MENTORING TOOLKIT FOR ROMANI AMBASSADORS

MENTORING PROGRAMME FOR ROMA YOUNGSTERS SUPPORT AND TACKLING ON EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING
ROMANI AMBASSADORS 2.0
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Contents

Co-funded by the European Union

Introduction and Intercultural competences approach

It is a fact that people move within the same country, or to other countries, in search of options and opportunities for human development and well-being that a certain place or context does not offer, or in search of international protection to flee from situations of conflict, violence, violation of human rights, etc. In several European countries the Roma Community represents approximately 10% of the total population. Although these countries employ Roma members to help improve the situation of Roma youth, their representation in education is low. And is characterized with high percentage of early school leaving.

To prevent and overcome divisions and to create suitable conditions for the equal coexistence of all in ethnically and culturally diverse societies, there is an urgency for democratic thinking, mutual respect, a transcendence of the ethno-centric perspective.

In order to achieve this, it is important that the educational system is also orientated towards these goals and values so the whole school system should be based on and encourages the intercultural approach which is a pedagogical-didactic principle, which directs the implementation of education in a way that supports the transformation of the existing subjugated ethnic/cultural minority groups within the educational system.

Co-funded by the European Union

Intercultural education is based on seeing culture as a changing category, which does not exist as an independent phenomenon, but is constantly (re)producing itself in relation(ship)s to/with other cultures.

Intercultural education can also be linked to the ideas of "culturally relevant pedagogy", as defined by Ladson-Billings, who singles out three key criteria on which such pedagogy should be based:

a) students must experience academic success

b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence

c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order

Platform and Procedures

This mentoring toolkit is part of the Digital Mentoring Training materials that are available for anyone to go over them for free via a MOOC platform.

What is MOOC? A massive open online course (MOOC) is a free web-based distance learning program that is designed for large numbers of geographically dispersed learners.

The platform could be found through the following link: https://palambassadors.eu/ and serves as a recourse for trainers, social workers, teachers, NGO's, human rights activists, experts in social integration, educators, job counselors with relative experience in working with Romani people or other exclusion groups, etc.

The platform hosts six modules with 40 hours duration of training, and advises the trainees through the whole process of mentoring acceleration and new skills creation.

The role of the platform is to reach as many learners possible and provide them with the opportunity to make use of the training materials and modules created during the implementation of the project.

The training materials contain theoretical lessons, practical exercises and post-study quizzes representing innovative approach for mentoring procedure with Romani children and youth.

In brief about the six modules that are included in the platform as part of Digital Mentoring training:

1 Building Mentoring and Mediation Relationship

Includes fundamentals of mentoring and mediation, two of the most effective ways to tackle the inequalities of Roma in Europe. Dives into the mentoring process, contains examples from good practices through Europe, and includes practical exercises on mentoring and a goal-setting worksheet.

2 Well being, Self-Esteem and resilience

This module focuses on the topics of well being, self-esteem and resilience and how to use them when working with children and youngsters from national minorities especially with the ones from Roma origin.

3 Active listening & communication

Talks about the importance of active listening and includes some techniques and examples related to active listening, as well as non-verbal communication tips, and cultural differences when it comes to listening & communication.

4 Conflict management and problem solving, strengths-based approach

Includes definitions and reasons for conflict, ideas on how to manage it, and tips on problem-solving, as well as some practical exercises.

5 Absolvents and the issues facing young people

Goes over the definition of absolvents and also issues threatening youth nowadays regarding mental health, well-being, over usage of alcohol and drugs, and bullying.

6 Intercultural skills and competences

Provides a summary on essential intercultural knowledge and includes practical exercises on culture, identity, and meaning.

Aim of the Manual

The aim of the current guide is to introduce the techniques and stages of development of the mentoring process to Romani trainers and practitioners so they can be beneficiated by it. Individuals with a Roma background, from local Roma communities or with a good knowledge of Roma issues, are trained and hired to act as mentors reducing early school leaving.

Developing intercultural competencies amongst the experts working with young Romani people and children from different areas of sectoral action is a key aspect in advancing the construction of intercultural schools and educational centers.

The Romani Ambassadors 2.0 project aims to improve the quality of the mentoring process based on the third approach: real and effective intercultural approach. The general aim of the training curricula is to improve the quality and effectiveness of the work being conducted by educational mentors, with a view to supporting better communication and cooperation between Roma and schools to tackling the early school leaving.

Good practices, examples and projects to tackle the early school leaving

ROMANINET
A multimedia Romani course for promoting linguistic diversity and improving social dialogue.
Aim of the project is the production of a course in standard Romani in multimedia format, based on the European Common Framework of Reference for Languages. It will be used by adults and young people, being suitable for being used by people with a low academic level.

InterCult
Intercultural Trainers Kit for Migrants' Educators"
The aim of the project is to improve the intercultural skills of educators for delivering efficient language training to adult migrants.

MEYC « Move and expand your competencies! »
The aim of this program is to enabling 380 youth workers working with progressive education methods to experience a positive professional mobility in Europe.

SODIVERS
The aim of the project is to create a new generation of trained social entrepreneurs who operate with opportunities and resources in the civil sector, apply the principles of inclusion and equality.

Roma HEALTH Care
The aim of this program is to improve the health situation of Roma in the partner countries. It was the first time that the health situation of Roma in different European countries was researched.

COMPASS
The aim of the project is to recognize and improve youth work and its impact on NEETs education and labor market inclusion. To develop a competence-based training explicitly targeting youth workers' soft skills development based on a tailor-made competence model that encompasses the specific knowledge, skills and attitudes required for effective career counseling and mentoring process of NEETs.

Not Only Fair Play
Objectives of the project:
Promotion of awareness of the importance of sport at school through a better integration of physical education into school curricula. Enhancement of sport as a mean to promote social inclusion of all students, particularly those at risk of exclusion and early school leaving. The promotion of an ethical approach to sport .The promotion of a comprehensive sports offer including all sports.

Inclusion of Minorities - A Project in Values
The initial idea of this project is that school is the first place that delivers knowledge, principles, values thus having direct impact on forming personal attitudes, interests and concerns/preoccupations and that it has the duty to support each individual in his/her endeavor to the status of active citizen with a strong sense of belonging to the community he/she lives in.

Promotor Escolar
The aim of this project is to promote school attendance, educational success and the promotion of Roma culture. In this project, they worked with three important elements; the students themselves, the teacher and the families.

Siklavipen Savorença
The aim of this project is to encourage:
Academic success of the Roma students, the educational normalization of Roma students and interculturality and equal opportunities.

Quedem després de classe" (Staying after school) and the Teen Project. Staying After School is a project that provides an educational and playful environment that complements the school life of children between 6 and 12 years old. In this space, activities are carried out that promote cognitive, affective and social development, thus encouraging play as a tool for fun.

Mentoring Zing program

This program designed to help those that haven´t been able to access the world of training and employment on equal terms with the rest. It offers tools, that young people can follow their path. It also help them to discover their talents and potentialities to participate in an impact scholarship program.

The "Coordinator of Social Mentoring"

This is a network of organizations that develop mentoring projects aimed at groups in vulnerable situations.

Their first project was in 1999 and have been going ever since. The Coordinator works to promote quality mentoring in the field of social action and to reduce inequalities.

Inclusive Schools: Making a Difference for Roma Children

The European Commission and Council of Europe are initiating a new joint project on "Inclusive schools: making a difference for Roma children" targeting schools where Roma children learn, in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovak Republic and United Kingdom.

National Strategies for Counseling

ROMED approach model

In the year 2011, the ROMED1 Programme was initiated with the aim of training mediators around Europe. The general aim of the ROMED (Roma Mediator Training) is to improve the quality and effectiveness of the work of Roma and Sinti as school & health mediators, educational counselors and educational facilitators in order to support better communication and cooperation between Roma and Sinti and public institutions (schools, health care providers, employment offices, local authorities, etc.).

ROMED program is focused on the following three main goals:

1. The promotion of effective intercultural mediation to improve communication and cooperation between Sinti, Roma and public institutions.

2. To ensure the integration of a rights-based approach in mediation between Sinti&Roma families and public institutions.

3. Supporting the work of mediators, educational advisors and facilitators by providing tools for planning and implementing their activities that promote democratic participation while empowering Roma and Sinti families and increasing accountability of public institutions.

What does a Roma mediator do?

The role and practical responsibilities of the mediator will depend a great deal on the kinds of issues specific to the schooling of Roma children in the context where one works. Despite this, we can summarize the main responsabilities in the following points:

• Ensuring school attendance
• Preventing and tackling the problem of school drop-outs
• Encouraging academic success
• Favouring positive relations between Roma and non-Roma children

In early 2000's Roma mediator saw an increase in the need of promoting the inclusion of roma children in schools, in some countries the employment of Roma mediators/assistants started in the 1980s and 1990s. Spain, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Finland, France and Romania are some examples. After the 2000's, under the new European Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies, EU Member States were required to submit strategies on Roma inclusion to the European Commission (EC) by the end of December 2011.

National Integration Strategies of each European country of interest

Romania

Although Romania has a long history in employing Roma mediators/assistants in schools, this does not necessarily mean ensuring quality of said strategies.

The previous strategy for reduction early school leaving in Romania proposed four piling and six programme representative, composed with preventive measures, intervention and compensation.

PILLAR 1: Ensuring access to education and a quality education for all children

PILLAR 2: Ensuring the completion of compulsory education by all children

PILLAR 3: Reintegration in the educational system of people who left school early

PILLAR 4: Development of adequate institutional support

Bulgaria

Roma education in Bulgaria is a serious and topical problem. The actual number of Roma people is difficult to establish because of the internal diversity of their community and because their representatives are defined as ethnic Bulgarians or ethnic Turks.

In the 2011 census, according to NSI (National Surveys Institute) data, in 2011 (1 February 2011), Roma identified themselves as 320.761 or 4.9% of the population of Bulgaria.

The strategy has its own priorities:
Full integration of Roma children and students through desegregation of kindergartens and schools in the separate Roma neighborhoods and creation of conditions for equal access to quality education outside of them.

However, there are no budgets allocated for the Strategy in Bulgaria. A Decision of the Council of Ministers to withhold the Annex 'Programs for the Implementation of NRIS', described by Amalipe Foundation as the most concrete constituent of the document package, with clear deadlines and funding sources, implies that the NRIS is lacking the vital ingredient for implementation.

Spain

The country has experience with strategies for Roma integration since it has had Programmes/Action Plans for the Development of the Roma Population since 1989 (current Programme: 2010-2012), and created the State Council of the Roma People in 2005.

Nonetheless, in spite of 40 years of social and education policies aimed at achieving the full convergence of Roma with the rest of society, this goal
is still very far from being attained. This is due to multiple reasons, such as Spain trying to recover from many years under a Dictatorship, the financial crisis, a multicultural society with not much interculturality, etc.

The illiteracy rate of Roma overall population was 7% in 2013 and 5.5% in 2018 (Hernández et al. 2019), 8.6% in 2011 and 9.85% in 2018 (FSG 2019).
43.3% of Roma population has completed the compulsory secondary education (Damonti and Arza Porras 2014). This figure is 34.9% in the last FOESSA survey0020(Hérnandez et al. 2019)
50.3% of Roma students skip school between 5 and 10 days per month (FSG 2013).

Czech Republic

The Czech Republic has experience with the Roma integration strategies and with specific measures targeting Roma, such as the Decade of Roma Inclusion, involvement in the EU Roma Network and building on experiences from previous strategies. Even without explicit reference to the 10 Common Basic Principles for Roma Inclusion, the Concept complies with all the principles.

The Concept above all takes into account the socially excluded Roma population, which it breaks down into vulnerable groups. The only principle that the Concept falls short on is Principle 7 – Use of Community instruments. In essence, the Concept does not contain references to the EU legislative and political framework.

Another weak point of the Concept is the absence of budgets for individual measures and indicators of their impact. Monitoring of implementation thus speaks to the fulfilment of individual tasks, but not to the actual impact on the life of the Roma minority.

Therefore, despite some of its improvements, there are still many challenges which the Roma community in the Czech Republic are currently facing due to a lack of implementation of the necessary national strategies.

Sweden

Within the Roma inclusion strategy the municipalities have a central role in the work to improve the situation of Roma people, because they are responsible for activities that are crucial for Roma's opportunities for inclusion in society.

The leading organisation for the Roma inclusion strategy is Länsstyrelsen (The Stockholm County Administrative Board).
Länstyrelsen has since 2012 coordinated and done the follow up efforts within the framework of the strategy. The authority's mission includes, supporting municipalities to develop working methods and methods for Roma inclusion and ensuring that these are disseminated to municipalities, regions and relevant authorities.

The County Administrative Board has stressed that there needs to be a permanent funding for municipalities that work strategically for Roma inclusion. The lack of funding means that the work will be short-term and project-oriented. During the Corona pandemic, it has also become clear that activities that are outside of regular line work and that lack government grants tend to be de-prioritized.

Greece

In Greece, the Roma community is subject to a multi-faceted social exclusion in the sectors of housing, employment, health and education.

A national research for the General Secretariat for the Management of European Funds and the NGO "Efksini Polis", conducted in 2008, recorded that 54.7% of Roma has never received schooling, 33.4% have finished only a few grades in elementary school, 7% has graduated from elementary school, 3,4% has followed some grades in lower secondary education, 0.5% has concluded lower secondary education and thus compulsory education, while only 1% has continued to higher secondary education.

In Greece, the strategic approach follows the concept of the previous 'Integrated Action Program for the Social Inclusion of Greek Roma (2001-2008)' and adopts specific guidelines, taking into consideration the conclusions of the assessment and results of interventions.

The Integrated Action Plan specified two axes:

1: Infrastructure
2: Services.

A key conclusion deriving from the Integrated Action Plan (2001-2008) assessment is that at planning level, the plan responded to the necessity and the timely character of the integrated approach based on Greek Roma diagnosed needs and problems.

The current situation in the partners' countries

Bulgaria

In the context of today's post-industrial, globalizing society, the problem of the access of children to school education and early school leaving (ESL) is of particular importance and relevance to the EU countries.

A number of studies in Bulgaria show that the over-concentration of ESL students is characteristic of two types of schools as a whole.
Schools which are the only schools in a settlement. The percentage of non-enrolled secondary school pupils who have completed primary schools has almost doubled thereSuch a situation is often explained by the fact that in some of the more conservative and patriarchal communities in Bulgarian society the physical closeness of the school is one of the key prerequisites for attendance and the absence of a school in the settlement leads to dropping/ not enrolling in the school.

Segregated Roma or Gypsy schools (qualifies them as so-called "ghetto schools") in which the number of dropouts is extremely high: in Roma neighborhoods in big cities, and sometimes in smaller ones, there are schools in which nearly all pupils are from the Roma minority.School segregation can reveal itself both as inter-school segregation and intra-school segregation with separate Roma classes, but in all its dimensions it is a special form of discrimination which, in Roma case, overlaps with lower quality education .

To sum up, the desegregation of the Roma education should become the mainstay of national education strategies in order to ensure equal educational opportunities for all children along with comprehensive socialization.

Romania

In the last ten years, the early school leaving rate in Romania has been steadily decreasing and Romania has set out to reach the target of 11.3% in 2022. The highest early school leaving rate was 17.3% in 2013, placing Romania behind only four countries with higher early school leaving rates: Italy, Portugal, Spain and Malta.

The causes of early leaving are multiple and diverse: lack of accessibility in general and reasonable adaptation in education, lack of access technologies and assistive technologies and devices in the education process, insufficiency of support services offered, lack of adapted transport, poor family awareness of to the importance of developing the potential of the child/young person with disabilities, discriminatory or negative attitudes regarding the school

Early school leaving is a significant problem, especially in rural areas. At the secondary education level, the dropout rate was 1.5 times higher in rural schools than in urban schools. Poor students lag behind the more affluent, and their access to upper secondary and post-secondary education is limited.The early school leaving rate almost doubled among vocational and technical students between the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years. This growth is largely explained by the financial crisis.

One effect was the demotivation of low-achieving students, who faced a greater risk of dropping out than of completing the degree program in which they were already enrolled, and this contributed to an increase in youth unemployment, not enrolled in any form of education or training (also called NEET). Students in Romania leave school early for various reasons, including personal, family, school and social factors. It is generally the result of a progressive and cumulative process of declining engagement.

Czech Republic

Preventing early leaving from education and training (ELET)
Lowering drop-outs from education (with the identical definition as the Eurostat, meaning 'The proportion of persons in the age of 18–24 years, who reached education in the maximum level of ISCED 2 and are not in the process of formal education or vocational training.') was one of the indicators of the fulfilment of the Strategy for Education Policy of the Czech Republic until 2020 (in the responsibility of the MEYS).
This figure is surveyed by the Czech Statistical Office by the annual Labour Force Sample Survey.

The goal is to have less than 5.5% of persons fall into the aforementioned definition by the year 2020. This goal has already been reached. This goal was fully in line with the Europe 2020 strategy, which states that there should be less than 10% of individuals leaving the educational system early, in the year 2020.
The average drop-out rate in the Czech Republic (6.7%), although lower than in the EU (10.6%), has been increasing recently. Moreover, in some regions (Ústí nad Karlovy Vary) it is multiplied (15%).

Formal education: main policy measures on ELET

The issue of early leavings is partially tackled by the Education and career guidance which is considered as a prevention and intervention measure to tackle early leaving, as specified in the 2004 Education Act and Decree 72/2005 on providing guidance in schools and school guidance facilities. However, it is not explicitly considered as a compensation measure to tackle early leaving.

For more detailed information about the main policy measures on ELET scan the QR code:

Sweden

In December 1999, the Swedish parliament decided to implement the Council of Europe's Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages.

Stockholm municipality's goal is that until 2040 have a school and kindergarten for everybody regarding background, national minority, languages and other conditions. However reports on the conditions of Roma students in preschool and school as well as dialogues with Roma show that the conditions for many Roma are not satisfactory.

Roma students' and parents' experience discrimination and vulnerability at school, further the trust and relationship with with teachers and other school staff are low- which affect access to preschool and primary school. It is therefore important that preschools and schools in the city of Stockholm actively work against discrimination and promote equal rights and possibility in accordance with the Discrimination law.

In a study by the Ombudsman against ethnic discrimination (DO) shows that around 90 percent of the Swedish population believes that Sweden is a racist country and the same number believe that Sweden is to some extent are extent hostile to the Roma minority.

For more detailed information about the current situation in Sweden scan the QR code:

Greece

According to the Eurostat definition, early school leavers are those who:

- Are in the 18-24 age group
- Have an education at most up to a lower secondary school leaving certificate, which corresponds to ISCED level 2 (equivalent to Greek High School) or short ISCED
- Have not participated in education and training activities four weeks

prior to the day of collection of the Labor Force Survey data.

School dropout is associated with:
•the low educational level
•the individual level
•the highest unemployment rates
•the lowest wages/low wages
•the most difficult professional development
•to a degree with higher chances of delinquency, social marginalization

CAUSES OF SCHOOL LEAKAGE

Stereotypes and social exclusion
Roma children usually attend school units in or near the camps, they "join" the education among them, while they are excluded from the dominant group.

Poor living conditions
Difficult living conditions and economic poverty do not make the education of Roma children a priority. People must first ensure decent living conditions so that they can afford to deal with the education of their children.

Difficulty accessing Structures
There are places in Greece where the access of Roma children to school structures is difficult (such as in Kamylovrisi, Lamia)

Introduction to mentoring

Mentors represent a real professional category, identifiable among the didactic functions exercised in the school environment. The main mission of this professional category is to facilitate the process of professional integration of beginners in the school units where they work.

In this era of the complexification of professional training processes, the mentoring option corresponds much better to the needs of the moment. Direct experience from professional environments as well as educational research has highlighted the fact that being a mentor is quite a difficult task and that the fulfillment of related roles can no longer be left to the intuition and groping.

Informal mentoring relationships have a spontaneous character, they are voluntarily initiated between two compatible people, one of them being more experienced, who is asked for psycho-social support. There is a classification of mentoring types:

1. Educational mentoring is appropriate in schools, but also in university institutions. This activity supports the specialist's initial professional training.

2. Induction mentoring aims to guide the individual at the beginning of his professional career. It is frequently practiced by organizations with the aim of helping new employees to adapt to specific working conditions. This process assumes that the beginning of the mentee is oriented to the knowledge of the functional state of the organization, but also of the method of performing the requested service.

3. Training mentorship is predestined for employees who want to develop new skills or adapt to new changes in the system. The role of the training mentor can easily be confused with that of the training instructor, or a trainer. In a training mentoring relationship, a mentor is an experienced person who is willing to help new employees but is not entrusted with this task.

4. Mentoring for professional/vocational qualifications can be applied during the orientation period to obtain a qualification. The role of the mentor is to guide the disciple along his training.

5. Developmental mentoring is effective in the general development of the disciple, manifesting itself through assistance, guidance, and counseling in different stages of development or stages of transition. The presence of a development mentor in any institution is beneficial. It can facilitate the transfer of employees to another position, their placement in new projects, and overcoming professional activity problems.

Coaching is largely used for companies and sports, although it has become part of many life skills. The coach will focus on specific areas that require improvement or help implement new skills and systems.

Coaching and mentoring share the goal of helping others grow, develop and reach their full potential. Both methods give people the opportunity to take responsibility for their own personal, life, career, and business development.

Some people use multiple trainers or mentors throughout their life and career, depending on their desired goals. You can have a life coach for situations related to your personal life and you can work with a business coach for your business goals or with a career coach if you want to develop your career. You can also work with a specialized health coach if your goal is one related to nutrition and physical exercise.

Coaching and mentoring are two similar development techniques commonly used in the workplace to improve individual performance and skills. Coaching is often short-term, while mentoring tends to be an ongoing process. Coaching aims to achieve specific skills and goals, while guidance covers a broad scenario relating to a person, where it focuses on both professional and personal aspects. Coaching is often short-term and tied to achievements of organizational relevance. On the other hand, when talking about mentoring, the focus is on long-term relationships and broader and broader development.

Mentoring process – Mentor vs Mentee

The roles and responsibilities of a mentor

1. Act as a role model
By definition, a mentor is a person who others look up to and respect. But with recognition comes responsibility. Employees expect you to set the standards for both their behavior and their achievements.

2. Help mentees with their career development
Mentors may help mentees define their career path through goal-setting. Together, they set out an action plan so that they can achieve their goals within a specific time frame.

3. Provide constructive feedback
Since a mentor's role is to support their mentee's growth and development, it's essential for them to provide constructive feedback. The mentor has experience that the mentee lacks and can use that experience to guide their mentee to their desired destination.

4. Be a coach
A good mentor knows when to use coaching techniques and when to intervene with advice.

A coach encourages their clients to look for their own solutions. But a mentor will also give career advice to their mentee based on their own career.

5. Follow up on their mentee's progress
A mentor should follow up regularly with their mentees to hold them accountable for any actions they agree to take

The roles and responsibilities of a mentee

1. Be coachable
To be coachable means letting the mentor take the lead and being open and willing to listen to their insights. It also means being highly committed to your own personal growth and professional development.

2. Use active listening
When the mentor is speaking, use active listening to understand and absorb the information they're sharing. Reflect back what you've heard them say to make sure you've understood it correctly.

3. Be clear on your goals
You may not know exactly what your professional goals are before starting the mentor-mentee relationship. But you should know what your goals for the mentor-mentee relationship are. You should also know which direction you want to go so that the mentor will know whether they can help or not.

4. Ask for feedback
A good mentor will provide plenty of feedback, but if you need more, you should never be afraid to ask. It can be uncomfortable to receive constructive criticism. But it's fundamental for your professional growth.

5. Respect the mentor's time
The mentor is volunteering part of their precious time to help you. Avoid being late for meetings and keep explanations as concise as possible. You should also respect meeting times and avoid asking for last-minute changes, as well as replying to messages or calls promptly.

A good Mentor:

• is committed to his role

• accepts the protected

• can offer support and guidance

• is effective in different interpersonal relationships

• is a model of continuous learning

• exudes optimism and hope

Useful values

Enthusiasm
When you are looking for a mentor, you should key in on one very important aspect of the possible mentor's personality.

Mutual Respect
Respect for others is not limited to mentors, but it should be on your list of requirements for yours. Mentors should know how to be tactful in their conversations and emotionally intelligent.

Active Listening
A mentor needs to be able to listen to you. They should be involved in the conversation, prompting you for clarity or more information.

Honest Feedback
Feedback is essential to improvement. A mentor should create long-term objectives and short-term goals to help you realize your goals.

Good practices of mentoring

• Suitable match between mentor and mentee

• Clear goals and objectives of the mentoring relationship

• Reciprocity

• Setting time commitments in the relationship

• Planning activities over time

•Regular communication between the two members

•Creating a supportive environment

•Protection and guidance of the mentee

•Provision of psychosocial support

•Achieving life balance

•Career development advice

•Learning networking techniques

•Management support

Mentoring techniques

What is a mentoring relationship?

A mentoring relationship is a connection between a more senior person and a mentee who may be younger, or less experienced. Although the senior-junior mentoring relationship is what usually comes to mind when someone says "mentorship" it doesn't necessarily mean that's the case all the time.

How to build a strong mentorship?

Agree on expectations

Sharing how you got to the position you're currently in and the challenges you've overcome may be a good route to take with the relationship.

Be committed

One of the most important elements for a successful mentorship is a commitment on part of both the mentor and mentee. Mentoring takes time and energy from both participants. Each should be dedicated to playing their part and helping to build a strong relationship.

Give straight feedback

A mentor plays many roles. They're an encourager, an advocate, a coach, a listening ear, a guide, and much more.

Share stories and struggles
Mentors are at their most effective when they share lessons from their own experiences. By sharing your story with all its ups and downs you can take a step towards being vulnerable with your mentee.

Connect your mentee with other people in your network
As a mentor, you likely have a greater network than your mentee. To help them continue to grow and find more opportunities, consider connecting them with people in your network.

Stages of Mentoring

Stage 1: The initiation stage is when the mentoring relationship begins. Both the mentor and mentee are entering the relationship with an open mind.

Stage 2: The growth stage affects both the mentor and the mentor. Both parties find that they benefit from the mentoring relationship and they are each fulfilled from their interactions.

Stage 3: The separation stage occurs in most human interaction and mentorship is no different. At this time, changes occur that make both parties reassess, redefine, and/or reconsider the value of the relationship for the future.

Stage 4: The closure stage is when the relationship ends as it once was because goals have been met and the relationship has run its course in the formal capacity.

There are many types of mentoring

Traditional One-on-one Mentoring
A mentee and mentor are matched, either through a program or on their own

Distance Mentoring
A mentoring relationship in which the two parties (or group) are in different locations.

Group Mentoring
A single mentor is matched with a cohort of mentees.

Traditional mentorship with knowledge transfer
Offers knowledge, gives advice and shares his own judgment and experiences. The mentee is a passive receiver, learn from the model of the experienced

The mentor as the mentee's support and guide
The conversation is based on the mentee's goals and questions, the mentee learns from his aha experiences

The mentor as trainer, sparring partner, coach
Listens to the mentee and acts as a mirror, does not give advice or guide, but supports the mentee's own learning process

Collegial mentoring/ reverse mentoring
The mentor is in a collegial position with his mentee/mentees, the conversations are based on an equal dialogue

Benefits of mentoring for Mentees:

Of course mentees gain a lot from being mentored, but it's not just career development. Further benefits for mentees include:

- Increased self-confidence

- Increased self-awareness

- Develop strong communication skills

- Growing a personal network within the business

- Exposure to new and different perspectives

- Learn to self-reflect

- Improve goal-setting

- Learn from other's experiences

- Learn to ask good questions

- Being supported by someone

- Being advocated for

- Increased chance of promotion

- Increased job satisfaction

Mentoring Plan and template

Mentoring Engagements

	Meeting Goals	Meeting Agenda
1st meeting	Establish the relationship and begin building trust, define the general direction and expectations for the relationship	Conduct relational interview, Define learning need and set expectations, Set agenda for next meeting
2nd meeting	Expand the relationship and continue building trust, clarify the learning objectives and set preliminary goals	Conduct relational check-in, ask questions to establish initial goals, set agenda for the next meeting
3rd meeting	Expand the relationship and continue building trust use effective dialogue worksheet to clearly discuss your mentoring question or issue	Conduct relational check-in, discuss learning objectives using dialogue module, set agenda for the next meting

Mentoring Plan

Mentee: ……………………

Mentor: ……………………...

Please, fill out according to your needs with meeting outcomes agreed by both, mentor & mentee and added after each meeting

Mentoring plan and log of sessions	
Excepted start date	
Expected end date	
Learning objectives of Mentee	
Meeting 1 Date: Venue and/or methods: Meeting will tackle: [indicate the topic of interest] Meeting outcome: **Meeting 2** Date: Venue and/or methods: Meeting will tackle: [indicate the topic of interest] Meeting outcome: **Meeting 3** Date: Venue and/or methods: Meeting will tackle: [indicate the topic of interest] Meeting outcomes:	
Intended frequency of the meetings	☐Monthly ☐Every two months ☐ Quarterly ☐Other: …………….
Intended method of the meetings	☐In person ☐Videoconference ☐ Telephone
Remarks	
Signatures: (Mentor and mentee agree with the above-mentioned)	Mentee: Mentor:

Questions and Answers session

1.What is a mentor?
- A mentor is someone who has more experience than you do in their field and offers guidance and advice on how to succeed. Mentors are usually people who have been promoted or worked at a company for many years. I think mentors are important because they help new employees learn about the company culture and understand expectations. They also provide support when you're unsure about something.

2.What is mentoring?
- Mentoring is when a person seeks guidance from someone who has more experience than them. It's a relationship where both parties benefit because they learn different skills from each other. I had a mentor who helped me with my strategies and taught me new ways to improve my work. She also gave me advice on how to handle certain situations at work.

3.What are the different types of mentors?
- There are many different types of mentors. Some mentors are formal mentors, meaning they've been assigned to mentor someone by an organization or institution. Others are informal mentors, meaning they're helping their mentee without being asked to do so. Finally, there are self-mentors, which are people who learn from books, online courses or other resources.

4.Is it possible to have multiple mentors at the same time?
- It's possible to have more than one mentor at once, but I don't think that would work well for me personally. I find that having one mentor who is available to answer questions or provide advice when needed works best for me because I can get all of my questions answered without having to reach out to multiple people. However, I do think it's important to have mentors with different skill sets so you can learn from many perspectives.

5.How can I find a good mentor for me?
- I find that I learn best from people who are more experienced than me in their field, but not so much that they're too senior to be approachable. In my last role, I had an opportunity to work with someone like this, and it was great because he could answer all of my questions and offer advice on how to improve my own performance. He also helped me navigate through some challenges I faced at work.

6.Why do people need mentors?
- Mentors provide guidance and support for those who need it. They're someone you can turn to when you have questions or concerns about something. I think mentors are so valuable because they give advice that's based on their own experiences. This helps them share information that's relevant to what you're going through.

7.What makes a good mentor?
- A good mentor has patience, empathy and a willingness to learn from their mentee. They are able to listen to their mentee's concerns and provide advice or resources when needed. I am someone who values relationships and communication, so these skills come naturally to me. I also enjoy learning new things, which helps me be open-minded and receptive to my mentees' ideas."

8.Is it possible to become a mentor without any prior experience?
- Yes, anyone can become a mentor without prior experience. In fact, I've done this myself in my previous role as a teacher. When I first started teaching, I didn't have any mentoring experience. However, I was able to use my communication skills to help students understand concepts they were struggling with. This helped me develop my ability to mentor others.

9.How does one know when they've reached their goals as a coach/mentor?
- I believe that setting goals is an important part of being a successful coach because it helps me keep track of my progress and gives me something specific to work toward. In my last role, I set monthly goals for myself and my team members, which helped us all stay focused on our objectives. At the end of each month, we would review our goals together and discuss ways we could improve. This process was helpful for both individual growth and team development.

10.What are some common traits that successful coaches/mentors share?
- I think one of the most important traits that successful coaches/mentors share is their ability to motivate others. I find that when someone has a positive attitude, they're more likely to encourage their mentees to do the same. Another trait that many successful mentors have in common is their willingness to learn from their mistakes. This shows that they're humble enough to know that they don't have all the answers and are willing to ask for help when needed.

11.What is coaching and how does it differ from mentoring?
- Coaching is more active than mentoring. When I am coaching someone, I will actively help them find solutions to problems or teach them new skills. In my last role as a project manager, I coached my team members on how to complete tasks and solve problems. Mentoring is different because it's more of a guiding process. I would give advice and suggestions, but ultimately, I would allow my mentee to make their own decisions.

12. What type of skills should a person possess in order to be an effective coach or mentor?

- I believe that an effective coach or mentor should possess three key skills. First, they need to be able to communicate effectively with their mentee. This means being able to listen as well as speak, asking questions when necessary and making sure you understand what the mentee is saying. Second, they need to have empathy. Being empathetic allows them to relate to their mentee's feelings and experiences. Finally, they need to be organized and prepared. Mentors who are organized and prepared will be better at setting goals and

meeting deadlines."

13. What are some of the challenges associated with being a coach or mentor?

- Coaching or mentoring is a challenging but rewarding job because you're helping someone develop their skills and talents. However, one of the biggest challenges I've faced as a mentor was when my mentee didn't meet our goals for the quarter. We had a meeting where we discussed what went wrong and how we could improve in the next quarter. My mentee understood why they weren't performing well and committed to improving in the next quarter.

Evaluation

This part provides information about the understanding of the benefits and challenges of using participatory approach to evaluation develop skills for planning and conducting a participatory evaluation session. Additionally, is aiming at stimulating further peer learning and support and clarify issues that are still confusing for some members of the group. The overall objective of the module is to develop constructive thinking and planning skills of participants.

Each participant receives a small piece of paper and is asked to write a question about the topics addressed in the training, particularly related to something they are not confident about. All papers are then collected in a box. Participants will take turns in extracting one question from the box and reading it out load to the whole group. Anyone who has an answer is invited to communicate it. Several answers or comments are possible for each question. This goes on until all questions have been dealt with.

The participants are divided in groups of four/five and ask to respond to the questions in hangout. Recommended are the participants to be divided in that way so the members of the groups to have things in common (place of origin, work, education, interests). Representative of each group will share the main elements of the responses.
General discussion about the contribution of the participants to the programme is following.

Exercise: Evaluation form at the end

- What did you expect from this training course?

- To what extent have your expectations been met? Explain why.

- List the three most important things that you have learnt from this course.

- How satisfied are you with your own contribution to the training course? (1 = bad; 5 = excellent)

- How much do you appreciate the co-operation with the other participants during group work?

- List the three most significant contributions that you have made to the training course.

- How are you going to use the ideas learnt in this training course?

- What did you like most in this training course?

- What did you not like or like less in this training course?

- How confident do you feel about implementing what you learnt in practice?

- What specific elements or activities will you implement as a result of your attendance in this training course?

ANNEX
Profile of Mentor for Romani People
Methodology

In the process of detailing the necessary skills, competencies and values that a mentor should encompass, we combined theoretical research with field work following an abductive approach.

Firstly, in order to define what mentoring means, we carried out theoretical research while also taking into consideration the situation and background of the Romani community within each country including the degree of segregated schools, percentage of absentees and percentage of Roma children who reach higher education.

Moreover, because our aim is to create a guide that can be used as a model to follow on a European level, as part of our methodological planning, it was very important to share perspectives with other entities who also work in the same field and have experience working with a mentoring approach including social workers, teachers, psychologists and intercultural mediators amongst other professionals.

In order to translate this into reality, each partner organised in their own home country two local meetings inviting organisations such as NGO's, schools and other entities that worked with mentors and mentees as well as the mentors/mentees themselves whom explained their own experiences and how they benefited from this method of instructing.

Secondly, in order to promote this strategy of sharing further and to include more countries within the definition of the mentor's profile, a very important part of our methodological design involved carrying out a minimum of 10 interviews each addressed to experts in the fields of education, social work and NGO's such as cultural mediators, psychologists and project technicians.

The interviews were carried out through the delivery of an online questionnaire designed through the platform "EU Surveys" which the interviewees could fill in from the comfort of their homes in order to facilitate the process. Said questionnaire was translated into 7 different languages in order to reach the maximum audience possible (Polish, English, Spanish, Romanian, Swedish, Bulgarian, Greek and Lithuanian).

The goal was for this questionnaire to be answered not only by professionals within each partner country but also other European countries which permitted a much broader view on mentoring. The questions were specifically devised to gather the maximum and detailed information regarding the profile of the mentor; his/her social, cultural and educational backgrounds, his/her abilities, skills (soft skill, hard skills, competencies), his/her personal aptitudes, attitude and core-values.

The distribution and dissemination of this questionnaire was one of our main strategies to gain insight into the profile of the mentor, in order to create a reference model that can be used on a European level in the implementation of mentoring.

Analysis

As explained in the previous section, in order to adequately define the profile of the mentor along with the set of skills that are required to successfully forge a relationship between mentor and mentee, a questionnaire was given out to different experts in the fields of education, social work, cultural mediators, psychologists and Project technicians all of which, a 96.51 %, have or have had experience in working with socially excluded groups (Roma, migrants, people with disabilities, unemployed, NEETs, etc.) from an array of different ages starting from as young as 5 to adulthood (18-24).

However, it goes without saying that most mentees are of a young age whether teenagers still undergoing their obligatory education years or young adults about to enter the labour market.
This degree of intersectionality considering factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, economic and cultural context is, precisely, what allows us to capture a deeper insight into our object of research.

Furthermore, the detection process of the targets is, precisely, by considering the social and cultural factors aforementioned, with which it is possible to evaluate the degree of social exclusion, vulnerability and discrimination of the targeted groups that the experts in social inclusion intend to support.

A total of 86 questionnaires have been filled out by experts, both men and women (but especially women) proceeding from an array of different European countries not only belonging to the countries of residence of the European partners involved but also other nationalities too. Some of these countries are Romania, Bulgaria, Sweden, Lithuania, Scotland, Spain, Greece, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Turkey, Albania, Montenegro etc. (amongst many others) in order to obtain a broader look into the methodology applied on a European level.

Most of the experts (more than half) pertaining to different schools, NGO's and organisations across Europe have an extensive experience in implementing mentoring practices, in fact, more than one year of experience (54.65%).

By mentoring practices, we are referring to support and accompaniment of minors, intercultural mediator, provision of guidance for those in need and the implementation of positive reference models which, as we can see in this graph, all seem to be familiar with and incorporate these good practices in their methodology:

Do you/your organisation implement any of the following good practices?

		Answers	Ratio
Support and accompaniment of minors		59	68.60 %
Intercultural mediator		46	53.49 %
Provision of guidance for those in need		57	66.28 %
Implementation of positive reference models		51	59.30 %
No Answer		1	1.16 %

Moreover, in order to meet the common goal of social inclusion, participation and educational success, many implement a similar methodological approach including dynamic activities (68.60 %) and weekly/ monthly follow-ups between mentor and mentee (39.53 %).

What methodologic approach do you implement in order to meet your aims?

		Answers	Ratio
Informal approach (non-conventional)		59	68.60 %
Formal approach (conventional)		54	62.79 %
Dynamic activities		57	66.28 %
Weekly/monthly follow ups		34	39.53 %
No Answer		1	1.16 %
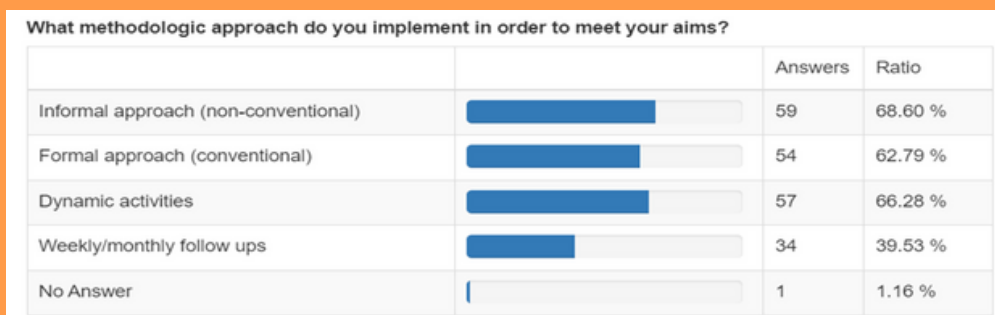
What is interesting is the fact that when it comes to a more conventional or unconventional model, there is more of a division not only between countries but also within the same country between more conventional methods (62.79 %) and non-conventional methods (68.60 %), the latter though being the most used especially in Sweden, Romania, Bulgaria and Spain.

Other techniques used in order to achieve their goals include promotion of Roma culture, working on personal growth, activities between mentor and mentee and support in the educational process through direct contact with the community, schools and families. This cross-section approach is essential for building trust, instilling confidence and assurance as well as being able to identify the current personalised reality of each and every mentee.

The main resource used in order forge a relationship and have a long-lasting impact on the life of the mentee mainly include giving importance to the use of huma capital (77.91 %), that is, when it comes to mentoring, the most important asset are human values and ethics such as respect, empathy taking initiative and being encouraging.

These values can go a long way when it comes to helping the mentee in his/her educational and personal process. Besides this, having a safe space in which mentees can freely express themselves (58.14 %) and making use of the latest digital resources (55.81 %) from an educational point of view is also important so that the mentee can gain broader knowledge on educational tools that can serve useful in their future.

Some of the literal quotes from experts regarding what they personally attach most importance to when it comes to the success of their projects, involve: "support, we try to be a guide for the improvement of the conditions of our users." (educator Fundació Privada Pere Closa Spain), "time offered to each person in order to hear very well about their material and spiritual needs" (social worker from Romania), "Goal setting, follow ups on progress, be available, encourage and support" (Job coach from Sweden), "Regular meetings, we help families and professionals to prepare a "family conference" - a meeting where a family and their loved ones come together to find a solution in their difficult family situation" (Educators from Lata in Czech Republic) and a final quote from a social worker in Bulgaria "active behaviour in the labour market and desire to acquire/improve the knowledge and skills of my mentees."

As we can observe, what is mostly required is a safe space for the mentees to truly develop their full potential which can have a positive impact later in life not only at school but also when it is time to enter the labour market. The only way to guarantee this success, as most experts point out, is by working along with the families, committing long-term and offering a space where the people in need can be heard and will not be judged.
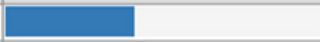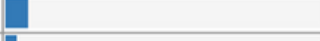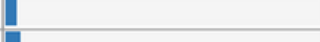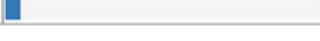
Regarding the skills and social background required for a mentor, it is interesting to analyse the results in which in some aspects coincide and in others don't.

Firstly, when it comes to socio-cultural background, it is proven that it is not as relevant as the level of education or experience meaning that the mentor can come from either a working class or middle-class background without this being a defining factor in their work and capabilities.

Although some do consider that most probably mentors would come from a middle-class background, most, fortunately, believe this is not relevant and, in fact, if the mentee comes from a working class social and cultural background it seems more logical for the mentor to be familiar with this setting in order to truly be able to connect and empathise with the situation of the mentee.
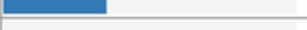
In most cases, the emphasis is put mainly on the level of practical and training experience as one of the most important aspects to bear in mind when it comes to mentoring.

Education

		Answers	Ratio
University Degree		35	40.7 %
Training		38	44.19 %
Secondary education		6	6.98 %
Primary education		3	3.49 %
No Answer		4	4.65 %

As we can see, although education is important, rather than focusing on educational level the most important trait for any mentor to have is professional training (44.19%) (more than one year preferably according to the results) in order to truly be able to face and help those in need as a positive role model.

What is more interesting to look at is the personal aptitudes and skill set that these experts consider necessary to possess in order to become a good mentor:
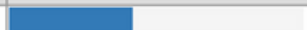
Personal aptitudes

		Answers	Ratio
Social awareness		72	83.72 %
Initiative		57	66.28 %
Core-values (respect, non-discrimination, equality)		72	83.72 %
Empathy/understanding		70	81.4 %
Critical perspective		47	54.65 %
Curiosity		30	34.88 %
No Answer		0	0 %

Social awareness (83,72%), core-values (83,72%) and empathy (81,4%) most certainly stand out as traits necessary for someone who will be working with youth and people in difficult situations.

This is the basis needed to give way to good practices. Looking at some of the qualitative answers from the open questions of the questionnaire, the main emphasis when it comes to core-values append being a positive role model, long term investor a guide to youngsters as well as being an active listener, the only way to truly make a difference starts by listening to those whom mentoring is addressed to; the mentees.

However, a good attitude and personal core-values is still not enough, these must also be accompanied by a specific skill set:

Competencies/skill set

		Answers	Ratio
Soft skills (Word, Excel, ppt)		36	41.86 %
Conflict resolution		67	77.91 %
Critical analysis		60	69.77 %
Adaptability		65	75.58 %
No Answer		2	2.33 %

Conflict resolution (77.91%), having a critical point of view (69,77%) and being able to adapt (75,58%) are all very important competencies required to forge a relationship with the mentee.

Taking some qualitative results from the experts, many quote the close proximity between the mentor and mentee going beyond a conventional relationship between educator and student.

A mentor/mentee relationship should not be confused with a teacher-student relationship, the former encompassing a much larger range of aspects of the mentee's life, differentiating itself from a traditional relationship of power and authority such as with teachers. Let's not forget that mentors, as seen in this research, tend to also be quite young and are not authority figures but guides who develop a much closer relationship with the mentee outside school hours.

The mentor is not only someone who follows up on the grades of the mentee but who also impacts the personal and family life of the mentee which is why being able to adapt, being empathetic and socially aware are all necessary qualities to truly forge a relationship. Having said this, the mentor has an impact on many different areas of life of the mentee not only from a professional point of view but also in terms of personal development.

In which areas can the mentor support his/her mentees?

		Answers	Ratio
Career strategies		56	65.12 %
Leadership behaviour / Assertiveness		40	46.51 %
Marketing (self- Presentation)		31	36.05 %
Presentation's technique		30	34.88 %
Conflict management		52	60.47 %
Work division and time management		40	46.51 %
Contacts from own network/ Networks		29	33.72 %
Compatibility family-career		34	39.53 %
No Answer		11	12.79 %

As we can observe, the mentor influence, personal life, family life, professional life, self-esteem and general outlook on life. Some of the main categories related to work include career strategies (65,12%), work division and time management (46,51%) and Marketing (36,05%) whereas others encompass social skills and family life such as conflict management (60,47%) leadership (46,51%) and family-career compatibility (39,53%).

For this reason, as we saw previously, the mentor must be in possession not only of certain personal traits and core-values but also hard skills and even digital skills such as networking, knowing how to navigate digital platforms and educational training which can benefit the mentee later in life.

The impact of the mentor goes beyond what a conventional educator can do and, most importantly, it can impact the mentee in later life, shape him/her personally and professionally.

Additionally, it is generally agreed upon that this relationship is not simply for one school semester but ongoing, at least one year or even more, perhaps for life depending on how it goes. The mentor does not only have a relationship with the mentee but with his/her surroundings, family and community.
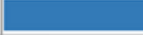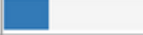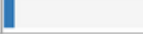
Conclusion

The mentoring methodology goes beyond a student-teacher traditional relationship and beyond a purely economic and work objective, which although included, the ultimate goal, as the experts and organisations interviewed point out, is not merely to acquire techniques to enter the labour market but to go beyond that, to reach social inclusion and cover all aspects of life of the mentee so that he/she can feel more confident in his/her capabilities, feel pride in his/her own skin and feel heard.

The only way to reach this goal, is through mentoring, a methodology proven throughout decades as the most effective educational method which benefits both parties, mentor and mentee.

What do you think are the long term impacts/goals of a mentor-mentee relationship?

		Answers	Ratio
Educational success		27	31.4 %
Social inclusion		43	50 %
Comprehensive and inclusive education		13	15.12 %
No Answer		3	3.49 %

"MENTORING TOOLKIT FOR ROMANI CHILDREN AND YOUTH EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING"