



European Network
for Educational Support Projects



Mentoring for migrant youth in education

A handbook on how to make mentoring sensitive to a diverse student population

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About this handbook

We know from research and experience that all kinds of school pupils can benefit greatly from having a mentor for a period of time, i.e. someone who is a role model and/or can help with developing perspectives for education and for future professional ambitions. Mentors can help to avoid school drop-out, but also to achieve the access to higher education.

Why another handbook on mentoring?

There exist excellent handbooks on mentoring, however, there is something paradoxical about most of them, and that also relates to the practice of most mentoring programs: On the one hand, they very frequently address children and youngsters from migrant families because they are in general more likely to have problems at school or to be considered “pupils at risk”. On the other hand, the specific background of the mentees (be it the migrant background, the socio-economic status, the religious belief in the family or living in deprived area of a city) is conceptually hardly acknowledged or taken into account in most mentoring programs. A majority of them operate with mentors who are quite distanced from their mentees in their life situations and experiences. These projects simply do not look at the specific resources and situations in immigrant families and mixed neighbourhoods. We believe that this is a major shortcoming and therefore this handbook presents material and project portraits in which intercultural competences and the resources and potentials of young people from migrant families stand central.

As part of the SIRIUS network, in 2012 the European Network for Educational Support Projects (ENESP) was founded as a platform for exchange and cooperation between mentoring programs from six European countries. All the projects in the network put a strong emphasis on intercultural sensitivity in mentoring. Some were even started by immigrant or ethnic minority organisations, in others children of immigrants play a central role – not only as mentees, but also as mentors or even in the project coordination. For the ENESP-network it is essential to value particularly the educational resources in the immigrant communities themselves.

Goals of the handbook

With this handbook, the member organisations of ENESP want to share their experience in organising mentoring programs which respect and acknowledge the cultural backgrounds of the mentees. As the network itself, the handbook profits strongly from the exchange across country borders. This exchange has highlighted the fact that mentoring projects share a lot of common aspects, including the potential positive impacts, but also many challenges for creating sustainable good practices.

The portraits and materials collected in this handbook show that intercultural sensitive mentoring is possible and how it can be implemented.

We do not want to replace other existing handbooks, but we believe that we have something important to add, something that has been ignored in previous efforts. The training of the mentors might be an example here. Other handbooks only mention themes which are directly related to coaching techniques and similar. These are important fundamentals not to be ignored, but we think that the training and preparation of the mentors should also discuss intercultural issues and how to deal with the cultural background of mentees, their families and the mentors. We have learned in our project practices that the background is important for several specific goals of mentoring and at specific stages of the mentoring relationship. And this should be found back in the curriculum of the training of the mentors.

Acknowledgments

We used other handbooks as sources of inspiration; especially the online handbook of www.mentoring.org must be mentioned and recommended here. Another interesting training kit is the EMYA T-Kit, available at www.emya-mentoring.eu.

The handbook presented here is a collection of items and contributions from the member organisations and mentoring programs in the network. All of them wrote parts and contributed to those chapters in the handbook that were most relevant to them and shared their practical instruments. This handbook is going to be a constant work in progress as we are hoping to revise and enlarge it regularly.

If readers are interested in knowing more about the member organisations or contacting them, please refer to the ENESP-Brochure or the portraits in the ENESP-section of the SIRIUS Homepage.



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The Process of Mentoring

Chapter 1

Definition of goals: designing and planning of mentoring projects

Since mentoring is such a versatile and open concept, the initiative for a project can come from almost anyone: a few parents, a few university students, a school, an immigrant or neighbourhood organisation, a city district, a school board or even a national ministry of education. This is how some of the projects in our network began.

Mentorproject SKC

The Mentorproject started in 1998 in Amsterdam. We started with four schools and 15 years later we now work at approximately 50 schools in Amsterdam.

One of the unique points in our project is the close cooperation with the schools for primary and secondary education, which is essential for our planning and management through the year. Before the start of a new school year, at each school a meeting is held between our project manager, the involved teachers and members of the school management. In this meeting, the planning of the year, the matches between mentors and mentees and other relevant issues are discussed.

The central focal point of our project is the transition from primary to secondary education (after eight years at age 12), a particularly sensible phase in every child's school career. Part of our concept and method for the seventh and eighth grade (last two years of primary

education) is to prepare the pupils for the test and the choice of the secondary school. We focus on social skills which are relevant for the choice and the transition. We developed six different themes which all cover social and learning skills both for 7th and 8th grade. In every grade the teachers can make a choice for three or four out of these six existing themes they want the mentor to work on with the mentees.





Junge Vorbilder

This project was founded in 2004 in Hamburg with the goal to support the transition from lower secondary (and the end of compulsory education) to upper secondary education.

The concept responds to the problematic that only the academic track of Gymnasium at that time (a school reform in 2009 changed this) allowed the direct and almost automatic access to upper secondary education which, in turn, is the precondition for the access to any kind of higher education. But most children from immigrant and low-educated families are streamed after primary education into non-academic school tracks. From these tracks the transition to upper secondary involves a change of school and the fulfilment of quite demanding school pre-station requirements. The project thus aims at supporting children from immigrant and low-educated families with the potential and ambition for university or college in this transition to upper secondary education.

While the 1:1-mentoring mostly happens outside the school context, since 2011 we also offer tutoring courses which since the abolishment of grade repetition in Hamburg the schools have to provide for all pupils with specific problems.

A particular characteristic of our project is that all our mentors come from immigrant families and study at one of the higher education institutions in Hamburg (see also Part 2.b.).

Giovani al Centro

Giovani al Centro is a project of the Intercultural Centre of the City of Turin, organized in cooperation with the Asai Association.

It was created in 2009 because of a lack of after-school support in Turin for teenagers in high school. The project is a brilliant example for how a public service and a private association can cooperate on reaching common goals. The general departure point is that a city full of intercultural relationships must bet on new generations and their capabilities. The mission of the project is to give a valuable opportunity to teenagers to meet up in a protected environment, valuing the plurality of their cultural belongings as a chance for sharing and for personal growth.

Ağabey-Abla

The German-Turkish Forum Stuttgart e.V. started its combined mentoring and scholarship program called Ağabey-Abla (Turkish for "big brother-big sister") in February 2009 with the support of the private Robert Bosch Foundation.

The project is situated within the Turkish community in Stuttgart: both the mentees and the mentors have a Turkish background. The mentees are school pupils in primary or lower secondary education in the age group 7-14 years old from four elementary and secondary schools and one grammar school.

Our mentors are 16-28 years old and engage voluntarily, but they receive financial support in the form of a study grant of the Bosch Foundation (next to workshops and trainings in personal, social, pedagogical and career themes) and become part of a growing network.

In our program the cooperation with the schools is very important, because it is the teachers who help to

select the mentees, and they also regularly meet with the mentors in order to adjust the educational goals for the respective mentees.

But the mentoring is not restricted to tutoring and learning together: at least once a month, the tandems do some leisure time activities together, like visiting museums or a library or playing basketball together. Moreover, the program itself organises some group activities every three months.

It also addresses the families of the mentees and informs on different topics related to school, like e.g. the German educational system. Part of this are also seminars for the parents, mostly in Turkish with native experts, and a wide range of activities for tandems and the families in cooperation with cultural institutions in Stuttgart.

NPOINT

NPOINT is a roof organisation for a number of projects all over the Netherlands which initially started out with just mentoring activities.

These activities have developed and resulted in tutoring lessons supporting the main school subjects languages and maths. On the basis of this, we then started with talent development activities where students can explore their talents and interests and how to capitalize on them. At present, mentoring activities are carried out in the following two ways:

- ◆ Mentors in tutoring courses as role models: they teach the school subjects and keep parents informed about their child's progress. But they also show the pupils in person that educational success is possible.
- ◆ Also 1:1-mentoring is offered; it can be performed by the mentors or other volunteers. Here, more social aspects stand central, examples of activities are bowling, go-karting, trips to museums or the preparations for certain events (e.g. the Science Festival).



Chapter 2

Mentees

In principle, the need for mentoring support is so big in every city and town that finding access to mentees is never really a problem. On the contrary, most projects have to find ways and concepts to keep the total number of mentees within certain limits.

But also the specific focus of a program determines the access to and of potential mentees. Selection criteria for the mentees depend strongly on the general focus and concept of each project and its cooperation partners.

Selection of mentees

For many projects (e.g. SKC, Junge Vorbilder, Ağabey-Abla), the cooperation with schools is of central importance here – which bears many advantages: teachers and schools can be supposed to know best about the potentials and problems of their pupils. However, this requires a certain readiness and some capacities in the schools to cooperate at a level of equal partnership. So far, our projects have not had major problems in finding school fulfilling these requirements, but by far not all schools are well prepared for this.

In the cooperating schools, different strategies are employed to present the program to the pupils and their families. At Mentorproject SKC every school organises a teacher-parent meeting to welcome the parents in a new school year and to inform them about the details and planning. The project manager of SKC joins the teachers in these meetings to inform the parents about the project; this is the first step in the recruitment of mentees. We also inform the children in seventh and eighth grade during regular school hours. The children and parents receive a

registration form, and by filling-in the form they agree to join the project for two years. Most of the mentees are motivated by themselves or by their parents to join the Mentorproject. Sometimes, the teachers specifically motivate children whom they think could use the extra support best. This is very similar with the Junge Vorbilder in Hamburg. They also present the project at parents' information evenings in school and in the corresponding classes during school hours. However, in most schools there is a "tipping point" at which there are enough mentees who "spread the word", so that no particular recruitment activities are necessary anymore – and even more so when teachers actively promote the program among those pupils who can most profit from it. Most projects, however, limit the scope of their programs, e.g. to the last two grades of primary education at SKC, to grades 1 to 7 at Ağabey-Abla, and grades 8 to 11 at Junge Vorbilder. Similar as SKC, also these last two projects work with registration forms for the mentees and their families and a certain obligation to a commitment for a minimum period of time and regularity in the meetings of the tandems. At the Junge Vorbilder the registration also implies a financial contribution from the parents.

Other projects (e.g. Giovani al Centro, NPOINT) are more neighbourhood- and community-oriented. They run local centres, i.e. physical spaces located in certain areas with special needs, thus their mentees mostly come from the area and respond to the offer of activities and support nearby their house or school.

These projects do not necessarily require a formal commitment by the mentees and/or the families for the start, but to participate in those parts of the program which need the regular presence of the same youngsters for a certain period of time they do. For the rest, the concept of an open and protected space parts from the voluntariness and simply aims at speaking to the children by the activities and their attractiveness.

Social Activities

All projects in our network part from an understanding of education that goes far beyond what is offered by schools. And this is also why this kind of projects and their activities should be considered an important complementation to school education.

Social and cultural activities have a dual function in many projects:

- ◆ They make programs more attractive and frequently serve as entry points for youngsters. This is the case, for example, at *Giovani al Centro* where music or theatre activities can result in public performances for the community attracting new kids to the Centre, but also as a starting point for a more regular and intensive presence and for the participation in educational support and mentoring. It also applies to the Robotic courses and the Chess Club of *NPOINT* or the film and Hip-hop-workshops of *Junge Vorbilder*.
- ◆ They broaden the scope of the educational activities and speak to the children in a more holistic manner. Taking kids from rather marginalised areas to a museum or a theatre downtown is an important contribution to widening their horizons; performing mentoring tandem-meetings at the university can give a special stimulus for mentees and allow them to imagine themselves there in some years later; taking an active part in a cultural production – be it a band project or a theatre play – requires and develops general social skills – reliability, teamwork, structure, creativity etc. – that are not only useful for one's school performance, but also necessary in the future professional life.

In an even broader understanding, including the socio-emotional aspects of mentoring, social activities play an even more important role: they mark the difference between mentoring and other forms of tutoring. Informal conversations, working on a relationship of trust, providing guidance also in private social matters and orienting towards developing a professional and life perspective represent the special qualities of mentoring and as such characterise all the projects which have contributed to this handbook.

Finally, it is also in these aspects where the intercultural sensitivity or, in the case of "ethnic mentoring", the "cultural intimacy" of the mentors come particularly into play. Mentors with a background in immigrant families are not only role models as regards becoming successful in school or getting access to higher education, but also as interpreters between culturally different spheres and worlds and as orienters for youth constantly moving through these spheres and worlds. A Turkish mentor coming to a Turkish family in Stuttgart or Hamburg or Amsterdam is received with far less insecurity and more "cultural comfort" than any mentor of German or Dutch background. Mentors from immigrant families know exactly what their mentees from immigrant families are talking about when it comes to stereotypes and preconceptions in both directions.



Chapter 3

Mentors

As stated above, the recruitment of the mentors is crucial and very much depends on the concept and philosophy of the project. Many mentoring projects, especially those founded by white middleclass-foundations or personalities, simply recruit their mentors from the peer group of the project founders – but they obviously want to help a very different clientele.

Recruitment

Sometimes these projects even complain about the difficulties to recruit mentors from other ethnic communities or cultural backgrounds. In our view, this is mainly a problem of access and legitimacy. The projects represented in this handbook show that there is no lack of engagement and disposition to become a volunteer particularly among the young members of immigrant communities. The very well developed mentoring-scenery in the Netherlands would not have been possible without the pioneering work of immigrant and ethnic minority students!

Since the mentors are the cornerstone of any mentoring project, all mentoring programmes heavily depend on finding enough and the right kind of persons willing to become mentors. Practically all our projects work with young mentors, in general university or college students. They are most flexible in their weekly schedules, their own school experience is not too long ago (i.e. still fresh in memory and comparable to the situation of the mentees), and they are most open for different kinds of incentives or compensation – which makes it easier to conceive the program as equally benefiting for the mentors as for the mentees.

Mentorproject SKC

The recruitment of mentors is a big part of our daily work during the start of every new school year. Every year we recruit about 300 mentors. About 80% of these mentors join our projects as interns and receive study points for it. The resting 20% are volunteers. All the mentors are students in universities or colleges of applied sciences, and we aim to work with students who are younger than 28 years old. Most volunteers are recruited by direct contacts, newspaper advertisements, online advertisements and flyer-actions.

Most interns are recruited by our co-operation agreements with the universities. The rest of them are finding their own way to our organization because they have heard about the experiences of other interns.

Junge Vorbilder

We recruit our mentors mostly directly at the institutions for higher education in Hamburg. In the beginning we distributed folders and went to seminars with many students with an immigrant background, e.g. in Turkic Languages and Culture. In the meantime, more than 300 mentors have been recruited and the program has become well-known among students from immigrant families. That means that we normally get enough applications throughout the year to answer the increasing demand and fill the ranks of those who leave us. Occasionally, we also place a job add on a corresponding website of the university.

A big incentive for students to apply is the fact that the mentoring is paid. Even though it obviously still demands a lot of extra non-paid engagement (e.g. trainings, intervision meetings, informal time spent with mentees and/or the parents), it offers the mentors a nice monthly supplement to their generally scarce finances. The idea behind the payment is not only a stimulus for participation – mentors who are only interested in the money do never stay long – but also to offer a material reward for the special competences and experiential expertise they bring with them.

Cosmicus

For the recruitment of mentors (and also mentees) social media like Facebook and Twitter can be used, because they are very popular among youngsters. An important source is also the mentors themselves, many new mentors come via friends or colleagues who already know our program. We thus make use of the social environment of (potential) mentors and mentees.



Giovani al Centro

Our mentors are of both Italian and immigrant origins; they should be from 14 to 20 years old and should have attended high school. We recruit them directly at the high schools, but also mostly through word of mouth and via social services or other organisations who know us.

Ağabey-Abla

All our mentors have a Turkish background, the project is well-known in the Turkish community of Stuttgart. However, since our requirements are to have attended a grammar school until at least 10th year, to have experience with teaching and/or dealing with children, and to show a certain level of civic engagement and participation. We constantly spread the word at universities, grammar schools, Facebook and other social sites, student and other associations, within our own community societies, and among the alumni and the active mentors.

NPOINT

All this also applies to NPOINT's member organisations, especially word-of-mouth is also important here. As special activities to mention, for example, we hand out roses at teacher training colleges on Teacher's Day (and similar activities) and we place adverts at teaching faculties and on the internet.

Screening

Screening is actually part of the recruitment process. It can mean two aspects: (a) to define clear formal criteria which mentors have to fulfil in order to be at all considered (e.g. age, level of education); (b) to perform some sort of preselection among those applicants who fulfil the formal requirements (or, on the contrary, who do not fulfil all criteria, but could nevertheless be recruited upon special consideration).

The formal criteria in most projects include a certain age range. Too young applicants may not be self-assured and qualified enough, for too old applicants it is generally feared that they are rather perceived as a teacher than a mentor and that their educational experiences are not comparable with their mentees anymore. Another formal requirement in all projects is a minimum level of education which is generally set

at the completion of higher secondary education or even the enrolment in a university or college. Junge Vorbilder moreover only recruits mentors who have an immigrant background in their families; Ağabey-Abla only Turkish mentors. In some projects (Ağabey-Abla, Junge Vorbilder, NPOINT) a police clearance certificate is required or, at least, desired – mostly for formal reasons. All projects work with contracts.

More relevant in all projects are the “soft” criteria. As NPOINT puts it: “It is important in this area that applicants are highly motivated. The college/university level volunteers obviously have the intellectual capacity, but if motivation is lacking, they have little to teach to the children. How does a mentor interact with children? What does a mentor do when a child does not listen? What qualities does the mentor have to motivate students and make them enthusiastic? Does the mentor have sufficient knowledge and is s/he able to get that across to the students? These aspects go for all our volunteers, whether they teach or participate in extra-curricular activities. However, it is possible to select volunteers suitable for teaching and those suitable for other activities.”

In order to find out about the motivation of new wanting-to-be mentors, most projects ask applicants for a motivation letter. Then all projects do screening interviews. In the interview the project manager asks for knowledge and experience, motivation and vision based on several variables (SKC). There are people who really want to be a mentor, but just do not have (all) the skills. So screeners should estimate beforehand if deficits can be solved by a preparatory training or rather not. Good intentions or motivation are important, but being a good mentor requires also other skills (Cosmicus). Mostly two candidates are invited at the same time. The intelligence or the grades are not so important, but the motivation and the continuity, the authenticity and the empathy of the applicant. The social skills and the experience with children are important as well. Turkish is also required (Ağabey-Abla).

At NPOINT the new mentor applicants first participate as interns in two courses and in the Junge Vorbilder-project they have to complete a two-day basic training before being appointed. This allows the mentors to get a better idea of their future tasks and provides

a more profound impression of the applicants to the project managers and trainers.

Training

All projects see the necessity to prepare, accompany and further train the mentors. It mostly begins with a sort of introductory training to make future mentors familiar with the mentoring idea and methodology. Also standard methods are introduced and typical situations anticipated. In most cases, these initial trainings also function as non-declared “assessment centers”, providing the project coordination with a chance to reject candidates who appear to be not suited during the training.

Since the mentors in all our projects are young people, all projects take the opportunity to also offer trainings for the personal benefits of the mentors. More as a rule than an exception, these two aspects – a better qualification for the job in the program and gaining a certificate or expertise useful for the further professional career – go hand in hand. This is how training (mostly offered by the organisation itself) is conceived in the different projects:

Mentorproject SKC

After the screening every mentor is given training by one of our selected project managers. Three of the projects managers have been trained by the University of Applied Sciences in Amsterdam in a “Train the Trainer”-program. The first training contains a lot of information about the organisation, the project and the basic pedagogical principles. They do different role-plays on standard situation to see how one can react to different kinds of behaviour they can expect from the mentees.

After the training every new mentor has a meeting with a project manager about all the specific information needed about the school where the mentor is going to work. During the first meetings with the mentees the mentors are observed by the project manager and an experienced mentor, called “contact-person”, who will give the mentor feedback, allowing her/him to learn and develop in their own goals.

After having gained some experience every mentor joins an advanced training which consists of two parts with 4 hours each. In that training we pay special attention to a couple of theoretical concepts, like e.g. the Theory of Multiple Intelligence by Howard Gardner. One of the main goals of the Mentorproject is developing a positive attitude towards the children. So that is also one of the points in the training.

Junge Vorbilder

New mentors have to complete two days of "basic training" before being matched with a mentee or taking over a tutoring course in school. In these two days they are familiarised with the mentoring idea and method, with the organisation and the coordinators, and standard situations are played through. The trainers of these trainings are experienced former or still active mentors who have completed 30 hours of "Train the Trainer"-trainings.

All mentors are moreover required to participate in at least three evening trainings which are offered every month to six weeks. These complementary trainings have certain topics that are regularly repeated – the content of final exams in English, German and Maths, "learning to learn", intercultural competences, and the social pedagogical limits of mentoring.

Giovani al Centro

The project works with the concept of "Intercultural Animators" which requires a much more extensive education for the mentors. The Advanced Training consists of 180 hours of training to develop an educational relationship expertise in an intercultural environment. The training provides abilities to organize integration and cultural activities and to support the teenagers in active citizenship and empowerment. The course makes use of interactive methodologies (role plays aimed to analyze knowledge and know-how) and is divided in 120 hours in the classroom and 60 hours of practical training as mentors in the project, while being monitored by an educator and a psychologist.

Ağabey-Abla

Before the beginning of the school year a 3-day Basic Training is organised outside of Stuttgart and including all the mentors being active in that year (of which some are new, but others have already been mentors in previous years). The Basic Training provides an introduction to the organisation, role-plays and workshops on specific topic, but also an occasion to have fun together and to build a network. The project-team constantly enquires about the needs of the mentors and correspondingly designs the workshops, trainings and other social activities during the school year.

NPOINT

In our projects, the training is basically on the job. We have teaching material available for the lessons, and in some cases, there are also teacher guides available. These materials can be used by the mentors in preparation for their classes. However, we offer advanced training to prepare the mentors for home visits and progress interviews with parents, and at least three times a year there are seminars to increase and deepen the knowledge about specific topics, such as how to deal with outstanding students or students with learning difficulties, how to motivate students, how to recognize problems in students, and what the added value of these activities is for the supervisor.

Chapter 4

Matching of Mentees and Mentors

“Matching” means bringing mentees and mentors together. Depending on the scope of the program this is a process executed with a lot of care and attention, but it can also imply a certain degree of coincidence. Similarly, the foreseen duration and the commitment in the specific mentor-mentee-tandem can differ.

How to deal with matching?

In several projects, the tandem is supposed to stay together for a year or, at least, one school term (Ağabey-Abla, Junge Vorbilder, SKC), therefore the project coordinators put some effort in matching the interest and needs of mentees with the preferences and competences of the mentors. Beyond a certain scale of the project – e.g. SKC has to match about 1.500 mentees to 300 mentors at the beginning of each new school year – and also in group mentoring (e.g. NPOINT, Junge Vorbilder) this is not possible. And *Giovani al Centro* operates with a concept based on a day-to-day spontaneous matching which allows for responding to different and changing needs. However, for a teenager with more problematic issues, the educator and the psychologist can match a single mentor that will always work with him/her.

Changes of mentors are possible in all projects, but the overall impression in all projects is that this is not a major issue. Intercultural sensitivity certainly is, but it can play out very differently. At Ağabey-Abla both sides automatically have basically the same ethnic background or at least they speak the same immigrant language. But obviously, there are many differentiations within immigrant communities (e.g. in the Turkish

case between religious and secular families), so that the same ethnic or linguistic background is no guarantee for avoiding misunderstandings or even conflicts. Also the *Junge Vorbilder*-project has been operating in the 1:1-mentoring with the concept of “ethnic matching”. The experiences have been almost unanimously positive, but since the “ethnic” or linguistic composition of the group of mentors is not the same as among the mentees (the project is not restricted to any particular immigrant group), the matching also frequently involves intercultural tandems. On the one side, frequently neither parents nor mentees formulate any preference in this regard, they just want someone to support them. On the other side, intercultural tandems very frequently turn out to be an interesting and valuable experience for both sides.

Mentors generally do not have too many expectations as regards their future mentees. Hardly ever do they formulate clear cultural preferences, and none of the projects accepts restrictions in this regard. In larger cities, the location of the activity can be an issue: if a mentor has to travel about one hour per trip for a 90 minutes-meeting with the mentee, this is not always convenient. *Junge Vorbilder* explicitly has a regional approach with mentors being matched ideally exclusively in one region – for which they can state a prefer-

ence (this also applies to SKC and Ağabey-Abla). Many of the mentors in a region are also recruited among the students living in the area.

In group mentoring it is obviously also the skills and competences of the mentors which play a role in the assignment of tutoring courses. But since also in 1:1-mentoring many mentees come with specific needs for tutoring in certain subjects, the strengths and weaknesses in this regard among the mentors is also considered in some of these projects – especially those not working with mentees at the end of lower or higher secondary education (e.g. Junge Vorbilder, NPOINT, SABA).

While in most projects the matching is done by the coordinators on the basis of the conversations they had with mentees and their parents and their knowledge of the group of mentors, some projects have also developed forms of matching in which mentors and mentees come together by their own choice. This is the case with the more spontaneous matching at *Giovani al Centro*, *Cosmicus* and *SABA* who organise “speed-dating” events for mentees and mentors – with good results because then spontaneous sympathy can play a role.

All this shows that also the matching process should be related to a specific concept and the clearly stated philosophy behind each mentor project.



Chapter 5

Practice and Mentoring

What, how and where?

Mentorproject SKC

The mentees are being supported for at least two years. They see their mentors every week during the school year with exception of the regular holidays. During these two years they work on about six to eight themes. Examples of theme titles are: "Secondary school", "News" and "Friendship". Examples of the skills we practice in the assignments are: giving a presentation, giving arguments in a discussion, how to handle conflicts with friends or classmates, how to make a report etcetera. Every theme consists of seven meetings with a lot of assignments in which the mentees practice their social skills and their learning skills.

Cosmicus

The mentoring activities were outside the schools, sometimes at the home of the mentee and sometimes at the home of the mentor. That way, the mentor had regularly contact with the parents of the mentee. The mentor and mentee met at least once a week 1 or 2 hours. But they were stimulated by the coordinator to meet also in the weekends and during vacations. Not for homework, but for activities, like watching a movie, playing football or having dinner together.

Giovani al Centro

The project takes place at the Intercultural Centre of Turin, twice a week on Tuesday and Friday, from 3pm to 7pm.

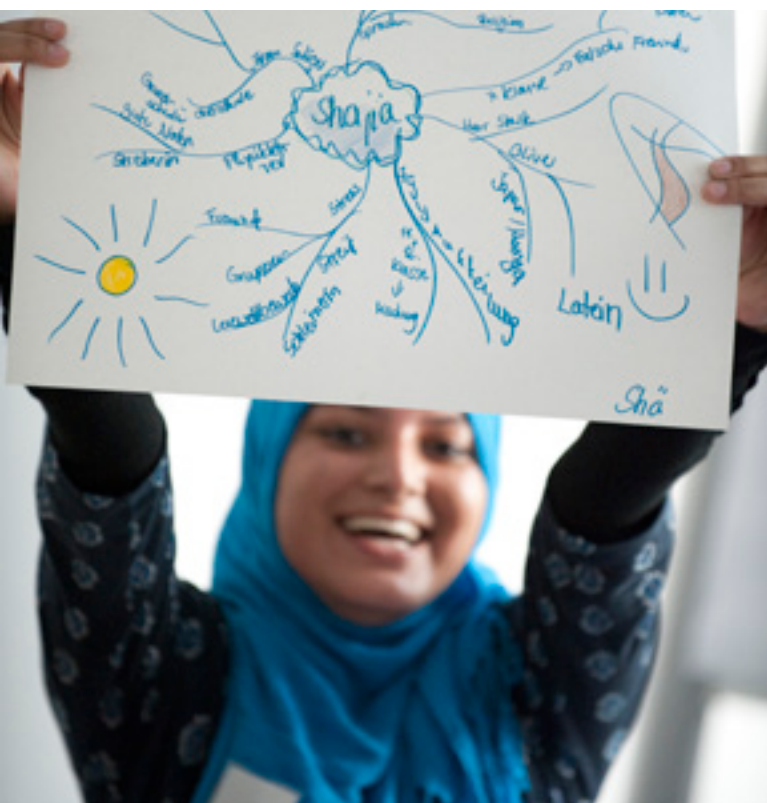
Ağabey-Abla

The mentoring takes place at the schools. One (or two) of the mentors at each school is a representative and helps to coordinate between the school and the project coordination. They also support the mentors with individual questions or problems. But if a mentor or a mentee or the parents have a problem or suggestion, the project coordination-team is always available.

The mentors have to document their meetings with the mentees in online-journals or diaries on our homepage. These journals/diaries are a good instrument for the project coordination to know about the progress of each mentee and to give feedback. At the homepage there are also links, documents, FAQ to help.

NPOINT

The students receive about 4 to 8 hours of lessons per week in our education centres. Next to this they are participating in social activities for approx. 8 hours per month.



Junge Vorbilder

The 1:1-mentoring takes mostly place at the mentees' homes because we want them to be in contact with the parents too and to know about the home situation of their mentees. After a while it can be a good idea to take the mentee out and do the mentoring somewhere else, e.g. a public library or the university. The tandems meet by average for three hours per week, most on two different days.

The tutoring courses of the group mentoring happen in the schools. Since we offer many courses in the cooperating schools, the mentors of each school form a team on their own, and one of them acts as a special contact person, the "school ambassador". Only occasionally, group mentoring might also take place in other locations, and we are currently experimenting with holiday courses in the premises of our organisation verikom.

Monitoring and Support

In all projects, the mentors also need special attention. Even though mentoring rebuilds what has been called "natural mentorship relations" (as e.g. between family members) and the success of mentoring frequently results more on the good personal and intuitive relationship between mentor and mentee, the mentors and the mentorship-relations need constant accompaniment by the project organisation. This accompaniment may simply involve regular meetings

between the project coordination and the mentors (e.g. Cosmicus, Junge Vorbilder, Giovani al Centro) – individually or in group – but it generally also includes regular training activities and professional feedback or supervision (Giovani al Centro, SKC).

See, as an example for a very close accompaniment, the case of SKC:

"During the mentoring the mentors are supported by a contact person who is always at the school during the mentor meetings. The contact person is an experienced mentor or an advanced student in the final years of university. The contact person observes the mentor and mentees and gives weekly feedback to the mentors. This contact person is again supervised by the project manager. When the contact person or the project manager sees that one of the mentors is no longer capable of supporting the mentees we decide to give them another mentor."

In some projects, there are trained professionals for this, e.g. an educator and a psychologist at Giovani al Centro. In most projects, however, this is done by the project coordination. At Junge Vorbilder all the coordinating and training staffs have been recruited among the experienced mentors, but there is also a strong element of intervention among the mentors themselves, e.g. during the monthly regional mentor meetings and in closed Facebook- and WhatsApp-groups.

Finally, some projects (e.g. NPOINT, Junge Vorbilder) also seek to receive regular feedback from the parents. Parental involvement in the mentoring process can be the most important support needed to make a mentoring-relation succeed and fulfil its goals.



Chapter 6

Finalising the Mentorship

This is probably the most underestimated aspect in many projects – in the sense that the end of a mentoring relationship is frequently simply not thematised, let alone incorporated as fixed aspect in the trajectory of a mentor-mentee-relationship. But obviously, the idea of any mentoring project is to empower mentees to take charge of their own educational success. This means that a mentorship must be conceived as a timely limited activity which, in the ideal case, comes to an end at just the right moment.

How and when to end the mentor-mentee relationship?

However, the different concepts also imply a different emphasis: for example, at Cosmicus entering a mentorship for a mentee also means to enter a whole network of relationships which is meant to last, even though tutoring is not necessary anymore. Therefore the project states that “it is a bit weird to talk about closure. Maybe it is closure in the context of the project, but the mentoring is meant to stimulate mentor and mentee to engage in a more longstanding relationship. Most of the mentees do not have many (older) people in their environment who they can rely on when they need advice or something else. So, it is not about ‘closure’, but rather that the ‘sustainable relationship’ develops into something different.”

This applies to NPOINT in a similar manner: “We try to get pupils and mentors to become friends ‘for life’ by showing them that the mentor really is a person who they can turn to for any sort of advice. Because pupils are also introduced to the mentors’ networks, this creates a situation where they get to know a

variety of role models and people able to offer them a horizon for the future. And, in order to receive mentoring, pupils are not restricted to attending classes at the education centres. They can still take part in the social activities, even after they have stopped taking classes, e.g. by preparing for educational events.”

The two projects react with this approach to the fact that children of immigrants very frequently come from families which lack those specific social relations and network connections that greatly help in the transition from education to a professional career. Good educational results are certainly a basic condition, but in many professional fields they are not enough. In this regard it is of great relevance that the relationships developed in secondary education with the mentor and her/his social environment last well beyond the actual mentoring.

The other extreme are the spontaneous mentorships created from week to week at *Giovani al Centro*. This is because here the tutoring is part of broader process of cultural and social involvement whose cycle follows the school year and usually closes up with an artistic event. At the end of the school year, mentees can

attend a summer camp. The cycle of the school year is important for most mentoring projects, particularly those which directly cooperate with schools or even let the mentoring itself happen in the schools. See, for example, at Mentorproject SKC: "Every theme that the mentees work on has its own book. Every mentee receives a folder to collect their books, so that they have a full folder at the end of the year. We then arrange a meeting with the mentees, the mentors, the parents of the mentees and their teachers at which each mentee receives a Mentorproject-diploma. Part of the diploma is a written personal message of the mentor in order to support and encourage the mentee. The mentees also keep the folder with all the books that they have worked with during the year so that they can later look again in the books and see what they have learned during the sessions of the Mentorproject. They can use the material later in their school-career, for example, when preparing for a presentation or to read again how to make a resume or what to do when you have conflicts with one of your classmates."

A formalised and celebrated end to a mentorship is a good element of recognition, particularly for pupils with a social background that provides not

many social opportunities for being rewarded. However, this is more difficult to organise when the mentoring is not embedded in the day-to-day at the school (as at SKC or Cosmicus) or part of an educational (NPOINT) or socio-cultural centre (Giovani al Centro), but rather happens at the mentees' homes (e.g. Junge Vorbilder). When there is no institutional framework, mentorships may simply end by not being taken up again after the long summer holidays. Individual mentoring at home is more flexible, it can be started independently from the school year cycle and react much more individually – e.g. allowing the adaptation of the rhythm and speed and intensity to the individual needs and urgencies. In the ideal case, the final phase of that type of 1:1-mentoring consists of a gradual "sneaking out" of the regular meetings between mentees and mentors during which the mentees, however, know that they can ask for help at any moment. It is then part of the experience of empowerment and self-confidence to notice that the mentor has not been necessary for weeks and months. As with Cosmicus and NPOINT, also the Junge Vorbilder encourage mentors to keep in touch with their mentees and to seek occasional informal meetings (e.g. having an ice-cream together) well beyond the end of the actual tutoring.



B

**Project
Themes**

Chapter 7

Evaluation

Evaluation of the project work is frequently a task demanded by funders, particularly when the funding is not restricted to short-term periods of maximally three years, but embedded in a long-term strategy either by private foundations (e.g. Oranje Fonds in the Netherlands or Stiftung Mercator and Robert-Bosch-Stiftung in Germany) or state authorities. But, obviously, projects should also have their own interest in some sort of assessment, whether the project's results match the formulated goals. And an effective quality management also facilitates quick reactions to negative developments or malfunctions that can arise in any project at any time.

At the same time, mentoring is a qualitative instrument whose effects are not meant to be restricted to better school performance or measurable increases in the knowledge of subject matters. All different kinds of studies on mentoring have clearly demonstrated its effectiveness (see Brochure for more details), but these results are mostly based on either experimental designs or on extensive interviews with and scientific accompaniment of mentees and their families – both instruments that are not realistic to become part of the everyday practice of a project itself. Therefore, all projects work with compromises: they do what is manageable, but know about the limitations. Here are some details:

Mentorproject SKC

In our Mentorproject we have different kinds of evaluations. Firstly, we do weekly evaluations with the mentees. At the end of every meeting they fill-in a short questionnaire about the things they have learned in that week. We also ask them what they think of the meeting, what things they liked and what they disliked. In that evaluation the mentor also has

the opportunity to talk with the mentees about the things that went well and the things that need to be improved in the following meetings.

Secondly, the mentors have weekly evaluations with each other and with the contact person. They can talk about the meeting, ask questions and give feedback to each other. This is also the opportunity for the contact person to share her/his observations with the mentors. The project manager joins this meeting once every two or three weeks.

For the mentors who join the Mentorproject as interns, there are a couple of extra meetings with the project manager to evaluate their learning goals.

Two or three times during one project year we also have evaluation meetings with the teachers, the caretakers and the management of the school. During these meetings we talk about the individual mentees and their progress in learning and social skills. We also talk about the development in the classroom in general. Sometimes when, for example, one half of a class takes part in the Mentorproject also the other half is profiting because the mentees talk about it during

the regular school-hours and also the general learning atmosphere in a class changes.

Next to this we also arrange a minimum of three meetings per project year in which the parents participate. They can then see how we work with their children and they can ask questions directly to the mentors and the project manager. And we can ask them questions, for example, about the behaviour of the children and their reactions to that behaviour at home.

Finally, we also developed an evaluation instrument for the teachers. Once per year they are asked to fill in a questionnaire about the Mentorproject. However, although the results of these different evaluation meetings have been always very good, we wanted to know more about the actual improvement of the learning and social skills of our mentees. For this end we asked one of the universities in Amsterdam to execute a major evaluation research on our project whose results are not available yet.

Ağabey-Abla

Our program is annually evaluated by an institute called IRIS e.V. from Tübingen. The methods are varying and developed in joint discussion. They include face-to-face interviews with the mentees, an online questionnaire for the mentors, focus group discussions and participant observation. The project team also designed a feedback-sheet that is used after each workshop and activity.



This is all based on an evaluation concept that is revised annually. This year we also included our strategies for project consolidation and fundraising.

NPOINT

- ◆ Parents can act as a “sounding board”: changes in the children’s developments are reported by their parents, we consider the parents’ perception as a reliable factor in this respect.
- ◆ The lessons are evaluated with a level test and diagnostic tests which are taken every six weeks. The school students are asked about the lessons and what they have learned during the past five weeks. Progress reports go also to the parents and each school.
- ◆ It depends on the particular goal and skill to be developed during the program which method is most appropriate. We can relatively easily and reliably measure improvement in the mentees’ academic achievements. More difficult are the improvement in mentees’ social skills, their willingness for social commitment and the reinforcement of the mentees’ personality and self-confidence. We evaluate these aspects mainly through progress or performance interviews, and through the feedback from parents and teachers.
- ◆ Other aspects are more directed towards the improvement in the cooperation between educational institutions and mentees’ parents: we want to strengthen parenting skills and stimulate parental involvement.
- ◆ Finally, it is our aim that all mentees develop plans for the academic year together with their mentor/supervisor. These plans can then be evaluated regularly helps the students to think and act in a result-oriented way.



Giovani al Centro

- ◆ We evaluate through the school reports for the mentees and a logbook for the mentors, as well as through written and oral reports by the educator and the psychologist who work in the project.
- ◆ Content of the evaluation is the improvement of the school achievement of the mentees, especially through school results and meetings with teachers. Another important aspect is the idea of strengthening the personality and self-confidence of the mentees. This is evaluated through regular reports by the educator and the psychologist of our Centro. In these reports also the improvement of social and personal skills and the willingness for social commitment are assessed.

In other projects, such as Cosmicus and Junge Vorbilder, the main evaluation tool is the feedback asked from or given on own initiative by the mentees and the parents. Also suggestions from mentors, schools, parents or mentees are taken up and considered. At Junge Vorbilder an important tool are the monthly intervision meetings of the mentors in the different regions. The results of these meetings are fixed in minutes and incorporated into our quality management system.

Chapter 8

Public Relations

Most projects dedicate the largest part of their public relation activities to the mentors, and that part largely relies on the internet, i.e. through a webpage and accounts and groups at Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and other social media. Project portraits can be placed on YouTube and similar channels.

Where and when?

Another important challenge is to make the projects and their activities known to a wider public – possibly including potential funders and public institutions. For this, articles in the press and filmed portraits on TV are of crucial importance. Obviously, also folders and other information material are important and used, for example, to inform schools and parents about the basic features of a program.

Some projects regularly produce a newsletter that can be used to keep social contacts and funders informed without necessarily being regularly in direct touch.

Cosmicus and NPOINT established so-called “boards” or “committees”, consisting of personalities who are not directly involved in the project coordination. Ideally, this kind of bodies is composed by experts and well-known persons from a wide range of professional backgrounds, e.g. scholars, politicians, officials, researchers, managers, entrepreneurs, and students. They do not only accompany the activities and give advice, but also act as “ambassadors”, giving projects credibility and a public face.

Taking part in applications for prizes and awards given out by foundations or public institutions is also a good strategy to make a project better known – even when no prize money is involved.

It is generally the prize-awarding organisation which then takes care of professionally communicating the content of the prize and the winners to the wider public. Having won an award or prize can be communicated on the project’s own homepage and frequently serves as a signal of quality, seriosity and innovativeness.

Chapter 9

Cooperation and networking

Mentoring projects never work alone, for them cooperation is vital. And all projects in this European network are connected in many different directions and at all different levels.

Partnerships

Since all the projects are about educational support they all cooperate with parents and with schools (unless they represent their own schools, like Cosmicus). All projects, moreover, seek to be embedded in one way or the other in particular neighbourhoods – be it that they represent neighbourhood organisations for themselves (e.g. Centro Interculturale di Torino) or that they run local educational centres (e.g. NPOINT, SKC) or operate with region-based coordination and cooperation structures (e.g. Junge Vorbilder).

Many projects also cooperate with other similar or complementary projects, so that, in junction, a broader range of activities and programs is available to the children and families. However, it is not very common that the different mentoring projects in a city – or, at least, in a neighbourhood or active at specific schools – coordinate their efforts, nor is that the school authorities or the regional governing institutions would take efforts to systematically incorporate bottom-up non-school based educational support activities into an overarching concept of a local or regional “educational landscape”. The ENESP-network within SIRIUS strongly advocates to take this into account and to promote initiatives in that direction. In Hamburg, for example, a broad range of mentoring projects has founded an umbrella organi-

sation called Mentor.Ring Hamburg that has been in dialogue with the school authorities and tries to work jointly on common themes, such as evaluation, training and recruitment.

Other relevant local networks target immigrant populations in general, children at risk or socio-cultural activities. Many projects also cooperate with cultural institutions, allowing the tandems to regularly attend cultural performances or visit museums under special conditions.

Also universities can be important partners. They can provide theoretical concepts and methodologies (and students) for evaluation efforts, but for several projects the cooperation is also important as regards the recruitment of new mentors. Being active in a project may allow mentors to earn credit points for their studies or to gain practical experience – this is especially relevant for teacher students.

With regard to the recruitment of mentors and to disseminate the project activities in our intercultural mentoring approach also network contacts with immigrant organisations and immigrant student organisations are important.

Finally, a number of organisations are also networking at a European level (apart from the membership in ENESP). This may allow the access to EU funding schemes or funds from international foundations.

Funding, fundraising and sustainability

Apart from the Centro Interculturale della Città di Torino, an institution of the municipality of Turin and one of the two partners of the Giovani al Centro-project, all projects presented here are based on private initiatives.

Civil society

There is fundamental contradiction in the “projectitis” underlying a lot of good and promising initiatives: it is not that difficult to raise some funds for beginning a new project – there are foundations and programs specialised on innovative ideas. But despite the fact that in almost all application forms nowadays the applicants are asked to make statements about the sustainability of their efforts, the interest of foundations etc. generally rapidly decreases when a project is not that new anymore and mainly aims at finding ways to secure its good results and to project itself into the future. When a project has reached this point – as a reminder: until then there has been gained a lot of experience and also the project conceptualisation is quite advanced – it is almost exclusively the state which can take the concept and project on board to secure its future existence. But that is not happening very regularly, most municipalities and ministries do not even possess established tools and procedures to measure a project’s goals and effectiveness on which basis the decision of a continued funding or incorporation into wider social and educational development strategies could be taken.

The only alternative to being dependent on state funding on the long run is “making money” through the project activities, and it is certainly no coincidence that the projects with the longest duration in our

network are also the projects which have developed strategies in that direction – at least as an additional source for funds.

One widely underestimated possible source of income is the parents. It is well-known that parents in Europe spend several hundreds of millions of euros per year on private tutorial classes, and that money mostly goes to private commercial tutorial institutes. One could therefore justifiably argue that these resources are better spent in educational support programs with no commercial interest and motivation. In those projects which ask parents for a contribution, the monthly rates are generally far below those of commercial offers, and they also generally offer a better and more intensive support.

Projects that depend exclusively on one source of funding should be considered financially highly vulnerable, because then their very existence may depend on decisions taken somewhere else. Thus, in the ideal case, projects find ways to combine different sources of funding and income.

Mentorproject SKC

The Mentorproject is funded by the city districts in Amsterdam. In their youth policy they formulate the aim to provide role models for the children and our project supplies these role models. With most of the

city districts we have established long funding relationships, but there is no real sustainability in that.

The Mentorproject has been active in Amsterdam for now over 15 years and a lot of schools, children and students participated in the project. But still, it is never a hundred percent sure that we can continue our project with funding from the city districts. We are trying to get more cooperation partners in the profit sector to diversify our income and be less dependent on funding by the city of Amsterdam.

Giovani al Centro

The mentors are all volunteers but they can receive university credits for their social work. So, the only people paid in the project are a professional educator and a psychologist – and their jobs are linked to the Intercultural Center which has a municipal budget for its activities. However, we constantly need extra budget for artistic activities and seek to participate in private, state or European funding initiatives.

Ağabey-Abla

Our project receives its main funding from the Robert Bosch Foundation, the City of Stuttgart, and the Paul-Lechler Foundation. There are also donations from the members of the German-Turkish-Forum, with many of them being entrepreneurs.

NPOINT

In our centres and activities a main financial source are usually the parents' contributions. But private donations are still important for the education centres to keep their head above water financially. For events outside the scope of the lessons, we look for additional subsidies or funds.

Our oldest educational centre was founded in 1994. Sustainability over almost two decades can be achieved by making the activities and the people involved known to a wider public. The value of the work and the organisation must be clear to everyone. Sustainability also means investing in people. If students, parents, supervisors and partners are satisfied, the continued existence of your organisation will be safe.

SABA

The mentoring project is funded by the Federal Government for Migration, Refugees and Integration. Sustainability is not guaranteed.

Junge Vorbilder

The project exists since 2004 and started with funds from a major national lottery. Since then funding came from the City of Hamburg, several local and national foundations, awarded prizes and private donations. In order to facilitate sustainability and further growth of the project, since 2007 the parents contribute with the costs of the mentoring – especially since our mentors receive some financial compensation. A grant program financed through donations and foundations helps low-income families with that contribution.

Since 2011 we also operate as a service provider for schools in the field of tutorial courses for the main subjects. In some schools we organise and execute the entire tutorial program (around 50-60 courses per week per school), in others we just take over a number of courses. This activity generates resources that allow financing the basic infrastructure of the project (several paid part-time jobs, office facilities in three city areas and trainings).



Colophon

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