



e-Training Centre for Social Entrepreneurs

ETC4SE Platform Mentor Guide

The ETC4SE team

Project No. 2017-1-EL01-KA204-036221



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
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Outline

1. Introduction to the ETC4SE project
2. Mentors - training and support



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1. Introduction to ETC4SE project

The ETC.4SE project (co-funded by the European Commission under the Erasmus+ Programme) aims to create resources for future social entrepreneurs, existing entrepreneurs and tools that will help them by providing learning opportunities to encourage young long term unemployed to enter the business world, set up a business and be socially responsible.

All this using the theoretical basis of the Social Economy and with a collaborative spirit. An online platform has been developed where future entrepreneurs can find training materials and resources to suit specific needs.

The purpose of this guide is to help users of the ETC.4SE learning platform. The ETC4SE platform is an open educational resource with didactic materials on how to support an entrepreneurial project aiming at providing future entrepreneurs with tools to develop their own entrepreneurial project to solve a challenge of the community.

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2. Mentors – Training and Support

ETC4SE Mentoring Guide

What is mentoring

Mentoring dates back to Ancient Greek times, when it was very common for young and inexperienced men to have a mentor who would deliver knowledge to them in order to turn them into mature men. Today mentoring has spread beyond the “personal sphere” and it has become widely used in business in order to bridge the gap between educational process and the real-world experience.

In modern times Mentoring finds its application in many fields: scientific, professional and educational. Mentoring is a practice that has been increasingly adopted in recent years to achieve support and empowerment by transferring know-how and knowledge from experienced to less experienced people. The purpose of Mentoring is to help individuals and/or groups manage their personal learning to maximize the perspectives and opportunities offered to them, develop and evolve their skills and improve their performance.

2. Mentors – Training and Support

Although there is no commonly accepted definition of Mentoring, it seems that everyone agrees that this is a collective process where members improve and gain benefits (at a practical and symbolic level).

Mentoring is defined as the relationship between an experienced or more experienced person, the mentor, and a less experienced or less experienced person (advised / guided) who, through assistance and guidance, aims at the personal, educational and professional development of the second (Haney 1997).

Mentoring has also been seen as:

- a way to help new employees learn about organizational culture (Bierema, 1996),
- a means to facilitate personal and career growth and development, and to expand opportunities for those traditionally hampered by organizational barriers (Gunn, 1995).
- support for individuals through opportunities to enhance cultural awareness, aesthetic appreciation, and the potential to lead meaningful lives (Galbraith and Cohen, 1995).

2. Mentors – Training and Support

What is NOT Mentoring?

Paternalism
Representation
Psychotherapy



What is Mentoring?

**Systematically designed process
that helps the beneficiary answer the
question "What to do".**



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2. Mentors – Training and Support

In summary:

Mentoring is a relationship of cooperation between two (or more) individuals who, through the exchange of experience, opinions, information and practical advice on a particular area of education, employment or activity, in a trust and respect framework, aims to strengthen professional, educational and personal skills of the participants.

2. Mentors – Training and Support

What is the role of a mentor?

The mentor and the mentee are the main contributors to the mentoring relationship. So, it is necessary, their relationship to be characterized by honesty and confidentiality.

The role of a good mentor in the mentoring process is not to impose opinions and solutions, nor to judge and compare the mentee. Instead, the mentor should support the mentee to acquire new knowledge and skills, clarify, define and prioritize goals and requirements, and clearly identify the obstacles he / she will be faced.

At the same time, the mentor helps the mentee to develop self-esteem and self-confidence, his/her social and communicative skills, and supports him/her in exploring new perspectives and expanding networks.

2. Mentors – Training and Support

In any case, we must not forget that the mentee always has control of his/her own learning process.

If we had to give some brief insight into the role of the mentor, we would say that a good mentor should:

- get to know the mentee and try to understand his/her point of view,
- be positive, patient, honest and sincere,
- be consistent, reliable, impartial and straightforward,
- be prepared for each session, but also to have the flexibility to face a change in his/her plans,
- be an active listener,
- use understandable language,
- respect mentee's cultural background and diversity,
- be open to learn in turn from the mentee,
- comply with the commitments of the "Cooperation Agreement",
- listen, understand, propose without impose.

2. Mentors – Training and Support

On the other hand, a good mentor should not:

- proclaim, preach and / or moralize,
- say what the mentee should do instead of encouraging, proposing and seeking with him/her,
- refer to personal problems rather than just to share his/her condition (e.g. tiredness),
- make promises he cannot keep,
- be afraid to admit that he/she cannot answer a question asked by the mentee,
- understand the lack of interest or inability to understand the process from the mentee's side as a rejection,
- undertake psychological support for the mentee,
- judge, evaluate, train.



2. Mentors – Training and Support

What skills a mentor should have

The relationship between the mentor and the mentee is a partnership aimed at delivering positive results for the educational and professional development of the mentee, which may last for several weeks or months, or perhaps for only one session.

Relevant bibliography shows that effective mentors have features that promote interpersonal relationships as individuals. They are distinguished for their empathy, their positive mood and humor, their flexibility, their supportiveness, their willingness to encourage. All the above suggests that the ideal mentor has increased "emotional intelligence".

2. Mentors – Training and Support

The key features of a good mentor can be described as follows:

- Distinguished for his/her willingness to share experiences, skills and knowledge.
- Shows positive behavior and acts as an example to be imitated.
- Looks forward to the continuous learning and improvement of his / her skills, thus motivating others in similar practices.
- Moves on the principles of trust and respect.
- Demonstrates enthusiasm for "cooperative guidance"
- Provides guidance and constructive feedback.
- Does not judge, does not evaluate and does not train.
- Appreciates the views and initiatives of the others.
- Listens, understands and proposes practical and realistic solutions based on his/her experience.

2. Mentors – Training and Support

Barriers that may occur during the mentoring process

The mentoring process is neither simple nor easy. Since it is a dynamic relationship based on co-operation between two sides and is based on human communication and interaction, some obstacles may arise in the implementation of mentoring involving both mentors and mentees.

A good mentor should be prepared to recognize these obstacles and difficulties and find solutions in time so that the process continues smoothly.



2. Mentors – Training and Support

Some of the obstacles that may be encountered and associated with the mentees and the mentor should be aware of are:

- When mentees evolve often have the feeling that they have overcome their mentors. The dissatisfaction they manifest is related to their opinion that mentors are holding them back.
- Mentees who are disorganized are seeking advice that they do not follow or do not want to commit themselves to.
- Some mentees are constantly looking for facilities, opportunities and relationship control. In this case, the mentors feel used and indignant.
- Some mentees do not take seriously the process and are inconsistent. They are not prepared or willing to commit to a relationship, just want to satisfy their immediate needs.
- Finally, where there is a skillful and available mentor, some mentees tend to take advantage of his/her knowledge but also his/her available time.

2. Mentors – Training and Support

Some other obstacles that may be encountered and associated with the mentors could be:

- Mentors who are totally committed to a relationship or left to themselves to be exploited by the mentees can experience fatigue and exhaustion.
- The mentor may feel inadequate or ineffective. However, mentoring is only one of the many commitments and obligations in the mentor's life and there are always events that cannot be controlled by him/her.
- The unwillingness of the mentee to share information and feelings can lead to situations where the mentees are involved in erroneous communication models, with all that this implies on the outcomes of mentoring.
- Sometimes mentors are led into situations without their will. In their desire to meet the needs of the mentees, they are involved in ethical dilemmas they have to deal with.
- When mentors postpone their scheduled meetings as part of mentoring, they should immediately wonder why this happens.

2. Mentors – Training and Support

Conclusion:

Mentors can have a productive relationship with the mentees, if the boundaries of their relationship are clear and there is an open line of communication.

It is important to recognize the risks and difficulties when they arise. Talking about problems can alleviate tension and bring to surface things that can be manageable even when they cannot be discussed openly. Such a problem may be the lack of confidence.

Conclusions of the finding can redefine the factors needed to stabilize the mentoring relationship.

2. Mentors – Training and Support

Mentoring disadvantaged groups

Mentoring in groups facing social exclusion, such as long-term unemployed who want to reintegrate into the labor market, can be a real challenge.

This is because people who have stayed long away from the labor market face many issues. Some of these are associated with psychological difficulties (depression, lack of motivation for action, withdrawal, etc.) which have social extensions, such as low self-image, abstention from social networks, etc.

A mentor wishing to develop a successful relationship with a mentee from these population groups should take into consideration that more time and effort may be needed to develop their relationship on the right basis and ultimately to be useful to the beneficiary. The efforts of the mentor should focus on stimulating the beneficiary's self-confidence, mobilizing, assisting him/her to set priorities or goals, or to re-examine them.

2. Mentors – Training and Support

Also, the mentee can see the mentor at first with suspicion or disbelief and tend to be easily disappointed or abandon the effort.

Frustrations he/she has experienced during unemployment may have immobilized him/her and made him/her cynical or very impatient. The mentor should have all the patience to build the trust relationship in small steps and help the beneficiary without criticism to set his/her goals, identify his/her weaknesses and find the way that will lead him/her to an overall empowerment.

Especially entrepreneurship mentoring has specific requirements and commitments on both sides.

2. Mentors – Training and Support

Suggestions for further reading:

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2. Mentors – Training and Support

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2. Mentors – Training and Support

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- Smith, W. et al. (2005). Essential Formal Mentor Characteristics and Functions in Governmental and Non-Governmental Organisations from the Program Administrator’s and the Mentor’s Perspective. Journal of Personnel Management, vol. 2.
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2. Mentors – Training and Support

Tips for mentors to Support online training

Learning processes – how can it be used by teachers and trainers?

Different learning approaches

- Education differs and can be presented in many forms, all depending on how you approach and design it. The main importance is that it fit our values, our experiences but mainly our target audience. There are many forms available to select from ranging from behaviorist to constructivist, to social networking, peer learning, lesson studies, problem-based learning, learning with technologies and many more, with newer forms such as MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) and Open Innovation structures, gaining ground. Each teacher/mentor should focus on what they need to transfer and consider the best option to do so.

2. Mentors – Training and Support

How can I use this?

Each trainer/mentor has his/her ways of approaching and delivering training, whether this is formal or informal. A learning approach in a school differs from that of vocational training and university studies.

One thing is common though, practical examples help and allow the trainees to retain the information. In order to teach social entrepreneurship to your trainees, try to select an approach that will have a direct benefit to them i.e.

- Think of the best time of year to include this in your training delivery.
- Create a project and have group work done by your learners. There are plenty of information resources on the ETC.4SE website.
- Use of technology: find testimonials from YouTube, the Internet and have your trainees create a multimedia project. In this way, they will integrate their research skills with their ICT skills. Make sure you are confident in using these technologies as well in order to help your trainees.



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Different roles in the community: trainer/learner

- An open learning community is considered one of the most successful methods of learning where trainer and learner are inter-related and interconnected. The information flows freely both sides allowing also, learner-learner interaction. This stimulates information sharing and role-playing allowing learners to take initiatives and be in control of their own learning path. Communities are common and represented on Learning Management Systems (examples are Wordpress, Moodle, Blackboard and SumTotal), closed networking sites such as BuddyPress for example, but also blogs created by schools to allow information sharing.



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Autonomous learning

- Autonomous learning is characterized by learning at your own pace and at your own time. The actual meaning is that a learner sits by him/herself and studies. When in an online or e-environment, the trainer/course designer must appropriately design the course to allow the learner access to all relevant tools and course information in order to complete it autonomously. This means, self-assessment questions, exercises with links to evaluation tools, course material and tools for communication with the trainer (such as a discussion forum / email). Related to training on the 13 steps of the ETC.4SE Model, examples for autonomous study are PowerPoint presentations or PDF files with information, and URL links to specific sites.

2. Mentors – Training and Support

How can I, as mentor, use this?

As a mentor your options are many, you need to integrate training material on social entrepreneurship within your information delivery or course and allow the trainee time for assessment, reflection and further discussion with you online or, if pre-determined, in a classroom setting. Depending on the topic of training i.e. leadership, social innovation, social entrepreneurship, management etc. you can add sections you have found on the Internet, through your own research, through bibliography or the EU website into your training.

- How do you usually search for information, which sources do you use?
- Do you need multilingual information or information in various formats (online, books, URLs, PDFs, leaflets etc.)?
- If you have experience in providing autonomous learning, what type of assessment do you use?

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Collaborative learning

- Collaborative learning is the opposite of autonomous and is characterized by working in groups, either online or in a classroom. Unlike autonomous learning, people engaged in collaborative learning capitalize on one another's resources and skills (asking one another for information, evaluating one another's ideas, monitoring one another's work, etc. leading to active interaction, sharing of experiences and engagement in a common task. Trainers can use conversation analysis evaluation methods to assess this method but also statistical analysis of results.



2. Mentors – Training and Support

How can I use this?

Collaborative learning is one of the most successful training methods and allows for great interactivity between trainees. As a trainer /mentor, you can create short interactive role-playing game with your trainees allowing them promotion of skills and competences such as:

- Searching for information,
- Competition between groups,
- Communication and collaboration skills,
- How can it be promoted in Education?



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Face to face learning

- Face to Face learning is the most common approach used in education today offering both advantages and disadvantages. The trainer/learner role is more evident, and interaction depends on how the course material is structured and delivered. This method is mostly used when training social entrepreneurship today, with trainers integrating videos, testimonials, information and case studies during class. Group work can be organized to allow exchange of information and knowledge sharing.

2. Mentors – Training and Support

How can I use this?

Although the European Commission has published a plethora of information on social entrepreneurship on their websites, a trainer/mentor has to go through all this information to collect / extract what is necessary for their training. Face to Face training is the most used in delivering this type of information to trainees. Organizations in Europe, use face to face training scenarios to teach the topics above.

They use role plays, games and interactive activities to stimulate discussions, interaction, decision making and exchange of information. This has proven to be very successful and are promoting this through structured training provision.

2. Mentors – Training and Support

Below, are tips for mentors wishing to create online training material.

Before starting to design training material, the training content need to have a specific structure. Usually in online training the following topics are considered:

- Its role and importance – consider the role of the training material you are creating? i.e. what is the objective you wish to obtain?
- Needs to be autonomous – structure your course and modules in small autonomous training lessons.
- Is in the center – does not play a supporting role – the training material is the key material that a user needs to study,
- Needs to motivate and attract the trainee – structure it in such as way that will motivate and interest the user.
- Changes the way the trainee interacts with it – add features such as navigation, interaction, comments etc. The trainee/user needs to have control of the information provide to them.
- You write for reading on the screen – Think about small sentences, key points etc. Don't use large texts with scrolling for online reading.

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Think of creating a content template with the following information included. This will help you structure your autonomous, small lessons and they will be uniform.

1. Presentation of content – one slide where you shortly present the content
2. Structure of the training material:
 - a) Title – one slide with the title
 - b) Learning objective – one slide with the learning objectives which need to be measurable.
 - c) Learning content – the actual content. This can range between 10-50 slides maximum.
 - d) Assessment – how will you measure the objectives and the learning outcomes. Consider including multiple choice questions, activities, case studies etc.
 - e) Summary – conclude your lesson by summarizing the key points.



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Once the training material has been created and uploaded on the selected platform, a mentor needs to start their support work. Several stages are included within this phase. Mentors need to prepare their trainees, prior to their session, during the session and after the session. Below you can find some tips for each step.

Prepare your learners for online interaction:

- have you sent an invitation email?
- have you got replies from all participants?
- have you solved any initial technical problems i.e. have you asked your participants to try out the software they will use?
- have you sent the final invitation?

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Answer questions before the synchronous part:

- FAQ section on the platform. (updatable)
- Questions related to the time, content, structure of content/ course, trainer, trainees, certifications etc.
- Estimate around 5 minutes Q&A session in the beginning.
- Very important!!!! Do not forget to set the ground rules!
- Communication and interaction
- Noise and interventions
- Trainee participation

Answer questions during the synchronous part:

- Have an assistant checking the Chat and forum
- Make regular breaks to check for new questions and answer them.
- Try to group questions and answer many in one go.
- Ask for trainee feedback and if they have understood the answers.
- If you use chat sessions, record the chat session and post it on the forum when the session is finished.

2. Mentors – Training and Support

Conclusion:

The above constitute a small part of the mentor's role for online training. Mentor primarily need to support trainees in the allocated tasks and their work is usually conducted face to face. On an online training environment, their professional profile needs to include some additional tasks and competences such as being able to write training resources/content for online training. In addition, mentors need to be able to support their trainees using online communication tools.

We hope you found the above guide interesting.

The ETC.4SE training team

