained students to become mentors of newly arrived students in need to become integrated in the school
- 👤 Created a network of mentors
- 👤 Have trained teachers to become ambassadors of mentoring relationships
- 👤 Develop values such as empathy, solidarity, respect for others, tolerance, care and compassion
- 👤 Develop skills such as social responsibility, social interventions skills, active citizenship
- 👤 Develop the “student identity”, by providing shared values, experiences, relationships that pertain to the school environment
- 👤 Develop contents on mentoring skills and relationships that you can deliver to the school to be used in future mentoring training sessions – this is a way to promote sustainability of the program



Mentoring is based on positive relationships between mentors and mentees. As such, it is important to foster the development of relationships based on values that can be applied in the context where mentorship will occur, but also that can be transferred to other contexts.

This stage of the program is divided into five steps.



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## Step-by-step directions:

**Step 1:** You have to analyse the responses students and teachers gave to the questions posed in the previous step. You need to analyse, categorise and understand challenges, difficulties and needs, as well as suggestions given to improve integration process. This is important, because peer mentoring relationships will be built to tackle some of these needs, namely emotional, social and academic needs and challenges.

**Step 2:** The second step is to delve into the literature on mentoring, to prepare training contents. You should not build contents very difficult to understand; instead, you should aim to design informal, simple, and practical contents that can be easily absorbed by students and rapidly put into practice. One important aspect to take into consideration in these training sessions is to anticipate possible scenarios that may go wrong and how to solve them. This will prepare students and teachers who are ambassadors to prevent them from happening and to understand how to act.

**Step 3:** If you want, you can prepare PowerPoint presentation slides, or print leaflets, or just train students on mentoring by just passing the information orally – it is up to you and the characteristics of your participants to decide what best suits the program. In our case, we started by using PowerPoint presentation slides, but soon realized that students were not paying attention to it, so we changed our approach to just have informal conversations with them about how to build mentoring skills and relationships. Students agreed – and teachers too – as an informal conversation allowed for more participation and exchange of ideas.

**Step 4:** Who are the participants? In the training sessions on mentorship, you should invite students who will be mentors and also teachers who will be ambassadors. What is the duration of the sessions and for how long should you implement them? Well, it depends on the contents you have, the engagement of students, and the understanding of the training skills. It is important that you assess the uptake of the contents from one session to another to decide the number of training sessions.

**Step 5:** After training students to become mentors and teachers to become ambassadors, you need to encourage the building of the mentoring relationships. For this, ambassadors are helpful, because they spend their time with students in the school almost on a daily basis. They know these students very well and the dynamics of the school. Therefore, they can intervene whenever needed. If required, you should keep yourself available to provide further training sessions or deliver feedback. In our case, we set up a WhatsApp group with teachers and students. This channel of communication was very important to respond to doubts and questions in a quick way.





### How to encourage mentor-mentee relationships?

- o Discuss this with ambassadors – they know their students very well and what will work
- o Create spaces and or tools that are available all times for mentees to reach out to mentors – remember, mentees might be shy when asking help, so you need to create avenues to overcome this
- o Pay attention to language – create tools and use mentors that speak more than one language, to increase the chances of success of these relationships
- o Once relationships are established, create regular communication channels with mentors, mentees and ambassadors to respond to their doubts, give suggestions, monitor the relationships and keep encouraging them!



In our case, to encourage mentor-mentee relationships we counted on the help of teachers. We asked them what they suggested to start this process and they decided that devoting some time in their classes for mentors to go there and present themselves to potential mentees would be a good start. In these moments, mentors spoke to potential mentees, introduced themselves, explained how mentorship works, way they could help and what languages they

spoke. Teachers also encouraged potential mentees to ask for the help of mentors whenever they needed. Moreover, mentors suggested the creation of two additional strategies to enable these mentor-mentee relationships:

- o Creating a database with the mentors' names, email addresses and languages spoken by them to be given to mentees, since some of them might be embarrassed to ask for help and might prefer initial virtual contacts, instead of face-to-face
- o A little corner in the library dedicated to mentorship, where materials and a mentor (or more) are at mentees disposal



By the end of these activities, you will...

- 👤 Implement solutions tailor made for specific needs of students
- 👤 Promote co-created tasks and solutions
- 👤 Empower students, who will feel heard and included in the decisions that directly concern their lives
- 👤 Promote a school environment that are smoother for newly arrived students to become integrated and develop feelings of belongingness

After training students to become mentors and teachers to become ambassadors, you need to prepare other sessions – you should invite mentors and mentees, as well as ambassadors, to discuss activities to implement in the school to respond to practical needs. These are informal sessions, based on dialogue and communication, where all participants are equally invited to share their suggestions to co-create, co-develop and co-implement proposed solutions. These vary from case to case and are specific to a given context. To give some light to what these activities might look like, we explain some of the activities we implemented:



### Step-by-step directions:

**Step 1:** Each session, we started by gathering students in the library, in a circle, where everyone could see each other, so that dialogue and horizontal communication could be established (see figure below). We explained students the purpose of the session and, with the help of ambassadors, we started the conversation. Since we had been working for time, no ice-break activities were needed.





*Students in a circle ready to start one of our sessions*

**Step 1:** Each session, we started by gathering students in the library, in a circle, where everyone could see each other, so that dialogue and horizontal communication could be established (see Fig. 3). We explained students the purpose of the session and, with the help of ambassadors, we started the conversation. Since we had been working for time, no ice-break activities were needed.

**Activity 1:** One that was very important was the development of a welcoming leaflet to offer to new students that arrive in the school. This idea came from a student who said that it was very difficult for him to navigate in the school when he arrived, because he was not familiar with the buildings and could not read understand Portuguese. Other students joined and added that in their case they did not know how to buy meal tickets for lunch or to interpret their class schedules. Therefore, we all decided to put in a simple leaflet the map of the school, instructions to buy meal tickets and to read academic schedules written in the languages of origin of the newly arrived students that are new in the school.

**Update:** *remember that some tools might need to be updated. After a few months, other students also suggested that some expressions used in exams should be explained, translated and included in the leaflet, such as “explain”, “characterize”, “describe”.*



**Activity 2:** Another proposed solution by students was to have the name of each building of the school written in the languages of origin of newly arrived students. This made their navigation in the school easier and prevented them from being late to classes or to get lost – as often happened according to reports. Therefore, ambassadors talked to the principal of the school, who agreed to buy big plaques to put at the entrance of each building (see figure below).



*The plaques in Arabic are being shown to students and ambassadors*



Develop these sessions as many times as needed as they are important:

- o Four you, to monitor the pilot action and the mentor-mentee relationships
- o For students, as these relationships will be strengthened
- o For teachers, as they will strengthen their role as ambassadors
- o For creating a pro-diversity and multicultural environment, as you all will create a friendly and welcoming place for students who arrive in the country and in the school for the first time.

## SOME REFLECTIONS

As you can see, activities are proposed and implemented according to specific needs, which may vary from context to context. What is important during these sessions is to not forget the motto **“nothing for us, without us”**. You should actively listen to students, give voice to them and co-create and co-decide with them in every stage of the activity.



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## CHAPTER 5: INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY – INTERCULTURAL ACTIVITIES

By the end of this activity, you will...

- 🏰 Promote pro-diversity context in the school;  
Involve the wider community, namely families;
- 🏰 Develop values in students such as empathy, curiosity, respect and tolerance;
- 🏰 Strengthen the baggage of cultural knowledge of students



One important aspect of this program is to promote cultural exchange, pro-diversity contexts and to transfer this knowledge to the wider school community, as well as parents and relevant stakeholders.

To implement this, you should propose the school and your participants the development of intercultural activities. You can do this however you want or deem fit your audience, but in order to give you a practical example, we will describe how our activities were discussed, planned and developed.



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## Step-by-step directions:

**Step 1:** We started by developing a proposed plan of activities and scheduling a meeting with ambassadors to talk about this plan and the feasibility of implementing this activity. To our surprise, ambassadors told us that the school usually implement each year a whole week of cultural exchange, called “Intercultural Week”.

**Step 2:** Following this good practice already established in the school, we organised a session with mentors, mentees and ambassadors to discuss how to tailor the Intercultural Week to their needs, to promote integration and to build pro-diversity contexts.

**Step 3:** In this session, we asked about the activities implemented in previous years and, after realising that those activities were majorly developed for Portuguese students to become familiar with other cultures, we proposed to value the other way around as well. Therefore, the previous activities were kept, but new ones were added specifically to introduce newly arrived students to Portuguese culture, traditions and values (since integration is a bi-directional process and newly arrived students need to feel visible and heard in the school). Thus, in this session we asked them to share their ideas to develop activities based on their culture of origin. A beautiful discussion unfolded, where almost everyone participated and gave suggestions – a moment of true intercultural dialogue was developed and students felt empowered to share their culture.

**Step 4:** The implementation of the Intercultural Week with the suggested activities. Following there are some examples of the activities we implemented during the Intercultural Week.

**Activity 1: Traditional games of different countries around the world, including Portugal.** This activity was important to introduce new students to Portuguese traditions, and vice-versa. Teams were composed by mentors and mentees randomly and they implemented games they suggested. It was said that what would be valued was friendship, tolerance and respect, and fair-play, and not competition.





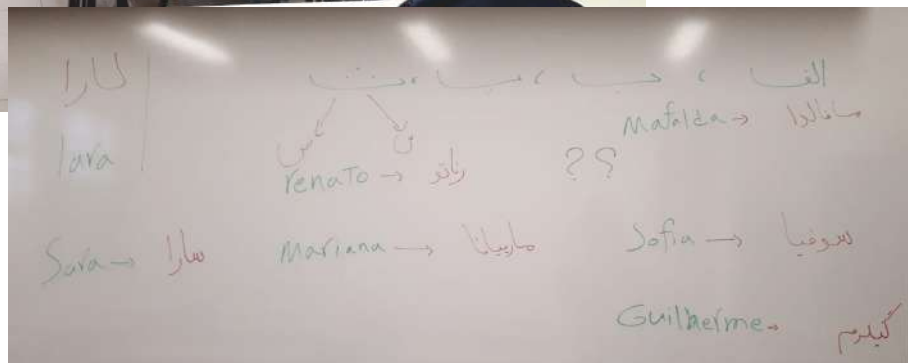
*Students playing games*

*Students creating figures in clay*

**Activity 2: Students teaching words and expressions in their native languages.** This activity is important because it reverses roles, by having Portuguese speaking students learning a new language, simulating a context where they would arrive in a new country. This activity contributes to build empathy, compassion and understanding of the difficulties newly arrived students face when they arrive to a new country.



*Students teaching some expressions in their native language (left) and the names of some students in Arabic (below)*



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**Activity 3: Dressing and food from different cultural backgrounds, including Portugal.**

This was an activity implemented to show the cultural diversity around the world and to value each and every type of dressing and food as important and characteristic of a certain identity and history.



*Students dressed in the traditional vests of their country of origin*

**Activity 4: Traditional Portuguese music and music of the country of origin of newly arrived students, suggested by them.** The relevance of this activity is similar to the previous one. It was important to open students to new types of music, understanding their functioning, and value different cultures.



*Students playing music traditional of Africa*

**Activity 5: A conversation about Islam with a representative of the Portuguese Muslim community.** This session was planned to last for one hour, but students were so engaged, that the session lasted for almost three hours. It was a truly important moment in their lives, as it contributed to refute some stereotypes and discrimination towards Muslims, and to value the presence of Muslim students in the school.



*Students and ambassadors gathered in a round table to listen to the representative of the Muslim community*



**Step 5:** The team, together with ambassadors, awarded every mentor and mentee that participated in the Intercultural Week with certificates of tolerance and respect for others, fair play, pro-diversity, in an attempt to highlight the importance of these values, instead of competition and division between students. We also awarded students with a voucher of 10€ to value their participation, but also their work in the mentorship relationships.

## SOME REFLECTIONS

The activities were co-designed and co-developed for students, but families and relevant stakeholders were also invited to join.

In the end, all participants, including teachers and the principal of the school, considered this Intercultural Week the most special ever implemented in the school, because it contributed to promote important values, to open the school to new realities, and to truly include newly arrived students in the co-creation process.



This is how our intercultural activities developed, however, it does not mean that you must strictly follow this. You have room for flexibility, adaptation and creativity to build on these activities or add new ones, just don't forget to discuss this with your participants!



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By the end of this activity, you will...

- 👤 Develop important values in students that will guide them throughout their life
- 👤 Raise awareness to social issues that can cause harm and division between students and hinder the integration process
- 👤 Make necessary adaptation to the program to keep it going the best way to address students needs and challenges
- 👤 Develop a positive, democratic and healthy relationships between students, teachers and the whole community

Reflexive sessions are those that are implemented from time to time to follow up the mentoring relationships, and to make adaptations and adjustments whenever needed, based on informal assessments. These meetings are also important to discuss the relevance of promoting values such as empathy, care and compassion, tolerance, solidarity, active citizenships, and so on. They are also important to discuss social issues that may arise during these reflexive sessions. In our case, the social issues that popped up were discrimination, gender equity, and bullying. Since we have already anticipated that these issues might arise someday, we were ready to discuss them with students. So, we recommend you prepare in advance these sessions, so you can be ready to respond to needs of students and ambassadors. Of course, you can also discuss these issues with your participants even if they do not mention them – it is up to you and the characteristics of your target group. For example, if in your context there are high numbers of discriminatory behaviour towards newly arrived students, you can prepare specific sessions to discuss this issue with students and to give tools to ambassadors to counter this problem.



What is important is to be sensitive to your context and participants' needs, since some of them might not be expressed in words.

The duration and length of these sessions depend on the needs and quantity of feedback participants want to give you or you want to collect. You should always show availability to organise these meetings, because sometimes participants might need them, but are embarrassed or afraid to ask for them.

In our case, we did the following:

- o We implemented regular sessions two times a month.
- o Before scheduling, we asked ambassadors some topics to discuss with students and prepared the sessions.
- o We gathered the group – mentors, mentees and ambassadors - in the library in a round table, to enable the flow of conversation.
- o In the beginning of the sessions, we asked students how the work was going, by asking them to share some issues they encountered, doubts, good practices and good strategies implemented by them. The key is to actively listen to them and guide the conversation.
- o The usual length of our sessions was around two hours, and we finished the session when we realized that students were getting tired or all their doubts or questions were answered. Usually, students did not have many doubts, but wanted to share their experiences and listen to their colleagues and to the team. Our group was very curious and interested in learning new things.
- o When students were having difficulties in initiating the conversation, because they did not remember anything to share or were shy, ambassadors started the discussion. As the conversation was unfolding, students became more involved and active.



# EVALUATION AND DISSEMINATION

## Evaluation

The evaluation of the activities can be done in different ways, but we propose you follow the approach we implemented:

1. Reflexive sessions were also moments of evaluation. Since the NEW ABC project is based on participatory action research, we implemented this model to our program. Thus, these sessions were privileged moments of assessment of the ongoing activities and mentoring relationships. We asked students and teachers to make informal quality assessments of the activities and, based on the feedback given, we proposed adjustments and adaptations to make the program work. These moments were important because they contributed to build active agency, empowerment and feelings of importance and belongingness. Every moment of assessment was registered in a journal, to keep track of adjustments and keep information up to date.
2. Formal assessment moments, following qualitative and quantitative methods. In the beginning of the program, we assessed participants expectations, knowledge on mentorship, values and social issues in a focus group session. In the end of the program, we replicated this session to compare results and analyse the impact that the activities had on students. To understand the level of satisfaction and suitability of the activities, we also developed a quantitative survey, that we gave students in the end of the program.



Although this is the recommended model to assess this program, you can make adaptations whenever needed.



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## Dissemination

The dissemination of the activities can be done following different approaches. It is up to you to decide what is the best way to disseminate your program's activities, with the consent of your participants.

The model we used was to disseminate the activities in the project's website and to invite relevant stakeholders for the intercultural week. In this particular moment, we had the opportunity to present our program and to discuss in person details and ways to promote the implementation of this program in other contexts.

Whatever you decide to do for the disseminating this program, just bear in mind that dissemination is important to extend the activities to other contexts and population in need, and to create sustainability and refinement of this program in the long term. The more the program is disseminated, the more newly arrived children and youth will receive help in their integration process, and more pro-diversity, respectful, empathic, and tolerant environments we will have.

***So, that's pretty much it. Thank you very much for your attention!***

***We hope this handbook has been (and will be) useful for your professional practice. Best of luck!***



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