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EOF European Outplacement Framework

Vocational Support for People with Difficulties on
Employment Access



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Final report on implementation of pilot seminar course for MENTORS



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Final report on implementation of pilot seminar course for MENTORS

Partner P0: SZF, Austria
Partner P1: RANDERS, Denmark
Partner P2: URI-SOČA, Slovenia
Partner P3: DIMITRA, Greece
Partner P4: COOP, Slovakia
Partner P5: IteE, Poland
Partner P6: School Centre Ptuj, Slovenia

Date P0: 29.04.11, 06.05.11, 20.05.11
Date P1: 16.05.11, 17.05.11, 23.05.11
Date P2: 18.04.11, 19.04.11, 20.04.11
Date P3: 05.05.11, 06.05.11, 07.05.11
Date P4: 02.05.2011, 03.05.2011, 04.05.11
Date P5: 27.05.11
Date P6: 22.03.11, 24.03.11, 19.04.11

Duration: 18 hours

Number of participants P0:17
Number of participants P1: 15
Number of participants P2: 8
Number of participants P3: 8
Number of participants P4: 7
Number of participants P5: 12
Number of participants P6: 23

List of participants (in attachment): please find attached

Target group P0: representatives of different companies, who are responsible for human resource management and/or who are working as apprentice commissioner

Target group P1: People who have recently begun working as mentors in companies and institutions in and around the city of Randers. These people are responsible for supporting and teaching the target group of our institution - young people with special needs – what they need to know when they are on the work place.

Target group P2: participants from different companies in our local area who are responsible for our clients (persons with disabilities) during our vocational rehabilitation programme and some new companies interesting in our seminar course and cooperation with us.

Target group P3: (Mentors, Trainers, Trainer Developers)

- ✓ 2 of them work **as mentors** on the Labour Institute of the Greek General Confederation of the Labour (Branch of Larissa)
- ✓ 4 out of 8 work **as trainers** on the Second Chance School for Adults
- ✓ 2 work **as training developers** in the H.R. department of Therapy Center for Dependent Individuals

Their educational background:

- University graduates of humanitarian departments (sociology, psychology, etc)
- Master degree (5 persons)
- Previous training in mentoring and consulting

Target group P4: Personnel consultancy companies, Recruitment companies, Public employment services, Educational institutions, Companies dealing with outplacement services

Target group P5: Employers and employees who are interested in the counseling of unemployed persons and who want to participate in the qualification and training on the job of new employees or trainees (e.g. students, apprentices etc.).

Participants of the course represented different trades of the local industry and services, e.g.: building and transport companies; catering, hotel and renovation services.

None of the participants of the seminar for mentors had previous experience as a mentor. The group of participants of the pilot seminar in Poland shall be treated as a group of **potential mentors**.

Target group P6: participants from different companies in our local area who are responsible for our students during their practical work in real work life

Objectives P0:

clarification of the role as a mentor and to get familiar with different kinds of methods
enlargement of the network, exchange of experiences and broadening the personal perspectives

to support and guide the employees in the most proper way

to deal with difficult situations
to hear about new methods regarding the guidance of apprentices and employees

Objectives P1:

To upgrade and/or renew the mentors' skills regarding their work with the young (our target group). These being communications skills, solving of problems at the workplace – physical as well as understanding of workplace culture, cooperation with tutors, integration into the labour market and an understanding of how society works when it comes to being on the labour market.

Objectives P2:

they want to improve mentors skills, to do their job better, get new skills, for better help trainees, to know more about motivation, communication skills and counseling techniques, to get practical experiences and know better MTG.

Objectives P3:

√ To improve mentor's skills in the field of counseling and coaching, to improve their communication skills and to get new contacts as well.

√ Getting familiar with innovative tools such as Methodological Training Guide and the Good Practice Catalogue as well.

Objectives P4:

to improve mentor's skills, to receive useful information and guideline how to work as a mentor, to improve techniques in supporting job seeking processes and to get new cooperation opportunities.

Objectives P5:

The aim of the seminar, set by the organizers, was to get the participants (and in some cases their employers) interested in mentoring, clarify the advantages and benefits for a company and, on the other side, the duties arising from taking care about a new employer (profile and duties of a mentor). The other aim was to present the experience in mentoring in other EU countries where the system of mentoring and tutoring has been sanctioned and has implemented legal and organizational solutions.

These were also the expectations of the participants who wanted to gain knowledge about the duties and responsibilities of a mentor, who can become a mentor, how to establish appropriate relations with trainees, colleagues at work and management staff of a company.

Objectives P6:

to upgrade the mentors skills on the training field (how to solve the problems during the mentorship to the students, communication skills, how to encourage the students, approaches to learning, labor market integration, overcome barriers to finding the job).

Clarity and sufficiency of the objectives P0:

Most of the participants were very happy and satisfied with the aims, which have generally met their expectations, although they were eager to hear more about communication and conflict management. We had a very heterogeneous group with totally beginners and with very experienced mentors already, so that was the reason, why the leading of the group was a challenge. All in all the participants enjoyed the contents of the seminars, working together and especially getting the possibility of networking. Nearly all participants expressed their gratefulness on having gotten such a possibility and were pleading for follow up seminars and also for seminars with a broader audience.

Clarity and sufficiency of the objectives P1:

All goals were met during the seminar. Our work was well accepted and approved of and the idea of mentor seminars which help improve the work of and between mentors, the young and the tutor was applauded. Contents and expectations of the participants were as good as we had hoped.

Clarity and sufficiency of the objectives P2:

We achieved the goals we have set. We present our partnership project and implement all modules. Mostly they find out that all modules are useful. The same they think about MTG. They were the most interesting on networking part between companies and conflict management in practice. Their expectations were satisfied.

Clarity and sufficiency of the objectives P3:

- √ The Mentors had the opportunity to get familiar with innovative tools such as Methodological Training Guide for Tutors and Mentors
- √ The Mentors had the opportunity to improve and empowerment their techniques in supporting job seeking process
- √ Finally, the Mentors had the opportunity to share their experiences and to get new and useful contacts during the pilot testing

Clarity and sufficiency of the objectives P4

The main goal was achieved and almost all expectations were fulfilled in positive way.

Clarity and sufficiency of the objectives P5:

The aims and objectives were not clear for all participants of the pilot course. A very extended programme of the seminar made the participants rather overawed than engaged (very often the participants were people with a lot of professional experience but low educated, very often above 50 years old).

Clarity and sufficiency of the objectives P6:

We achieved the goals we have set. We present the main point of partnership, not just between them and students, also between them and school. They were completely satisfied with content and expected results.

Process of the pilot seminar course P0:

We started with a workshop by representatives of the companies to discuss with them on the topic of mentoring and how these activities are defined in the company and which competences are needed in the future. Through this discussion process we have learnt a lot about the needs and interests of the companies and on the other hand we were able to initiate an effective promotion for our seminar programs. Secondly we mailed and phoned to companies, which are in a business relation respectively cooperation with our training organization and offered them the possibility of attending the seminars. The interest was very big and we got more confirmations than we actually had expected.

We started both the mentor seminar and the tutor seminar at the same day and time, so that the general units, which mentors and tutors had in common, were performed in one group. This start was a very successful one, as both mentors and tutors wanted to learn more about the others work and daily experiences. The second day was performed separately and the third day in the afternoon, the two groups again were put together. The content of the common unit was the reflection on the seminars, the future implementation of tutoring and mentoring and the cooperation between companies and training institutions. A lot of topics have been discussed in these two units, so we realized a real need in these discussion rounds. We – as SZF – have promised to organize a follow up meeting together with tutors and mentors to exchange experiences, but also to learn and hear about new approaches and to build up new contacts.

Process of the pilot seminar course P1:

We invited participants from different companies with which we already have a form or other of cooperation. This cooperation is a general cooperation where we are able to arrange a practical work experience for one or more of our young, a continuance of such a practical experience or a new one at the same work place. The team of instructors was from our own institution, including an EOF-project member, who already works as mentors/tutors and they have for many years already taken on the job of running mentor courses here in Randers Bo- og Erhvervstræning. Because we, as an institution, are already known for our mentor courses and regularly hold mentor networking days we had a very large turnout on the last day where networking was the focus. Some of the mentors may function as both tutors and mentors for the trainees at their work place.

According to the seminar program we introduced the various topics of the course and presented the Good Practice Catalogue and the MTG which lead to a Q&A session regarding the EOF project and our work. All participants received a copy of each product. Very important to all, both Randers Bo- og Erhvervstræning and the participants, was, and still is, the networking such a seminar creates the basis for at the work place as well as in other aspects of work life.

Process of the pilot seminar course P2:

We invited participants from different companies, especially those we have good cooperation already. We wanted to give that mentor extra knowledge with this seminar course, which will improve their work with our clients (persons with disabilities). We invite them by phone, e-mail or personal invitation. We inform other enterprises via Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Štajerska and Chamber of Craft Maribor. The team trainers responsible for mentor course were from URI-Soča,

we invited also 2 experts from Employment Service and another provider of Vocational rehabilitation. We run the seminar 2 days. During the seminar we present the main point of the seminar, problems of local economy and employment policy. We pointed out the MTG and how we can use the mentioned guide in the purpose of labor market integration. We presented the Catalogue of good practices. All participants get a copy of Catalogue of good practices and MTG. The participants find them both very useful and access that seminar like that, are good for their work and successful cooperation with URI-Soča and other providers of vocational rehabilitation. Good support the participants results better results and chances to become their work force in future. The participants were informed also about way of learning and the learning techniques. But the most useful they find out practice experiences.

Process of the pilot seminar course P3:

Before:

A data base created with details of people raised interest and contacted us for information on EOF project

We contacted them by e-mail, sending the invitation letter the brochure and the application form

Follow up by phone giving further information and clarifications about pilot's courses

The course:

The course piloted on 5/5 and 6/5 from 15:00 to 20:00 and on 7/5 from 9:00 to 14:00

- ✓ The trainers which implemented the course had fluency in consulting and coaching and in adult education and vocational training, they were experienced in labour and economic matters, they have being worked with unemployment people and long term unemployment people and with vulnerable social groups.

Process of the pilot seminar course P4:

The first and the most important step were to contact the potential participants. We used the following communication and contacting tools: personal meetings with prospective participants, invitations sent by emails, in cooperation with Labour office, EOF leaflets and seminar brochures were distributed to potential participants. During the seminars, there were used the unique and innovative training materials developed within the Partnership: "GOOD PRACTICE CATALOGUE" with a collection of outplacement tools from different EU countries and "METHODOLOGICAL GUIDE FOR TUTORS AND MENTORS" supporting their daily professional tasks. Moreover trainers provided very useful information and some practical examples related to counseling process and basics of coaching and its techniques. All participants received a copy of each product which can be useful for them also in the near future.

Process of the pilot seminar course P5:

Mentoring and a mentor are actually unrecognizable in the reality of the labour market in Poland. No tradition in acquainting new employees with the work environment and supporting them with psychological care and mentoring resulted from the economical-political history of the country and on the other side from the actual high unemployment rate of those well-qualified as well. Employers prefer to hunt for people with all required qualifications rather than to teach, train and adopt a new employee to work on a given position.

Therefore, the recruitment of people eager to participate in the seminar “Outplacement for mentors” was not an easy job in Poland. We were forced to take a little bit different aims and form of the realization of the pilot testing of the seminar programme.

The duration of the seminar has been reduced to 1 day. It was one of the basic conditions for getting engagement of the employees. All thematic areas have been considered but in reduced time dimension.

Cooperation with local institutions of the labour market has been established at the planning and organizational stage. The participants` recruitment has been carried out by the Labour Office in Warsaw (branch in Radom). It also has delegated one employee (Ms Maria Majda) who has carried out the following modules during the seminar: *Counseling process for unemployed people or people facing social exclusion respectively* and *Basics of “coaching” and its techniques*. The other trainers were employees of ITeE-PIB running the EOF project.

Each of the trainers has one’s own training materials in the Power Point presentation format. Handling methods (introduction, information) have been applied together with motivating methods alternately. Motivating was extremely hard and required a lot of effort from the trainers.

Each of the trainees received a copy of the Methodological Guide for Tutors and Mentors during the seminar. This material has been assessed as very useful and giving a good base for the preparation for working as a mentor.

Each module has been finished with time for the discussion. The discussions were very lively and full of additional questions about tasks and role of a mentor. One of the most interesting topic during the discussions has cover the issue of appropriate relationships between mentors and management staff who has to accept the duties concerning the process of mentoring as of the same importance as regular professional duties of the mentors.

It is necessary to emphasize a big value of the last element of the seminar – the development of the platform for cooperation (networking).

Process of the pilot seminar course P6:

We invited participants from different companies (especially companies with which we have continuing cooperation during student’s practical work. We create the team of trainers who were responsible for the seminar. The team was formed from the staff of SC Ptuj (each of them covered the certain content of the seminar). We run the seminar in three days in two different groups. The last day we combined the both

group also with group with tutors and they can exchange the experiences in the field of mentoring and tutoring for the students.

During the seminar we present them the main point of the seminar, the problems of local economy and employment policy. We pointed out the MTG and how we can use the mentioned guide in the purpose of labor market integration. Also we presented them the Catalogue of good practices (each participant get the copy of MTG and Catalogue of good practices). Very important for all of us, as well for mentors and SC Ptuj as well, is network with education and local economy and we pointed out the importance of that fact especially in the way that we are both “the producer” of the future work force. The participant were also informed about the way of learning and the learning technics.

Strengths and weaknesses P0:

Strengths:1. The most important strengths was, that “Mentoring” is a very evident and burning topic at these days. Companies are very much interested in it, as it seems to be of use for all the employees and especially for their apprentices. Many employees take the role of a mentor, but they know nothing about it and they want to enhance their competences in this field.

2. A further strength of the seminars was their design and the balance between theoretical inputs and practical exercising. The participants appreciated very much, that their “daily” problems and situations are transferred and trained during the sessions and discussed them also on a theoretical background knowledge. So that they had the feeling, that they really could develop further competences and to be better prepared for their daily business.

3. Finally they mentioned, that it was very important for them to have the possibility of networking with other mentors and have the possibility of exchanging experiences. And they want also more exchange with tutors, as they can gain new, important information from the “other side”. They have realized those chances as real benefit, they recommended to offer more space and time for working together with the tutors and training organizations.

Weaknesses: 1. Due to the interests and description of the target groups in the brochures we addressed many different representatives from the company for a basic seminar. On one hand this was an advantage as we have tried to “anchor” the topic of mentoring for the first time. On the other side it is partly a disadvantage to have a too heterogeneous group, especially the representatives of HR-management and the apprentices commissioners, as their interests and their tasks in mentoring are varying. This diversity should be taken more into account by some additional or optional modules specialized on these two target groups.

Strengths and weaknesses P1:

The strength was that people who may not otherwise have met, got together and were able to network across company borders and Randers Bo- og Erhvervstræning was able to strengthen even more the networking we have already been establishing and strengthening over the years with mentoring. Weakness was perhaps that participants and working people in general already know what is going on on the

labour market, in politics and economics on the area of mentoring and also more generally.

A weakness is definitely that in Denmark it is very difficult to get people to commit 100% to a seminar until it starts, because they may have to cancel their signing up for the seminar at the last moment because it interferes with their work.

Strengths and weaknesses P2:

The most important strengths was to improve cooperation between enterprises and providers of vocational rehabilitation and also networking between companies.

Strengths and weaknesses P3:

Strengths:

- Well structured course
- Quite useful innovative and interesting information
- Useful and interesting education material

Weaknesses:

- The course did not lead to an officially recognized certification

Strengths and weaknesses P4:

Strengths:

This seminar gave to participants opportunity to gain more useful experience and professional knowledge, to gain awareness associated with mentoring philosophy at all and to get new useful business contacts.

Weaknesses:

Too much information during short time, different needs of participants, lack of practical exercises

Strengths and weaknesses P5:

Strengths:

Well prepared trainers.

Well prepared didactic materials, interesting presentations.

Weaknesses:

No superiors of the potential mentors joining the seminar.

Strengths and weaknesses P6:

The most important strengths was the deepening cooperation between education and local economy.

Outcomes P0: An effective interest in working as mentors and implementing mentor models into the companies.

- Highly motivated mentors, who want to develop their competences further
- readiness of companies to invest in mentoring
- better quality of guidance and training of employees and trainees by the enhancement of competences
- the demand for offering additional seminars concerning mentoring
- The need of building up a platform for mentors and tutors for continuously exchange and learning – also from best practice models

All this aspects lead to a better cooperation between training institutions and companies in order to support trainees and to help them to get integrated into the labor market and to foster their personal development.

Outcomes P1:

The more knowledge, the better skills and the better tools the mentors have, the better ballast they will have in their work in the work place which will be beneficial for all parties involved. Trainees will become more accustomed to the culture on the work place and, hopefully, better at adapting to work life, i.e. integration will become easier for both work place/employer/employees and trainee. This will all in turn be beneficial to the labour market in general and improve completion at the same time.

Outcomes P2:

More qualified mentor will contribute to a quality successful integration of job seekers (persons with disabilities) into a labor market. The participants are more competitive and successful at employment. Mentors get new skills and do their job better.

Outcomes P3:

- All the participants considered that the course was very interested for them
- The middle average grade of the course was 5 out of 6
- 75% of the participants considered appropriate the duration of the sessions
- All the sessions evaluated as quite useful for the participants
- The education material as well as the trainers evaluated with an average grade 3,5 out of 4

Outcomes P4:

Inexperienced participants considered pilot training as a good base for their career, but further training education and trainings are more then necessary. Experienced participants improved their knowledge and got new useful contact and built up new business relationships. Trainers got new and useful information about best practice related to mentoring philosophy in foreign countries which participate at the project EOF.

Outcomes P5:

- 1) Increase of the participants` awareness about the role of a mentor in the systems supporting the unemployed or people changing their jobs (e.g. social responsibility of entrepreneurs)

- 2) Improvement of knowledge about the importance of outplacement processes, possible forms of its realization
- 3) Improvement of knowledge about the actual organizational/system solutions in other countries
- 4) Increase of the participants` awareness and knowledge concerning possible support from the national institutions of the labour market.

Outcomes P6:

Qualified mentors will contribute to a quality successful integration of job seekers into the labor market. Indirectly, this will also affect on the increasing in competitiveness of the local environment.

Problems occurred P0: Time management of participants. For some participants it was not possible to attend all 3 seminar days due to obligations in the company.

Problems occurred P1:-

Problems occurred P2:-

Problems occurred P3: No problem occurred or recorded by the participants during the implementation of the pilots

Problems occurred P4: Some participants couldn't come for pilot seminar because of their obligation at work.

Problems occurred P5: The organization of a 3-day seminar for the employees – potential mentors has turned out to be unrealistic in Polish conditions. Maybe it will be possible in the future.

Problems occurred P6:-

Recommendations P0:

1. more thoroughly differentiation of the target group. It should be distinguished between mentoring in the “HR-department”, where the general responsibility for mentoring in the enterprise is defined and between employees, who work – or wants to work – as mentors. Maybe the design should be divided into 2- 3 basic modules and afterwards there should be offered some special modules, which can be chosen optional depending on the role of the participants in their companies
2. greater amount of time to have opportunities for networking and building up contacts

Recommendations P1:

The seminar content could be loosened up, meaning that many point seemed to be viewed as superfluous and the expectations of the participants should be higher – they already know what is stirring in society -> on the labour market, in economy, politics etc. Communication and teachings in knowledge of one self and of people around you should be key – The more you know about yourself the easier it is to figure out how other people are, react, behave, etc and why.
The use of cases was very much requested!

Recommendations P2:

The content of the seminar should be more flexible according to the needs of participants. We could include more “team working”, to compare their experiences

and “produce” new ideas. Some parts of seminar should be oriented more in the needs of clients mentors are working with.

Recommendations P3:

Some of the participants expressed the opinion that could be useful:

- to be planned more time for discussion
- more detailed information about implementation of outplacement tools
- more detailed directions and guidelines regarding the role of tutor and mentor
- a longer course that could lead to an officially recognized certification

Recommendations P4:

To extend the content of the topic coaching and add more exercise

To add at least one more training day

To have several shorter cyclic meetings (due to quite a lot information within one day)

To add to seminar one useful module called: “How to build a mentoring culture”

Recommendations P5:

1) In case of companies which haven't practiced the mentoring processes yet, the representatives from the management staff (increase of awareness, building the responsibility, support for mentors) should be obliged to participate in the seminar (1/2 – 1 day)

2) Not everyone is able to define one's predispositions to a mentor. It is recommended as appropriate to work out short (psychological) tests to help candidates in making a decision about working as a mentor.

3) Enabling the exchange of experiences with tutors – but at the further stage, after gaining at least a basic experience in mentoring.

Recommendations P6:

The content of the seminar should not be so strict. In the future it will be very useful if we leave at least 20 % of the content to be “free”, in other words, more oriented towards the needs of specific groups and their problems in the process of mentoring for job-seekers (the possibility to express themselves, what are those skills that are most lacking or what skills would most benefit them).