



Education and Culture

Leonardo da Vinci



MENTORING AND GUIDANCE FOR ADULTS

www.adults-mentoring.eu

Adults Mentoring Training Pack For Mentees

BG/06/B/P/PP-166 041

GLOSSARY

National Coordinator – Organization responsible for the coordination of the Adults Mentoring piloting process in ... (Name of the country). The main tasks of the National coordinator are:

- recruitment of mentors and mentees,
- matching the couples,
- setting up the induction process,
- coordinating the mentoring process in ...(Name of the country)

The National coordinator is ... (Name of the organization).

Mentor – a professional (either manager or an employee in an organisation) in a certain field willing to cooperate with the mentee for their mutual professional and personal development. Mentors are recruited by the National coordinators based on pre-definite criteria. Mentors are expected to collaborate with the mentee for the successful implementation of the mentoring process.

Mentee – an individual, participating in the Adults Mentoring programme, over the age of 50..(Long term unemployed or at risk of losing their employment. Mentees together with Mentors are recruited by the National coordinators of the project in respect to the requirements of the Adults Mentoring project.

Project Coordinator – Euroconsulting LTD. Bulgaria. Responsible for the overall coordination of the Adults Mentoring project as International project with participants in five European countries (Bulgaria, Greece, Poland, Slovenia and UK). Euroconsulting, as project coordinator will supports national coordinators in each participating country, as well as providing guidance and support both to the mentors and the mentees.

I. INTRODUCTION

The project Adults mentoring - MENTORING AND GUIDANCE FOR ADULTS is a 24 months pilot project funded by the Leonardo da Vinci Programme of the European Commission that aims to develop a system for workplace mentoring for unemployed older people (50+).

This European project involves 7 partners from 5 European countries:

Bulgaria

- Municipality of Sliven (contractor)
- Euroconsulting Ltd. (co-ordinator)
- "Zgura M" Ltd.

Greece

- Diakrisi Ltd.

Slovenia

- University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education, Department of Social Pedagogy

Poland

- University of Lodz, Department of Special Education

United Kingdom

- Edinburgh University Settlement Community Learning Centre

Over the last century the average life expectancy in Europe has increased for males from 45,7 to 75 years , and for females from 49,6 to 79,9 years. At the same time however, Europe's birth rate has reduced drastically. Together these two factors mean the EU population is ageing. Looking at long-term projections, this process is set to accelerate in the future.¹

An important resulting tendency, noted in various reports of EU27, which led to the establishment of the "Adults Mentoring" project, was that by 2050 the number of people over 50 in Europe will have doubled to 40% of the total population or 60% of the working age population. Bearing in mind these staggering figures, the project is focused on the needs of older people (50+) who wish to find or retain employment thus delaying their retirement by the means of vocational guidance, counselling and

¹ Eurostat

training, by which they will update and upgrade their work key skills and competencies, soft skills, self-confidence, contributing accordingly to the empowerment of people over 50.

Taking into consideration the fact that a large percentage of the ageing population will soon be eligible for retirement thus creating talent shortages over the next 10 years, job seekers over 50 or early retired people should not be left as an unsolved problem. This is also addressed in the objectives of the Lisbon strategy,

The project aims to adequately address this issue, and enable this empowerment through a non-formal type of learning i.e. mentoring. Mentoring has demonstrated its efficiency in improving the employability and the key work skills and competencies of both disabled and disadvantaged people, and will potentially also offer good practice for learning and acquiring soft skills and improving the self-confidence of older people.

The Adults Mentoring project will build further on the experience already gained from several previous mentoring programmes, namely:

- The mentoring programme “Equal Employment Opportunities, Mentoring and Training for Disabled People and Employers” (www.marie-curie-bg.org/mentoring), with partners from Bulgaria (Marie Curie Association, University of Plovdiv, Regional Development Agency), UK (Mouzer Associates Coventry & Warwickshire Learning & Skills Council) and Greece (University of Aegean and Trade Association of Rhodes), elaborated a mentoring scheme connecting unemployed young disabled final year students and recent graduates to a mentor occupied both in a position and an industry preferred by the mentee. The project also foresaw the need for the establishment of an employers network to support disabled people.
- The Validation of Mentoring project (www.mentoring-validation.org) coordinated by Marie Curie Association with partners from Bulgaria (Municipality of Sliven), UK (French and Burt Ltd.), Greece (e-ISOTIS), Slovenia (University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education, Department of Social Pedagogy, SENT, Dobrovita), and Romania (Foundation H) that aims at supporting the work experience of young disabled people through incorporating and validation of mentoring programmes.
- The APT project (Access to professional training for people with disabilities) (www.apt-leonardo.org) coordinated by De Montfort University with partners from Bulgaria (Marie Curie Association and Center for Social Services – Sliven); Malta (National commission persons with disability and University of Malta) that aims at providing access to professional training, and improving disabled peoples’ opportunities for professional employment.

Based upon this previous experience, the Adults Mentoring project will develop a comprehensive system for workplace mentoring for older people (50+), whereby participants will be provided with an innovative type of vocational guidance matching their knowledge and understanding. Thus, the

objectives of this project correspond directly to the Stockholm European Council of 2001, which set a long term target for the employment rate of persons aged 55-64 of 50% in 2010.²

The following ambitious aims are set within the project:

- To create a mentoring system targeted at older people (50+) in order to increase their employability;
- To provide adults with soft skills and key work competencies training, work experience and self-confidence;
- To develop and pilot supporting materials for older people (mentees);
- To develop and pilot training materials for employers (mentors);
- To improve employers' awareness of older people's abilities, needs and capacities at the workplace;
- To develop networks of employers who are positive towards older employees;
- To develop training materials, accessible and widely available, free-of-charge, through the Internet. For those who have no access to the Internet, the materials will be provided in alternative formats (CD or printed version).

TARGET GROUPS

This project is oriented towards the following **target groups**:

- Job- seekers(over 50) who have been long-term unemployed;
- Older people who have been employed, but have recently lost their jobs.

Because the definition of Adults (Older people) varies in different countries, for the purposes of this project we will consider as Adults (Older/ people) people over the age of 50.

² Labour Force Survey 2006, 102/2007 - 20 July 2007, Eurostat

II. AGEING

Ageing is the process of becoming older. This traditional definition was recently challenged in the new "Handbook of the Biology of Ageing" (Academic Press, 2006) where ageing was specifically defined as the process of the system's **deterioration** with time, thus allowing for the existence of non-ageing systems (when "old is as good as new"), and anti-ageing interventions (when accumulated damage is repaired). Furthermore, ageing is an important part of human society reflecting the biological changes that occur, but also reflecting cultural and societal conventions.

AGEISM

Overtaking ageism (stereotyping and prejudice against persons because of their age) in the workplace requires a significant shift in perceptions for both employers and workers. Ageist behaviour is normally based on stereotyped prejudices (see Table 1), labelling and practices, rather than an active dislike of a particular age group. Age-related assumptions might be positive or negative – and could influence an employment decision, thus are classed as discriminatory. Typical negative examples are '*younger workers are less reliable*' or '*older workers are more set in their ways*'. Alternatively, on the other side, also generalisation such as '*younger workers are more enthusiastic*' or '*older workers are more loyal*' should be avoided.

QUALITIES ATTRIBUTED TO YOUNGER EMPLOYEES	QUALITIES ATTRIBUTED TO OLDER EMPLOYEES
Physically more able and healthy	Experienced
Easier to supervise	Reliable
Lower salary expectations	Stable
Willing to use new technology	Loyal
Creative	Have good practical knowledge
Energetic	Mature

Table 1: Ageism perceptions (Source: Bendick, Jackson and Romero: "Employment Discrimination" 1996)

Already undertaken researches (including TUC (UK) and the National Need Analysis carried out in partner's countries) show a considerable difference between employers and workers concerning age perception in the workplace. While employees see themselves still fit to work beyond 60, employers often push them out on false health and safety grounds. In fact, a poll by recruitment firm Monster in September 2006 found that among 8.277 interviewed European workers, a total of 46% believed their employers discriminated against older workers when it came to hiring new recruits. Notwithstanding these numbers, the study also pointed out that increasingly businesses do realise that they will have to take a more balanced approach. The "Manpower NOP report" (July 2006) confirms this where it states that "More than half of the businesses agree they want their staff to work beyond the age of 65 – but just 19% of employees say they will actually do this."

While ageism is still present, increasingly alternative approaches to support older people in employment are becoming available nowadays. Employers are increasingly realising the positive influence of experienced and skilled older employees. As an outcome of the increasing mutual

understanding and flexibility of both parties, a number of alternatives for older people (50+) employment and post pension occupation have been initiated.

For example, British Telecom uses some of the following approaches:

- Offering employees an opportunity to work part time or applying job-sharing;
- Enabling employees to reduce their work commitments by taking a lower grade job with less responsibility;
- Timing out, which allows employees to take phased sabbaticals;
- Encouraging employees to take up full - or part time secondments;
- Allowing employees to reduce gradually their working hours and/or responsibilities.

Also, legislation is being adjusted. E.g. in the UK, there are the new age discrimination laws that came into force on 1 October 2006 and that are expected to be a useful tool in ensuring older workers can continue to earn a quality living..

III. ADULT – LIFELONG LEARNING

What is adult lifelong learning?

Definitions of adult learning vary, but for the purpose of this document it is defined as all forms of learning undertaken by adults after having left initial education and training. This process may have gone very far (e.g., including tertiary education).³

Promoting **lifelong learning** is part of the Lisbon Strategy, which sets targets for economic growth, competitiveness and social inclusion. Although the Member States recognise the importance of lifelong learning, the number of adult learners in Europe today remains below the target set by the Member States. In this Communication the Commission encourages Member States to ensure the quality of their adult learning systems and their overall skills levels.

Adult learning is the practice of teaching and educating adults. This is often done in the workplace or through “extension” or “continuing education” courses at secondary schools, or at a college or university. Other learning places include community colleges, and lifelong learning centres. The practice is also often referred to as “Training and Development”. It has also been referred to as *andragogy* (to distinguish it from *pedagogy*). A difference is made between vocational education, mostly done in workplaces and mostly related to upskilling, and non-formal adult education, that can include learning skills or learning for personal development.

Educating adults differs from educating children in several ways. One of the most important differences is that adults have accumulated knowledge and experience that can either add value to a learning experience or hinder it.

Another important difference is that adults frequently must apply their knowledge in some practical fashion to learn effectively; there must be a goal and a reasonable expectation that the new knowledge will help them further that goal.

Better **adult education** can play a key role in vocational training in Europe and in the social inclusion of groups which are at a disadvantage on the labour market, such as migrants and older people, who are growing in number in Europe. Moreover, improvements in adult learning are a considerable advantage for both individuals and society. Raising overall skills levels helps to improve economic indicators, such as productivity and unemployment, and social indicators, such as civic participation, criminality and healthcare costs.

Barriers to adult learning

The barriers to adult learning are the following⁴:

³ Brussels, 23.10.2006 COM(2006) 614 final COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION “Adult learning: It is never too late to learn Adult learning: It is never too late to learn”.

⁴ As mentioned in Lieb, Stephen. – “PRINCIPLES OF ADULT LEARNING”, <http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/adults-2.htm>

- Many other responsibilities (families, careers, social commitments),
- Lack of time,
- Lack of money,
- Lack of child care,
- Scheduling problems,
- Transportation problems,
- Insufficient confidence,
- Having to learn, if told by employer, but not interested or ready to do so.

In addition to that, physical and cognitive changes take place as we age and are important to note because they can have an affect on our learning:

- Older learners have slower reaction times than younger ones. They need more time to learn new things, however, when adults can control the pace of learning, they can often effectively compensate for their lack of speed and learn new things successfully.
- Vision generally declines from the age of 18 to 40. After 40 there is a sharp decline for the next 15 years, but after age 55 the decline in vision occurs at a slower rate.
- Around the age of 70 our hearing begins to decline sharply and we begin experiencing problems with pitch, volume, and rate of response. Loss of hearing can be compensated for through the use of hearing aids, but often older learners may be embarrassed by their hearing loss and feel less confident. This decline in confidence can become a greater hindrance to learning than the physical disability.
- Few changes have been found in both sensory and short-term memory as we age, but long-term memory declines. Older adults have a harder time acquiring and retrieving information and they experience difficulties in organizing new material and in processing it. Older adults are not as able as younger learners in tests of recall, but the differences between older and younger learners in tests of recognition are small or nonexistent.
- When contextual learning approaches are used, less decline is found in the memory process as we age. The greatest problems with memory for older learners occur with meaningless learning, complex learning, and the learning of new things that require reassessment of old learning.

Adult learners' specificities

Although most of the Mentees often have a lot of experience, they lack motivation. As is true for adults of all ages, the previous educational level is the single best predictor of participation in non-formal and informal educational activities. The Need analysis report accomplished in the framework of the Adults Mentoring project confirms that older people are more influenced by Cognitive Interest to engage in the mentoring programme than by any other factors.

Highly experienced older people who want stimulating activities participate in such activities because they are interested in knowledge. They aim to get familiar with current labour market constellation.

This finding has a practical implication for programme planning for older people. When developing programmes for older people, we have to bare in mind that these should cover their interests and

needs. This actually raises the **need for motivation training**, while also focusing on new tendencies and taking equally into account the **relevancy of any required training**.

Furthermore, a particular lack of adaptive social behaviour (i.e. personal and interpersonal skills) is observed among older people. These are mainly soft skills, but also the more practical (hard) technical skills, as well as the ICT skills which are becoming increasingly more important as they are basically needed in every kind of job. We will go deeper into the soft skills and ICT skills in the following two sections.

Soft skills

When we talk about soft skills, we refer to the cluster of personality traits, social graces, and facility with language, personal habits, friendliness, and optimism that mark people to varying degrees. Soft skills complement the hard skills, which are the technical requirements of a job. Soft skills can be categorised as following:

Personal Qualities	Interpersonal Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-esteem - Sociability - Self-management - Integrity/honesty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participating as a member of the Team - Teaching others - Serving Client / Customers - Exercising Leadership - Negotiating - Working with cultural diversity

Table 2: Soft skills

ICT skills

The increased use of **Information Communication Technology (ICT)** both in the home environment, as well as in the workplace has had a considerable impact on older/adult people over the past years. They see how young people, particularly their children and grandchildren, have taken to ICT with relative ease. On the one hand, they often feel cautious about trying it for themselves, while on the other hand, there is often a strong motivation and curiosity on their part to learn about these new developments. This motivation will become even stronger for older people if they can see the relevance to them.

Older people are often motivated to take up ICT in order to keep up with grandchildren, so as to know what they are talking about. For others, ICT provides a means of stimulating and keeping the brain active by learning something new. For some it provides the means to communicate with family and relatives scattered around the world, using e-mail and instant messaging; it provides them with access to services such as online shopping, banking and increasingly online learning courses.

Mentors working with older people should be aware of the opportunities offered by ICT, but especially need to be cautious to identify in time specific age-related problems that many experience and which might hamper the ICT knowledge acquisition of the mentees. These problems can be mainly categorised in the following areas:

- **Memory:** older people may well experience problems in getting accustomed with ICT, and especially then with the many functionalities of software because of the problem they have with remembering and recalling new material.
- **Vision** generally declines from the age of 18 to 40. After 40 there is a sharp decline for the next 15 years, but after age 55 the decline in vision occurs at a slower rate.
- **Coordination and motor skills:** some will have difficulty controlling devices such as the mouse or touch pad and may also have difficulty in being able to click the mouse. In this respect, specific devices exist such as trackballs to make it easier for older people to use a computer, while a larger screen can also be of assistance.

In the following, we will examine the key skills that are required for ageing job seekers as they often lack up-to-date work skills and qualifications, making it more difficult for them to be “job search ready”.

Key skills (Key competencies for lifelong learning – A European Reference Framework)

Older people often lack the knowledge to see the relevance of their (current) skills and qualifications to the job that they wish to apply for. Additionally, they also often lack a good perception of their actual skills and abilities. Therefore, lifelong learning is a condition sine qua non for ageing job seekers to be able to compete in the job market, as well as to be “attractive” for employers. Furthermore, older job-seekers (50+) are a potential workforce as they are an integral part of the Lisbon strategy⁵ and life-long learning should involve and have an impact on them as well.

The **European Reference Framework** on key competencies for lifelong learning sets out the eight key competencies⁶ that should be developed to a level to form a basis for further learning and working life, and which should also be considered for ageing job seekers:

- 1) **Communication in the mother tongue:** Defined as an ability to communicate in the mother tongue and to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinion in both oral and written form and to interact linguistically in an appropriate way in a full range of contexts.
- 2) **Communication in foreign languages:** Defined as an ability to communicate in a foreign language – broadly similar to that of communicating in the mother tongue. It is based on the ability to understand, express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in

⁵ The Lisbon strategy sets a 10-year mission for the EU to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustained economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. Lifelong learning is a core element of this strategy, central not only to the competitiveness and the employability but also to the social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development.

⁶ “KEY COMPETENCES FOR LIFELONG LEARNING - A EUROPEAN REFERENCE FRAMEWORK” as mentioned in the annex of the “Proposal for a RECOMMENDATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on key competences for lifelong learning”, Brussels, 10.11.2005, COM(2005)548 final, 2005/0221(COD)

both oral and written form. It recognises that an individual's level of proficiency will vary between the four dimensions of listening, speaking, reading and writing and between the different languages.

- 3) **Mathematical competence and basic competencies in science and technology:** Defined as the ability to develop and apply mathematical thinking in order to solve a range of problems in everyday situations. Competence in science refers to the ability and willingness to use the body of knowledge and methodology employed to explain the natural world, in order to identify questions and to draw evidence-based conclusions.
- 4) **Digital competence:** Defined as an ability to feel confident and make critical use of Information Society technology (IST) for work, leisure and communication. It is underpinned by basic skills in ICT; the use of computers to retrieve, assess, store, produce, present and exchange information and to communicate and participate in collaborative networks via the Internet.
- 5) **Learning to learn:** Defined as the ability to pursue and persist in learning and to organise one's own learning.
- 6) **Social and civic competencies:** Defined as equipping individual to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life in increasingly diverse society. To encourage individuals to participate in civic life, based on knowledge of social and political concepts and structures and a commitment to active and democratic participation.
- 7) **Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship:** Defined as the ability to turn ideas into actions. It includes creativity, innovation and risk-taking as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives.
- 8) **Cultural awareness and expression:** Defined as the ability to appreciate the importance of creative expression, experiences and emotions in a range of media, including music, performing arts, literature and the visual arts.

The abovementioned competencies can be summarised in the following strands:

- **attitudinal skills**, for example, increased levels of motivation, confidence and self-esteem,
- **personal skills**, including improvements in timekeeping, attendance or personal hygiene,
- **practical skills**, which may be indicated by the ability to complete forms or to manage money.

The mentoring process we will present aims exactly at bridging the gaps in the key skills and competencies of the ageing job seekers. The mentoring process will help them especially to gain soft skills and improve their ICT skills, as well as bring back their confidence, optimism and (re-)integrate them as such in a working environment. The aforementioned soft skills are essentially the non-technical, intangible, personality-specific skills that determine one's strengths as a leader, listener, negotiator, and conflict mediator. "Hard" skills, on the other hand, are more along the lines of what might appear on one's resume namely the education, experience and level of expertise.

IV. MENTORING

WHAT IS MENTORING?

SHORT HISTORY OF THE TERM “MENTORING”

“Mentor” was the name Homer gave to Télémachus (educator, tutor, and teacher), the son of Odysseus. Mentor’s name gave birth to various common expressions such as “mentoring behaviour”, “mentoring tone” (in a conversation with another person), “mentoring attitude” (with respect to other people), etc.

Essentially they mean nothing else but “mentoring behaviour”, “mentoring, instructive, explaining tone”, “edifying, educating or instructive attitude”. Of course, such tone or attitude is not very appropriate when talking with an equal partner, who knows and understands no less than you.

Mentoring is a powerful and popular mechanism for people to learn many and new things related to their personal, social and professional skills. In fact, mentoring is one of the oldest ways to exercise influence. The first recorded modern usage of the term can be traced to a book entitled "Les Aventures de Télémaque", by the French writer François Fénelon⁷. In the book the lead character is that of Mentor. This book was published in 1699 and was very popular during the 18th century and the modern application of the term can be traced to this publication. A mentor can be anyone like a friend, a relative or a colleague. It is widely believed that the mentor is someone more experienced or older, who can be an imitation model or a tutor, a leader.

A mentoring relationship is usually one where a more experienced person assists another person to be aware of their own abilities and personal improvement.

Nowadays, the mentoring tradition of an experienced and wiser person who fosters the growth and development of another party has been widely adopted. This sometimes resulted in the perpetuation of old ways at the expense of diversity and development. However, together with these traditional approaches, new adaptations of mentoring allow individuals to interact as colleagues in a supportive manner, and on a more equal basis. This kind of mentoring can cultivate growth and learning, and this to the mutual benefit of both mentor and mentee.

No doubt, experience, skills and competencies are more valuable resources in a mentoring relationship than age or position. Also, open and clear communication, trust and assertive cooperation of both parties are essential. In fact, good mentors do also learn from their mentees.

⁷ François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon, more commonly known as François Fénelon (August 6, 1651–January 7, 1715), was a French Roman Catholic theologian, poet and writer. He today is remembered mostly as one of the main advocates of quietism and as the author of The Adventures of Telemachus, a scabrous attack on the French monarchy, first published in 1699. (Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois_F%C3%A9nelon)

Mentoring is fruitful in organisations when:

- it is perceived as a development strategy;
- it is allowed or encouraged as an informal process;
- it is an activity that occurs below the consciousness of individuals.

In such environments, people are learning from others, adopting models, attitudes and behaviour. The process allows them to absorb the culture and perceived values of the organisation through their personal contact with colleagues.

However, mentoring has to be carefully established, taking into account following aspects:

- it is an organized relationship whereby partners must be carefully selected;
- it is governed by an explicit agreement between the parties;
- it is voluntary and each partner must agree to the choice of the other and be able to withdraw if the relationship fails to work;
- it is confidential between the parties;
- its main purpose is to serve the needs of the mentee;
- it is a mechanism for sharing experience between two parties, a two-way street with benefits for both sides.

A ONE-TO-ONE, NON-JUDGMENTAL RELATIONSHIP, IN WHICH AN INDIVIDUAL MENTOR VOLUNTARILY GIVES HIS/HER TIME TO SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE ANOTHER, THE MENTEE.

ACU, HOME OFFICE 2001

Apart from the mentor and mentee, there is also the coordinator who takes the lead role in matching partners and providing support services. In the Adults Mentoring project, the management of the mentoring programme is realized on two stages – the national and the international one. The National coordinator of (Name of the country) is (Name of National coordinator). Euroconsulting Ltd. is the international coordinator of the Adults mentoring project, and together with (Name of National coordinator) will be responsible for the overall realisation of the programme.

Why choose mentoring?

Mentoring is applicable to all kinds of relationships between the mentor, who can be a professional, teacher, professor, manager, friend, etc., and the mentee who is less confident (experienced), but keen on adaptation. The purpose of mentoring is in handing over the experience of the mentors to the mentees in an individual way. As such, mentoring is a suitable, cost-efficient, and flexible form of preparation and support for older people in all areas of life, and especially in education and employment.

Therefore, the mentoring is a form of learning familiar to an individual relationship between a mentor and mentee. The most important advantage of mentoring, comparing to the wider spread forms of organization and preparation of education and learning, consist of the individual schedule and timing of mentoring schemes meetings between the mentees and mentors. However, one should be careful as mentoring is a form of learning that does not allow for uncoordinated and undefined results, nor does it tolerate a neglectful attitude towards the final result.

The mentor watches out for what the mentee grasped or failed to grasp. They are sharing skills, techniques, methods, directing questions, additional explanations, examples, and even additional support from other colleagues for help, solely intended for the mentee to get all the details of the required knowledge, skills, concepts, points of view, etc. Moreover, the mentor is obliged to ensure that the mentee has really grasped what they have learned, and can reproduce the acquired knowledge and skills with their own words or meanings.

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MENTEE-MENTOR RELATIONSHIP

Where we looked earlier to the linguistic origins of mentoring, in this section we will define the specific relationship that should exist between a mentor and a mentee in order to ensure the highest outcome (read: make the ageing job seeker “job search” ready or even “job ready”). This relationship can be characterised as following:

- The mentor is a person able to **provide support for other individuals** on a suitable level.
- Through **support training and direct guidance** the mentor can ensure the connection between theoretical training and practice at the working place, thus helping the mentees in their steps when exploring new opportunities: new technologies and new relationships.
- Mentoring is normally a **relationship involving participants differing in status** since the mentor is usually more experienced, supporting and guiding the development of a mentee (also known as a protégée, sometimes confusingly as “an apprentice” or a “learner”).
- **Training (induction)** is usually provided and required for both parties (mentees and mentors) and is widely viewed as a crucial element for success.
- Effective **monitoring** is required through the entire mentoring process.

- Mentoring schemes are quite **flexible** and should allow for changes in e.g. the frequency of meetings, the medium used for contacting, etc.

Mentoring is actually a form of informal learning. However, its main essence is that it solves the task of quality learning in the process of adaptation and employment. It ensures achievement of higher results. This task is realised through the following:

- The mentor must ensure that acquired skills, knowledge, techniques or way of activity are understood in detail by the mentee;
- The mentor's explanations should be comprehensive and detailed so that the shared knowledge and experience can be analysed, scrutinised and understood in the greatest detail, and afterwards be summarisable;
- The mentor should make sure, that every element, every taught knowledge and skill can be reproduced or repeated so that the mentee can apply it later on their own;
- The mentor should correct the gaps and mistakes, made by the mentee in the process of learning;
- The mentor should encourage the mentee to make a creative interpretation of the studied knowledge and of every non-standard solution.
- Mentoring for adults has to focus on encouragement by pointing out the abilities and obtained experience, rather than the limitations.

Now that we understand the mentor-mentee relationship, we will have a closer look at why mentoring is so attractive for ageing jobseekers.

MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS

Mentees (older people) as a specific and autonomous group can be motivated through a number of approaches. Generally, these approaches are clustered as social and personal motivation factors.

Social factors

- Social relationships: to make new friends, to meet a need for associations and friendships;
- Social welfare: to prepare for community service, and to improve the ability to participate in community work;
- The opportunity to make or maintain social relationships;
- To meet someone's expectations;

Personal factors

- Professional advancement,
- Personal Interest,
- Personal advancement,
- To achieve higher status at the workplace,
- To secure professional advancement,

- To keep abreast of competitors,
- Stimulation:
 - to provide a break in the routine of home or work,
 - to get rid of boredom, daily life chores and routine.
- Cognitive interest:
 - to learn for the sake of learning,
 - to seek knowledge for its own sake,
 - to satisfy an inquiring mind.

Adults/older people have responsibilities that must be balanced with the demands of training/learning. Because of that, you could face barriers against the participation in training/learning programmes. Possibly, it could/will happen in this programme too.

These barriers could include:

- Lack of time, money, confidence or interest
- Lack of information about opportunities to learn
- Scheduling problems
- Difficulties with child care and/or transportation
- A number of personal/everyday issues

You should be fully aware of the reasons why you participate in the mentoring programme and what the ultimate goals of the programme are. This should be clearly explained by your mentor or by the programme coordinator. If you don't know why and if you haven't been told about the benefits that a mentoring programme can afford, you will probably oppose the idea.

***TIP:** The recognition of learning outcomes could be a motivating factor. More about the recognition of learning outcomes and the validation of mentoring programmes is available on www.validation-mentoring.org. (Mentors and National coordinators of Mentoring programmes are strongly advised to get familiar with “The Code of Practice for Mentoring”)*

Finally, together with your mentor, you have to discover what is stopping you from learning. Programme coordinators together with mentors must plan motivational strategies.

ATTRACTIVENESS OF MENTORING

Mentoring as a concept to be applied for ageing job seekers is attractive and likely to be successful for a number of reasons:

- **Innovative character:** it is a complete innovation in the European labour market.
- **Cheap:** while participating in a mentoring scheme, the mentee is being trained at the workplace and therefore they are ready to start a job without the additional costs of training. The advantage for the employers is that it saves them both money for training and time.

- **Flexible:** the mentoring process starts in a way that gives you the opportunity to drive it in another direction during the process of mentoring.
- **Feedback mechanisms function:** good coordination is possible at every stage among all participants, and any issues that arise can be almost immediately addressed.
- **Quality assurance:** mentoring provides but also requires quality, hence mentors should be professionals to assure qualitative and effective mentoring.

Who will be the best mentor for me?

Just as you cannot easily predict which couples on a blind date will really get on with each other, so it is almost impossible to predict whether two people will 'click' as mentor and mentee. However, first instincts are frequently correct. If you take an instant liking to someone, you will probably find it easier to establish a mentoring relationship with them than with someone to whom you take an instant dislike.

If you are seeking mainly support from your mentoring relationship, following your instincts is as good a strategy as any. If you want to maximise learning, however, you may do better to look for somebody very different. Studies of how people learn show that the similarity of personality and background, which often attracts people to each other, provides relatively little opportunity for learning. The greatest opportunities for learning come with people least like us. In practice, most people find a mentor somewhere between the two extremes.

In choosing a mentor, you can ask yourself the following questions:

- What do I want from this relationship?
- What sort of person would I find it easiest to build a relationship with?

Boundaries

Discussing and agreeing boundaries sets out in a clear way how both parties are to behave with each other by asking the following questions:

- What is acceptable or unacceptable behaviour?
- Does any one else need to be updated on our progress?
- What do we mean by confidentiality?
- Issues that are off limits?

The key here is to talk openly and agree a way of working that is acceptable to both parties.

- Boundaries within the mentoring relationship will include boundaries considered for counselling and supervision. When personal issues fall outside the mentoring relationship, the mentor should support the mentee in finding counselling support.
- It is also important to be clear about responsibility and management. If issues arise where the mentor has concerns for the safety of the mentee or people associated with the mentee, the mentor must be explicit about these concerns. If they cannot be resolved satisfactorily, the mentor must be clear about their reporting duty to their tutor or programme staff.

Confidentiality

- In mentoring relationships, confidentiality is an important element of an effective relationship.

The mentee must feel able to bring difficult issues and their own vulnerability to the relationship in order to explore and work on areas for development.

- In order to provide a safe environment for the mentee, the mentor must offer confidentiality. During the foundation phase, the mentor and mentee must explore the nature of this confidentiality. They need to agree that personal issues shared in mentoring will remain confidential as far as possible. Should a discussion of general aspects of learning and development needs with programme staff be necessary, the mentor and mentee will discuss and agree how the mentor might best support the mentee.
- There are times when confidentiality needs to be broken, when the mentor feels the mentee or another person being discussed is at risk. These limitations of confidentiality are to be explicit in the contract.

Practicalities

- Mentees and mentors should meet at set times in a neutral environment, away from phones and interruptions. The practicalities of the mentoring sessions, frequency, where and how, should be discussed during the contracting. Expectations around punctuality and timing may also be helpful. The formality of arrangements will vary as there is no right or wrong way to set up the practicalities of mentoring and different styles will suit different mentors and mentees. During this foundation phase, mentors should explore how they want to work and agree with this pattern of working. All aspects of the contract should be reviewed at regular intervals during the mentoring period and changes may be made as needs change.

Agenda Setting

- Within mentoring meetings, it is helpful to encourage the mentee to raise issues relevant to them. Allowing the mentee to set the agenda of the meeting, rather than the mentor leading on all topics, encourages the mentee to take responsibility for their own learning and development.

Relationship

- Throughout the foundation and development phases, the relationship between mentor and mentee remains central to successful mentoring. During this foundation phase, the mentor will be setting the groundwork for promoting mutual respect in a non-judgmental and trusting relationship.
- Once all information has been processed and we have found you a match, both mentor and mentee will be asked to fill out an agreement, which is binding between them and the project coordinators.
- It is also very important to ask all mentors/mentees to complete and sign a statement of confidentiality and data protection forms.

Anti-Oppressive Practice

An anti-oppressive practice is based on 2 sets of core values:-

1. Human Rights & Dignity – the promotion of people’s rights to choice
 - encouraging participation in decision-making
 - treating each person as an individual

- promoting empowerment based on strengths
- 2. Social Justice – challenging discrimination, unjust policies and practice
 - recognising diversity
 - distributing resources fairly according to need
 - working in solidarity

What can a mentor do for me?

If you are beginning to think about the continuation of your career options then this process could be really beneficial to you. A mentor is in a position to be of valuable support, regardless of how exactly matched your profiles are. During the mentoring process, you should think of your mentor as a resource from which you can get insight and information. As well as being a guide for you, a mentor should be a positive influence upon you, sharing their personal experience, and providing you with lots of information and guidance. The mentor should help you to adapt your previous experience with requirements of the new work place environment.

At the end of the process, you should have gained more knowledge, confidence, and motivation and have become much better prepared to begin the passage back to employment.

We will try to provide you with a mentor who is compatible with your requirements; however a very close match of profiles between the mentor and the mentee should not be needed to ensure that the process is rewarding and beneficial.

BENEFITS TO THE MENTEE

Through mentoring, a mentee can:

- Gain practical advice, encouragement and support
- Develop self-confidence and a sense of empowerment
- Overcome social isolation
- Develop interpersonal skills
- Develop strategies for dealing with personal issues
- Identify goals and establish a sense of direction
- Gain insight into the world of work and explore career options
- Develop social and professional contacts
- Learn from the experience of others and adapt his own experience, skills and knowledge

THE PROCESSING OF MENTOR /MENTEE MATCHING

First step

At first you need to complete the application form provided by the National programme coordinator. We will study them carefully and will connect you with potential mentors. The selection will be done on the basis of your education, qualification, professional and personal background, as well as your career preference.

Second step

We will send information for each of these people we find appropriate for you. You then need to choose one of them and inform us who has been your choice.

Third step

We will get in touch with the mentor you have chosen and will give you a time to get in contact with him. If you do not make the first step please let us know and the mentor will contact you first.

Forth step

After the initial contact, your mentee / mentor relationship is initiated.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Mentor and mentee share the commitment to the progress and maintenance of their relationship. There are a few instances however where you or your mentor are more directly responsible. Please read carefully through the following list of guidelines and refer to it throughout the mentoring process.

JOINT RESPONSIBILITIES

Both the mentor and mentee are responsible for keeping the information exchanged confidential. For example, we hope that you will wish to talk about your positive experiences of being mentored within ADULTS MENTORING project on its website (www.adults-mentoring.eu) or in other project events, but mentees must make sure that their mentor knows about this. Mentors must also let you and us know if they wish to give out any details of your relationship. If you feel it is necessary, you can refuse such permission.

Both the mentee and mentor must report any difficulties with the pairing or its progress to the project staff, so that these can be resolved or the relationship can be ended in a proper way.

Tips for Mentees

BECOMING MORE STRATEGIC

Mentee

Please remember the following in your approach

1. You both share responsibility for the creation and maintenance of a positive atmosphere in the overall relationship.
2. You should let your mentor know as soon as possible the kind of goals you want to achieve from this process. It is up to you to 'set the agenda' (with assistance or approval from your mentor) as your issues are those which need to be addressed.
2. You must respect the other commitments that your mentor has. Therefore you should limit communication to a level you are both happy with.
3. Show your appreciation for the efforts made by your mentor, this means that you should always consider thoughtfully any opinions or suggestions that they offer.
4. Whether or not the relationship is working out, remain courteous and do not make negative comments about your mentor to others, especially other mentees you may know of who are taking part in the scheme.
5. You must provide feedback to the (Adults mentoring National coordinator) and inform your mentor of the progress of any actions which have resulted from or been discussed within the pairing.

Have you been told that you should become *less tactical and more strategic*? If so, what specifically did the person(s) mean?

To become more strategic.

Strategic versus Tactical: What's the Difference?

In a nutshell, *strategic* refers to the "what and why" and *tactical* refers to the "how."

Strategic thinking, planning, and actions reflect the doer's ability to consider the big picture, recognize patterns and trends, honour priorities, anticipate issues, predict outcomes, and have smart alternatives to fall back upon. Strategic issues deal with overriding mission and purpose, why the organization exists, how it makes a difference that others don't or can't make, and where it will be in the future.

Tactical refers to the hands-on part of getting the job done, making sure the strategic goals are met. It's performing each implementation task with quality and efficiency.

Both are very important. Leaders know and use strategy AND they are very aware of their organisation's tactics. That doesn't mean they perform these tasks on a regular basis. But they *could if they had to*, especially with a little learning. At the very least they're aware of what "good tactics" are

and are able to recognize when others are doing them well. They're often seen as "tactically credible" by their teams. Just as important, they're able to show their team members how their tactical work makes the overriding strategy possible.

How strategic and tactical are you?

How are you **balancing** these two approaches? Are you buried in details and day-to-day deadlines? Or are you able to see things from a larger, longer perspective?

Have you been accused of "micro-managing" projects, controlling every decision? Or are you able to overlook small issues in favour of the larger picture? Do you know what the *large and small issues are*?

How could your mentor help?

One of the most valuable things a mentor can do is help you take an honest look at yourself related to strategy and tactics. Here are some ideas to try if you want to develop in this area.

- **Interview** your mentor about the topic of strategy vs tactics. How does he/she see the two differing? Can he/she tell a story about when one or the other approach worked well? Didn't work well?
- Ask your mentor to **help you develop** in this area. Propose some objectives and learning activities.
- Ask your mentor **to be frank** about your efforts to be strategic. Where does your mentor see strengths and weaknesses in you?
- **Do a self analysis** of how you approached your last two big projects or decisions. Where did you get bogged down in tactics? Why did you do this? Were you as strategic as you could have been? How could you have improved? What might you do next time in a similar project?
- Research the **literature** on leadership and strategy. **Present your findings** to your mentor (and perhaps to the other mentees) about what major thinkers and leaders are saying and doing.
- **Shadow someone** with a reputation for being strategic. This could be your mentor or someone they recommend. Try to participate in a situation that allows you to observe this person "being strategic." Interview them *before* the event to understand the thought process, alternatives considered, and the game plan for the situation. Watch and listen carefully to what they say and do in the situation. Afterwards, debrief what was going on. Your goal: to get inside the person's head and learn to think like a strategic person thinks. **Talk with your mentor about this topic.** What do they believe to be true about your approaches? Discuss how you could further develop.

EXPECTATIONS AND GOAL-SETTING

It is a good idea to begin to decide upon your goals and an action plan as soon as you can. This is a good way of beginning to get to know each other, even if the final outcome is that a slightly different set of goals has been reached.

As a pair, it is important that you get to know a little about each other in order that a bond of mutual respect and trust can form. It is not advised that your emails become very personal but sharing some of your likes or dislikes and finding some common ground is recommended.

V. ONGOING ACCOMPANYING ACTIVITIES

Expectations and goal-setting

It is a good idea for the mentee to decide upon their goals as soon as possible, while the same applies for defining an action plan. Also, as a pair, it is important that the mentor and mentee get to know a little about each other in order for a bond of mutual respect and trust to be formed. This does however not mean that they should become very personal, however sharing some of their likes or dislikes and finding some common ground is recommended. Finally, helping to set realistic goals is one of the most important tasks a mentor will have to perform and it comes right at the start.

Monitoring

To begin with, there will be a short time gap from the date the mentor begins the mentoring process to when the National project coordinator first asks for feedback from both the mentor and mentee. This will take place using evaluation forms. After some time has passed, **(Name of National Project coordinator)** will contact you again. This is to ensure that both the mentee and mentor are satisfied with their matching and to see if there are any problems that **(Name of National Project coordinator)** could help you with now, rather than leaving them until later.

If there comes a point at which the mentee does not wish to wait until the next feedback session to let **(Name of National Project coordinator)** know of an issue, they can contact the National coordinator immediately.

Evaluation

As the process is gradual and therefore can take a while to make progress, when we do ask for the mentee's feedback, at each point it should be thought of as an opportunity to look back on what has been achieved so far.

Support

Support will be provided on a national and translational level.

- On a **national level**, in **(Name of the Country)** the National coordinator role will be assumed by **(Name of the National coordinator)**.
- On a **translational level**, the support will be provided by the staff of Euroconsulting and Zgura-M Ltd. Bulgaria.

The project cannot accept responsibility for the conduct of individual mentors and mentees but it will provide support in terms of guidelines, feedback mechanisms, monitoring and advice. It is advised that when the mentor or mentee have any problems or enquiries, they come to **(Name of National Project coordinator)** for direction or help. If **(Name of National Project coordinator)** needs to give details of

the mentor to another party in order to be of assistance to you, (Name of National Project coordinator) will ask his/her permission. In this respect, please read and abide to the confidentiality form.

Tracking of goals and objectives

It is a good idea to begin to decide upon your goals and objectives you will set. Both of you could start with the preparation of an action plan as soon as you can. This is a good way of beginning to get to know each other, even if the final outcome is that a slightly different set of goals has been reached. Helping you as mentee to set realistic goals is one of the most important tasks a mentor will have to perform and it comes right at the start. Here is a basic idea of the action plan you could both have in mind.

EXAMPLE OF WORKING PLAN/AGENDA

Agenda

1. Determine strengths and weaknesses of the mentee and find out what they 'need to know' so that the mentor can give assistance in the areas needed.
2. Set realistic goals and reasonable timeframes within which they can be achieved, these might include;
Through practice, mentee to become more confident using their already acquired skills and competencies and combining them in new approaches.
For example: Former typewriter is to be advised to obtain basic computer skills.
By the end of the mentoring process, the mentees should have a good idea of the new work place constellation, and current requirements of the desired job position.
3. Plan how best to achieve these goals (who does what and when).
4. Execute set plan.

Confidentiality

Although every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality, it must be accepted that in the case of emailed information, it is not absolute. Feedback within the project itself will be kept confidential within the Adults Mentoring project. All overall reports of the project will ensure that information will be presented as such as to preserve the anonymity of the involved mentors and mentees.

Participants have the option of seeking assistance from their National Project coordinator or directly from the projects coordinator. If the mentor contacts their National Project coordinator either the mentor or the National Project coordinator must notify Euroconsulting Ltd. and /or Zgura-M Ltd. Mentees must notify their mentor in case they have sought outside advice. Information cannot be passed to other members of the staff who may be able to help without the permission of the mentee and again the project coordinators and mentor must be informed. The mentor and mentee can talk about their relationship and achievements on the discussion group (for more details please contact...(Name of National Project coordinator)) or access the web site www.adults-mentoring.eu).

CONTACT DETAILS

The National coordinators contact details:

Euroconsulting Ltd.
Maria Valkova
info@marie-curie-bg.org

ZGURA-M Ltd.
Tel: +35932/622 128
Fax: +35932/ 628 890

REFERENCES:

1. The Growth Connection <http://www.growconnect.com.au/links.html>
2. Vella's 12 Principles for Effective Adult Learning <http://www.fsu.edu/~adult-ed/jenny/learning.html#vella>
3. <http://www.mentors.ca/>
4. MENTORING –A GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE, 2003
5. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES; MENTORING AND TRAINING OF DISABLED PEOPLE AND EMPLOYERS- <http://www.marie-curie-bg.org/mentoring>
6. <http://www.mentoring.org/>
7. Lieb,Stephen. – PRINCIPLES OF ADULT LEARNING from: <http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/adults-2.htm>
8. The effective mentor! guide
9. A Guide to Mentoring Students ,www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/hrpubs/tb_856/agtms-PR_e.asp?printable=True
10. Courtesy of The Connecticut Mentoring Partnership, *Business Guide to Youth Mentoring*.
11. www.staffs.ac.uk/ssmp
12. www.brunel.ac.uk/admin/careers/pro-active_mentoring.shtml
13. www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/hrpubs/tb_856/agtms-PR_e.asp?printable=True
14. www.contactpoint.ca/index.pl?section=mentoring
15. www.unis4ne.ac.uk/unew/ProjectsAdditionalFiles/wp/mentoringguide.pdf
16. www.sussex.ac.uk/si/documents/student_mentoring_leaflet.pdf
17. www.gcal.ac.uk/student/new2gcu/special.html (This is the mentoring page for Glasgow Caledonian University, and covers mentoring for direct entry students)
18. Manpower NOP report (July 2006)
19. Alison Morton-Cooper and Anne Palmer Mentoring, Preceptorship and Clinical supervision: A Guide to Professional Support Roles in Clinical Practice. 2nd edition 2000
20. http://www.exemplas.com/individuals/leadership_management/services_mentors_forum.asp
21. Taken from: Merriam, S. & Caffarella, R. (1991). *Learning in Adulthood*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 159-180.
22. Cross, P. (1981). *Adults as Learners*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 152-185.
23. From: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education Trends and Issues Alerts, "A New Look at Older Adults," 1997.
24. Knowles, M. (1980). *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: From Pedagogy to Andragogy* 2nd ed. New York: Association Press
25. Gavrilov L.A., Heuveline P. Aging of Population. In: Paul Demeny and Geoffrey McNicoll (Eds.) *The Encyclopedia of population*. New York, Macmillan Reference USA, 2003, vol.1, 32-37.
26. United Nations, 2005, *Human Development Report 2005*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
27. United Nations, *World Population Prospects: The 2004 Revision Population Database*, Population Division, 2004.
28. Weil, David N., "The Economics of Population Aging" in Mark R. Rosenzweig and Oded Stark, eds., *Handbook of Population and Family Economics*, New York: Elsevier, 1997, 967-1014.