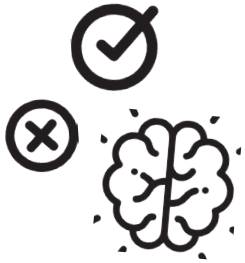
STRONGER TOGETHER

Erasmus+

Handbook

Stronger Together



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DESIGNED BY
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PROJECT

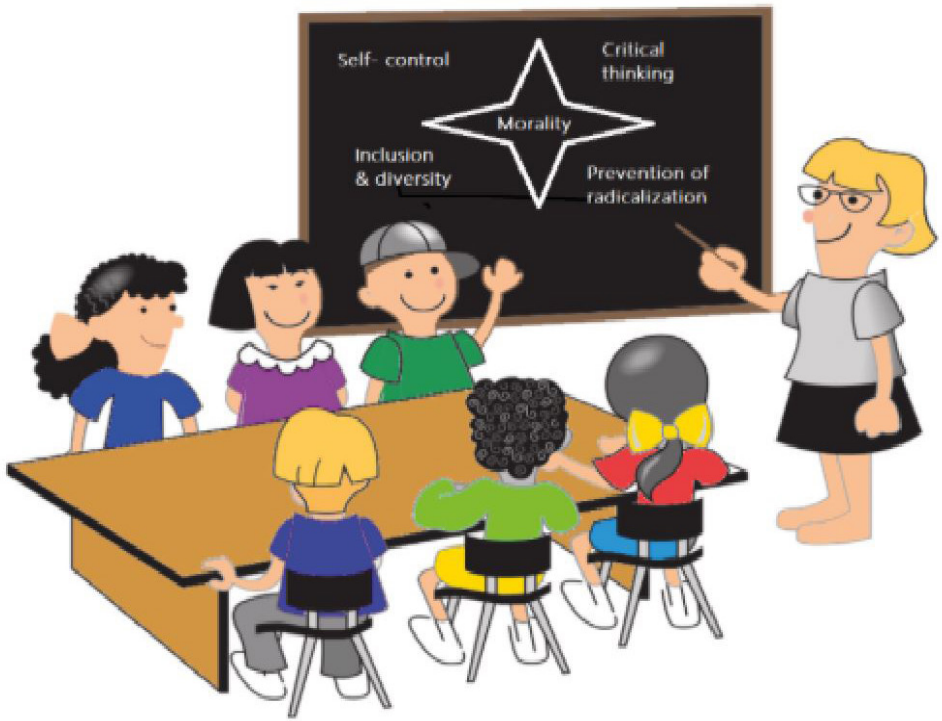
Stronger Together is a project of a 5-module curriculum that uses conventional and modernized learning techniques and tools, along a board game.

This is aimed for educators to use in their classes, in order to facilitate a dialogue on morality, self-control, inclusion and diversity, critical thinking, and preventing and solving conflicts.

This will make pupils, teachers, and parents involved in the learning process mutually, and thereby, everyone included will ultimately take part in preventing violent radicalization. This is a transversal method that will be used in the classroom with pupils of age 10 to 12, as well as their parents, as the complete target group.

Stronger Together encourages starting a discussion from an earlier stage in pupils' education. The training in morality, self-control, inclusion and diversity, critical thinking, and preventing and solving conflicts at an early age, can sustain empowerment through adolescence.

Thus, the curriculum will function as a preparation for further discussions in their school education later. By developing a curriculum for this target group and engaging a digital board game, this project extends and evolves the teaching methods on the subject among primary school classes.



The 5 themes of the curriculum are:

Morality

is about living together with shared rules and values, making choices and acting according to our convictions and the rules and values of society.

Self-control

is about controlling the impulses; understanding and controlling emotions, resisting temptations, tolerance to frustration and perseverance.

Inclusion & diversity

To live together means living with our differences, and this is far from a threat, on the contrary it is even an opportunity for developing fraternity and friendship.
To learn how to live together with compassion, there has to be a positive attitude before all else, in order to develop the solidarity, as well as open dialogue between each other.

Critical thinking

is about building an informed opinion prior to choosing and acting accordingly, while respecting others; coherence between our identity, values, and the world and information around us.

Preventing & solving conflicts

is about maintaining a dialogue, critical thinking and fraternity, as ways to prevent violent radicalization.

It is important to meet the pupils on a platform that they are familiar with, and the digital board game will serve as a tool for educators to facilitate a dialogue with the pupils. Thus, the curriculum will combine theory and practice, by teaching the class in aspects of violent radicalization, and playing the board game. The digital board game has the format of a role play where different reactions are possible in certain situations related to the curriculum themes.

The curriculum and the game are available in seven languages: English, French, Macedonian, German, Swedish, Italian and Danish, which will make it possible for different countries to integrate the curriculum directly in their teaching activities.

The European Union has been debating prevention on violent radicalization for several years. The "Stronger Together" curriculum involves the younger pupils in this debate. European schools, institutions, and organizations working with young people in the target age group, all have access to the curriculum and the digital board game, and they are invited to make use of it.

PARTNERS

This project should be implemented transnationally, as violent radicalization is a problem not only of one country, but of Europe in general. In its pilot phase, Stronger Together has been tested and consolidated in primary classes in six countries (Belgium, Republic of North Macedonia, Germany, Sweden, Denmark and Italy). This achievement was funded by a European Project (ref.), supported by six partners:

VIFIN - Videnscenter for Integration (Denmark – Project Coordinator): Resource centre for integration and social development

EcoLogic (Republic of North Macedonia): NGO specialized in extension and education for sustainable and social development, especially through "gamification"

VNB - Verein Niedersächsischer Bildungsinitiativen e.V. (Germany): Federation of lifelong education with more than 200 associations active in various societal issues

CSCI - Consorzio Scuola Comunità Impresa (Italy): Professional training agency specialized in pedagogy (including new technologies)

Östra Göinge – municipality (Sweden): Pilot municipality

Etterbeek - municipality (Belgium): Pilot municipality (concerned by the exposure of the Brussels area to radicalism)

METHODO-LOGY

In the Stronger Together project, we build on morality, self-control, inclusion and diversity, critical thinking and preventing and solving conflicts as essential values and skills to prevent radicalization.

The 5 themes of the curriculum (morality, critical thinking, self-control, inclusion and diversity, prevention and solving conflicts) are important ingredients of an inclusive society.

They should be taught at an early stage of individual self-development. In that context, Stronger Together proposes a method to teach them in a coherent and adapted way.

In general, the curriculum combines:

- Group work
- Dialogue based learning
- Activity oriented learning
- Game-based learning
- Reflection (think-pair-share strategy)

The teacher or educator remains the ultimate conductor of the process.
They are experienced and know better than anyone else their class on the existing limitations and available resources.

Hence, the guidance and proposed materials in this curriculum, as well as the board game, should be seen as a support to their existing educational work.

The curriculum and the board game are built in an attempt to be:

- Flexible enough to allow the educator or teacher to adapt to the needs and circumstances
- Ready-to-use, in order to facilitate the teacher's task, such as preparatory work and implementation in the class

Each training module comprises of:

- An introduction to the theme by the teacher (10 to 15 minutes)
- Practical activities
- A wrap-up and evaluation with the pupils (10 to 15 minutes)

By running 1 to 2 practical activities with the pupils, and including the time needed for the introduction + wrap-up/evaluation, the teacher should manage to keep the class busy for 1 training time slot (40 to 50 minutes).

The teacher may also decide to implement more practical activities and hence extend the time to 2 time slots for the training module.

The five modules are all build in the same way. They comprise guidance and activities related to the theme in question, adapted to pupils from 10 to 12 years old.
The teacher can adapt his/her teaching and pick activities according to the age of the pupils. Each module is backed by specific exercises of the digital game, ideally implemented right (or short) after the class dedicated to the theme in question.

Please note that the time needed for the digital game, supposed to follow each training module, is not included in the sequence mentioned above.

In practice, this is the overall full learning process, and it applies to each of the 5 modules:

10 year old puplis	11 year old puplis	12 year old puplis
Class (1 time slot) Digital game (1 time slot)	Class (1 time slot) Digital game (1 time slot)	Class (1 time slot) Digital game (1 time slot)

Each theme/module should be addressed at least once over the three school years.

The digital board game

The Stronger Together digital board game is an app-based game that you can download for either IOS or Android tablets or smartphones. The digital board game targets pupils aged 10-12 years old and their parents with the overall aim of creating a dialogue about the themes:

- Morality
- Self-control
- Inclusion & Diversity
- Critical Thinking

and of course, working on improving interpersonal relationships and being **Stronger Together!**

The game is (can be) played in two different environments: in class, and at home.

In class, the teacher can introduce the pupils to the game in continuation of a completed theme in the Stronger Together curriculum or as a teaser prior to beginning a theme in the curriculum. The game is played on a tablet in groups of three to four pupils. Each group creates a group name, which they will use every time they log in, if they are playing the game in more than one session. Please, see the online tutorial on how to play the game.

At home, the parents can download the app on their smartphones or on a tablet. They are encouraged to play the game together with their child and take time to discuss the implications of the possible choices with their child before answering. The child can tell the parents what they answered in school, which can lead to a dialogue about similarities and differences from the choices they took together. Please, encourage the parents to see the online tutorial on how to play the game prior to starting the game.

Game time:

Approximately 45-60 minutes per theme.

Components:

Tablets/smartphones with the downloaded app "Stronger Together".

Gameplay:

The overall purpose of the game is to save your friends from becoming radicalized by making good choices in life and helping others do the same.
Each theme (Morality, Self-control, Inclusion & Diversity and Critical Thinking) contains 10 scenarios where you as a group, depending on grade, are randomly subjected to a number of them, and have to make a decision on what you find best to do.

Thus, the game is based on collaboration and discussion among the team players in the group.

Upon starting the game, you are asked to choose a language by pressing on the German, Swedish, Belgian, Italian, North Macedonian, British or Danish flag.

Then you arrive at a page, where you choose class level, what theme and how many of them you want to play, and finally, you write the group name.

When you press "start game" you arrive at the board game: "the village". In the village, you will find a number of moving icons, when you press on one of the icons a scenario opens.

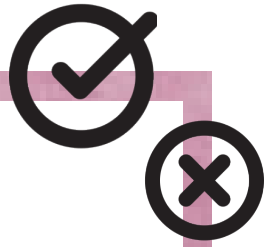
The structure for each scenario is as follows: Upon viewing a scenario, the players initiate a dialogue about the theme and have to choose what they consider the most appropriate response to the problem, given three choices. Each choice has a score. When you take a choice, you will be given feedback on your choice.

When you have played all the scenarios in the session, you will see if any of the characters that your group is trying to save are lost and end in 'jail'. If a character ends in jail, your group will receive an additional chance to save the person after completing the theme.

The characters that your group saves will arrive at the safe haven and are on the players' side in the quest to rescue the lost characters from jail.
They add to the + bonus of the overall score, thereby increasing the chances of saving the "lost ones", hence the term "stronger together".

The characters that you save in a theme are displayed with happy faces at the end of the session; the ones that are lost are displayed behind bars. The more people you save and bring with you, the better are your chances to save the world.

After the game:



It is possible to play the whole game in one session or divide the game into several sessions focusing on one theme (morality, self-control, inclusion & diversity and critical thinking) per session.

If you decide to continue the game after ending a theme, you can press the button: "restart", if you decide to end the game press on the button: "finish". Your scores will appear when you end the game.

BEST PRACTICES

The 'best practices' are a concept covering all possible adaptations that partners, i.e., respective teachers from each country managed to conduct with the help of the pupils, as well as the comments by the pupil's parents. These practices were the successful alternatives to the regular classes and game/modules testing, otherwise hindered under challenging circumstances.

VIFIN Denmark:

School & Country

↳ Vejle Midtbyskole, Denmark

Title of Module /Playing the game

↳ The 5 Modules & the Game

Target group (e.g. pupils 10-12; special students, etc.)

↳ 20 pupils in 5th and 6th grades.

Tested in Spring 2020, halted by COVID19 pandemic, and continued in Autumn, 2020

Describe the variation/adaptation you made from the recommended methodology (e.g., via online learning, etc.)

↳ We selected the tasks we assessed as suitable beds for the students and supplemented with our own slides. Among other things, we find just age-appropriate pictures for the exercise that dealt with rules under the module Morality. In particular, we adapted the module on conflict management with other exercises. We used the conflict ladder and role play to put focus on the topic.

Results:

The students have generally been positive about the course. For all modules, there are only 1-2 students who gave a negative smiley, the others are divided between medium and happy. The course on conflict management in particular has occupied the students.

Quotable quote (from teacher, parents, pupils)/and name of the person giving the quote

"It's a fun course and I want to learn more about it." Student, 5th Gradehas occupied the students.

Östra Göinge, Sweden:

School & Country

- Snapphaneskolan, Sweden
- Prästavångsskolan, Sweden
- Mölleskolan, Sweden

Title of Module /Playing the game

- Inclusion & Diversity
- Morality
- Critical Thinking

Target group (e.g. pupils 10-12; special students, etc)

- 10 - 12 years
- 10 years
- 12 years

Describe the variation/adaptation you made from the recommended methodology (e.g. via online learning, etc.)

- I found it easier to work with the activities with the older pupils and the game itself appealed more to the younger ones.
- I started the theme playing the game all together using a projector. After a dilemma the pupils discussed what to do in small groups. After a while we discussed the dilemma together.
- I have used the material as a starting point and made my own exercise to be able to continue the discussions.

Results

- We managed to get depth in the discussions.
- The pupils got familiar with the concept and learned a way to work with the material.
- The pupils became very involved in the process and in the discussions of the theme.

Quotable quote (from teacher, parents, pupils) / and name of the person giving the quote

- "Working with Stronger together has been great fun! The most positive thing about the activities was the discussions." (Oscar Ottosson)
- "It has been fun working on the project. Sometimes a question has seemed strange to the students, but the discussions have been very valuable. We will continue with this." (Eva Olsson)
- "You shouldn't believe everything you hear. If someone says that Messi has died and you think it's true, you might have to double check if it's really true. That is to be critical to sources" (Pupil, age 12)

" Every lesson should be like this!" (Pupil, age 12)

VNB, Germany

School & Country

- Germany
- GHS Altenbruch Cuxhaven
- Gymnasium Lüchow

Title of Module /Playing the game

- Self-control "physical reflection"
- Inclusion and Diversity "the lemon country"

Target group (e.g. pupils 10-12; special students, etc.)

- 5th grade upper secondary school
- 5th -6th grade lower secondary school for students with special needs

Describe the variation/adaptation you made from the recommended methodology (e.g., via online learning, etc.)

- The teacher combined the exercise "physical reflexion" with the image of the "self-control battery" to explain the different levels of self-control.
- Both teachers developed independently from each other a variation of the "lemon country" game. One changed the

lemons to oranges and made freshly squeezed orange juice for the class after the exercise. The other panned to do lemon lemonade with the students after the exercise as part of teaching about healthy food. Unfortunately this was not possible because of corona restrictions.

Results

- The image of a battery for self-control was quickly internalised by the students and they used it to explain their own behaviour and those of others.
- The "lemon country" was a fun game which made it easy for the students to discuss topics about diversity, minorities, belonging to different groups etc.

Quotable quote (from teacher, parents, pupils)/and name of the person giving the quote

- "You can imagine how enthusiastic I felt when I noticed how much this module stimulated my pupils to self-reflection".
- "The students just loved to talk about their name!"
- " We will organize a teacher training with the curriculum and the game at our school"

CSCI, Italy

School & Country

- Scuola Media Statale "Tanzio da Varallo) VC, Italy
- Scuola Media Statale "Rosa Stampa", Vercelli, Italy

Title of Module /Playing the game

- Inclusion and diversity
- Critical thinking
- Morality

Target group (e.g. pupils 10-12; special students, etc.)

- 11 - 13 years old
- 12 - 14 years old

Describe the variation/adaptation you made from the recommended methodology (e.g., via online learning, etc.)

We did not divide them into pairs but I preferred to ask the whole class the questions foreseen by the Dilemma Game, giving a word and focusing individually on each of them.. The activity included 5 dilemmas but for lack of time - given the discussions and multiple reflections and questions that arose - only 3 were asked.

Due to the impossibility for the children to use the tablets in group, the Stronger Together application was presented to the pupils but was not used at school. They had already been invited by teachers to download it at home so that they could use it as a discussion tool with their families, which some of them had done.

Results

On the whole, the students showed awareness about the topic, about their own feeling and social feelings, as well as enthusiasm and involvement. Despite the good level of emotional openness achieved, enthusiasm and participation, the degree of maturity of the classes (one, above all) is not very high, exactly as high as the ability to manage oneself in a group. The students were literally "taken by the hand" through reasoning (something of which they seem to have lost the habit) and reflection, necessary elements for the success of the module's experimentation.

Quotable quote (from teacher, parents, pupils)/and name of the person giving the quote

- "Very difficult but fascinating"; "The thing I have learned is to identify myself in situations" (students)
- "Morality is a teaching for the future"; "this project has made me understand how difficult and sad it is";
- "Heavy activity, if you don't change your mind about what is right or wrong, it seems useless as an activity, the only thing you can do is to raise awareness".

Eco - Logic, North Macedonia

School & Country

- Elementary school "Bratstvo" – Skopje
- Elementary school "Strasho Pindjur" – Sokolarci

Title of Module /Playing the game

- School "Bratstvo" - physical testing of module 5
- School "Strasho Pindjur" – physical testing of app-game modules 1, 2, 3 & 4 (conducted in a physical, as well as remote environment for virtual testing)

Target group (e.g. pupils 10-12; special students, etc.)

- 5th grade (age: 10-11)
- 5th and 6th grade (age: 10-11, 11-12)

Describe the variation/adaptation you made from the recommended methodology (e.g., via online learning, etc.)

- School "Bratstvo": In February/March we have tried to test out module 5 physically, within the context of the curriculum as well. We had a dramatization exercise with 3 small groups of the same class, but divided into different classroom corners. The online chat discussions for the test-session we had with them proved to be quite useful for them to understand the long-term benefits. The online chats were more of a detailed reflection for the dramatization.
- School "Strasho Pindjur": In September/October 2020 we tried out modules 1 to 4 through the digital app for the game. The pupils played this game at home foremost (remotely), and less in physical classes. We accentuated the home gameplay within this context. The app was more popular via online chats, and this gave us the chance to discuss this more during online classes.

Results

- Pupils had full attention over all modules, and kept good focus for all of them. Discussing about the game brought teachers and children closer, even if only online.
- The modules motivated pupils to think more in depth for the long-term usefulness of modules; their complexity and benefits.
- We have managed to reach a good level of constructive discussion with the pupils; a self-evaluation of their understanding.

Quotable quote (from teacher, parents, pupils)/and name of the person giving the quote

- "This project is quite unique because it involves pupils practically. It is a smart way to discuss serious topics with youths. And, it's online! A big advantage" (teacher: Tatjana Trpezanovska)
- "We, as many other countries, needed something like this to activate delicate topics with many ethnicities among children. Sometimes teachers need assistance like this for teaching best values to children. This makes them think in depth" (teacher: Zoran Davitkov)

• "Topics like these are always welcome for teaching children. Online presence is tricky in modern times, maybe now we can teach children to be safer in general" (teacher: Vesna Stojanova)

Etterbeek, Belgium

School & Country

↳ Claire joie/Belgium

Title of Module /Playing the game

↳ Self-control

Target group (e.g. pupils 10-12; special students, etc.)

↳ 6th grade

Describe the variation/adaptation you made from the recommended methodology (e.g., via online learning, etc.)

↳ • We have adapted the scenarios for the activity "I take one step back or one step forward depending on the situation to indicate the level of self-control".

E.g.: If I have to queue up to correct an exercise, if I have to wait my turn to speak, if I disagree with someone and that person does not want to hear my point of view, ...

• Using images such as a battery that runs down but can be recharged is very visual for children and helps them better understand an abstract concept.

• It made it easier for us to have the final objectives. It made it possible to have a written support.

• The module took twice as long as expected.

Results

↳ • The children become aware of their level of control through the different activities.

• Together, the children propose ideas to the group in order to help each other to control the different situations. For example: If you are very upset, go around the playground, hit a pillow, shout very loudly,...

• When you have calmed down, talk to the person you had a problem with again and explain how you felt.

Quotable quote (from teacher, parents, pupils)/and name of the person giving the quote

↳ Anabel et Carole : teachers

The pupils with whom we organised these activities are no longer in the school.

Disclaimer

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