

# Mentoring in Europe

## Towards an inclusive society, connecting cultures & generations

### Position Paper



**Mentoring  
Europe**

“Mentoring is impactful since it creates a domino effect. We often underestimate the value or contribution of a single individual, but mentoring is powerful. One mentor with the aim to share his or her experience and knowledge can upscale the capabilities of so many individuals. It starts a chain process and the amount of good being created is only multiplied. This is the most inspiring aspect of mentoring, once started we do not know where it can reach.” – Hamza Nawaz Butt (mentee)

**Mentoring supports individual, educational and professional development; encourages social inclusion, solidarity and tolerance; connects cultures, generation and societies and needs to be better recognized as such by European and national policy makers.**

*Mentoring<sup>1</sup> is an instrument with a broad variety of implementations. It is a form of coaching and networking, contributing to the growth of an individual. Mentoring provides recognition, role modelling, encouragement and personal attention to participants – also called mentees. They realise their ambitions with the support of someone who has travelled a similar path before. Due to the mentoring relationship, mentees recognise their opportunities and learn not to give up. The strength of mentoring lies in the fact that all parties benefit from it. The mentee gains confidence and has the feeling of not standing alone. The mentor develops skills as a leader, trainer and coach.*

Mentoring is an essential tool for keeping people connected. It is about sharing feelings, supporting each other and cultivating ambitions for the future, all aspects based on one of the main values of the Union as set out in article 2 of the Treaty on European Union - solidarity.

Mentoring has been a part of the development of European civil society for more than 20 years. In the past decade, more and more mentoring programmes have emerged. As practice and evidence show<sup>2</sup>, mentoring is a unique instrument that can be connected to a diversity of European, national and regional challenges and priorities. It works – under the right conditions – for different topics, target groups, goals and organisations. Despite the differences in cultural, traditional and legal context of the member states, mentoring works in comparable ways and mentoring has comparable impact on people. The instrument shares common values across the diversity of national practice.

**The support and guidance of (young) people of different ages in Europe, and the sustainable development of professionals needs a broader approach, going beyond institutions, structures and sectors. Mentoring answers this need, being a personal, powerful and customized intervention.**

Bearing this in mind, mentoring practitioners and researchers bring the following recommendations to EU authorities and to member states. In consequence, mentoring as an intervention can reach its full potential in the European and national context.

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<sup>1</sup>Definition of mentoring as explained by mentoring practitioners and researchers

<sup>2</sup><https://www.mentoringeurope.eu/publications/>and [www.evidencebasedmentoring.org](http://www.evidencebasedmentoring.org)

**Recognise mentoring as a tool for connecting formal and informal learning, at all levels of education.**

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**Integrate mentoring in academic curricula to promote the development of civic engagement, citizenship education and social responsibility among VET and university students.**

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**Develop a label that corporates can apply that commit to mentoring in different ways.**

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**Create mentor-rich environments in community development programmes where communities, education, government and businesses collaborate to tackle inequalities in society.**

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**Seek evidence and impact evaluation of mentoring on a national and European level to be able to develop and grow.**

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**Encourage member states to develop mentoring networks that connect individual mentoring schemes for a structured dialogue with national policy- and decision makers.**

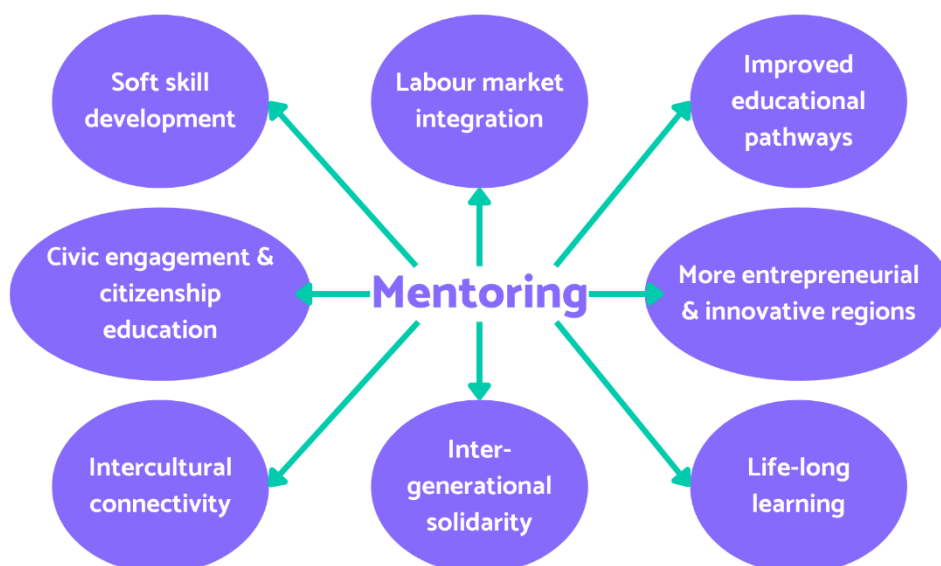
# We build

meaningful relationships so  
Mentors and Mentees reach  
the impacts they choose for



## The impact of mentoring

Mentoring has proven its universal power and social efficiency in a broad range of directions. Examples of measured impact according to research in Europe, are:



### **Mentoring prevents early school drop-out and contributes to improved educational pathways**

Best practices and research show that long term personal mentoring providing supportive attention by a non-familial mentor is effective in helping adolescents at risk to attain necessary life skills, to regain interest in school and in personal education, and a development of basic qualifications needed for work. Mentoring can prevent adolescents dropping out early from school and prepare the student for entering and completing a higher level of education. A long-term study from Germany shows that one year of mentoring for elementary school children from a low socio-economic background boosts their personal development to the

extent that inequality gaps towards opportunities in education and life are closed<sup>3</sup>. According to French national evaluations<sup>3</sup>, 86% of mentees develop a better personal understanding and self-awareness and 87% of youth who graduated are employed after being mentored<sup>4</sup>.

## Mentoring tackles inequality of career opportunities

Mentoring can offer major impact on individuals to tackle barriers in accessing the labour market, for citizens at risk like youth from lower income families or migrants that enter the EU and have to integrate, including second and third generation migrants. Mentoring can be one of the keys to conquer the inequity in career opportunities. As a Belgian study shows<sup>5</sup>, based on an evaluation of DUO for a JOB mentoring programme, mentoring provides individualized help that is tailored to migrants' needs and improves their odds of integration on the labour market. This impact has been significantly proven through the first Social Impact Bond<sup>6</sup> in continental Europe evaluating that the employment rate of young people participating in DUO for a JOB mentoring programme was 28% higher than the control groups. A retrospective Dutch study among alumni of MentorProgramma Friesland shows that mentoring stimulates young people to complete their education, to continue at a higher level such as universities and to build networks that are necessary to orientate on the labour market<sup>7</sup>.

## Mentoring is cost-effective with multiple impact

Mentoring is a preventive and cost-effective tool for national and local governments to create future contributors to a healthy European economy. A unique, long-time social return assessment<sup>8</sup> from Germany shows that each euro invested in a mentoring programme yields 8 euro back to society. The positive effects are on educational outcomes and job market prospects for the mentees as well as increased civic engagement on behalf of the mentors. A Finnish – Polish – Bulgarian collaboration<sup>9</sup> proves that mentoring can be a powerful intervention for NEETS (youth in in education, employment, or training) to find their way to school and work again. Longitudinal research in the US highlights how mentoring can break cycles of deprivation by addressing the 'mentor-poor' environments of people in lower socio-economic backgrounds, leading to higher educational attainment, higher household income and more time spent volunteering<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> F. Kosse, et al (2020). „The Formation of Prosociality: Causal Evidence on the Role of Social Environment”, *Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 128(2), pages 434-467

<sup>4</sup> Collectif Mentorat (2021). Expanding Mentoring Opportunities, Fostering Alliances [online]

<sup>5</sup> Bagnoli, L. et al (2021) Mentoring as a Pathway to Labour Market Integration: Evidence for a Belgian Programme, Econpapers

<sup>6</sup> Koisinvest, “DUO for a JOB: the first SIB in continental Europe”, 2014

<sup>7</sup> M. Vos (2015) Enriching relationships. Research on the long-term effects of mentoring for young people and the connection to industry. MentorProgramma Friesland, University of Groningen

<sup>8</sup> What good will it do? AN SROI analysis of the Balu und Du mentoring programme, 2014/2018

<sup>9</sup> Mentoring NEETs in theory and practice, Poikolainen (eds), 2021

<sup>10</sup> Hagler, M. A., & Rhodes, J. E. (2018). The Long-Term Impact of Natural Mentoring Relationships: A Counterfactual Analysis. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 62(1- 2), 175-188.

## Mentoring contributes to the development of soft skills

Various studies on the impact of mentoring prove that mentoring relationships develop soft skills of both mentors and mentees<sup>11</sup>. A mentorship is above all else a social relation that is the best environment for advancing these skills. The importance of soft skills is recognized by the World Economic Forum as being in the top 10 of job skills needed<sup>12</sup>, this acts as further proof that mentoring is a unique mechanism for ensuring a high level of employment by expanding work skills beyond job-specific knowledge.

## Mentoring is key to supporting entrepreneurial skills

The latest studies on the impact of mentoring on migrants prove that it is a key factor for supporting their entrepreneur skills. The mentoring support not only helps with business knowledge and performance, it also enables the entrepreneur to integrate into their host country through fostering relationships, developing cultural and social understanding and insights, and building social capital<sup>13</sup>.

**All this brings Europe's people one step closer to a higher level of education, training and a life-long learning that improves social inclusion and counteracts social exclusion. This in turn provides a better transition from education to the labour force or higher education and can, thus, result in a higher level of employment.**

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<sup>11</sup> For further research into the benefits of mentoring even beyond the development of soft skills, see [Publications - mentoringeurope.eu](https://mentoringeurope.eu)

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-future-of-jobs-report-2020/in-full/infographics-e4e69e4de7>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.youthbusiness.org/resource/mentoring-for-migrant-entrepreneurs>

# Mentoring is

Driving social and economic development in the European Continent



## Mentoring on the national and European Agenda

On the 11th of November 2021, the European Parliament adopted its Report on the **European Education Area** where the value and benefits of mentoring have clearly been underlined for educational systems, businesses, and our society as a whole. On the initiative of Ilana Cicurel, MEPs link the practice to the prominent pedagogical role of non-formal and informal learning as well as of volunteering and civic engagement while urging for a European framework on civic and social competences. On the same file, the Employment committee gave its opinion to the Culture & Education committee, encouraging the European Commission to promote mentoring and to work with Member States on the development of mentoring certification and labelling.<sup>14</sup>

According to the 2020 “A bridge to jobs – Reinforcing the **Youth Guarantee**” Council Recommendations, the European Commission pleads for a more holistic approach to help young people overcome barriers to employment through guidance and mentoring<sup>15</sup>.

The **Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion** gives multiple references to mentoring as an effective mechanism in various stages of integration. Providing mentoring and coaching to recently arrived migrant children, in particular unaccompanied young people, is especially important in transition to adulthood and from school to work.

This recognition of the Commission and Parliament encourages members states to initiate a further development in mentoring interventions for different target groups and social / economic goals.

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<sup>14</sup> REPORT on the European Education Area: a shared holistic approach | A9-0291/2021 | European Parliament (europa.eu)

<sup>15</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0277&from=EN>



Several member states are introducing **national campaigns** and actions to encourage organisations to initiate mentoring or to scale up their services.

Good practices that were launched in recent years are:

- ⇒ The French action plan “1 jeune, 1 mentor”, launched by president Macron in March 2021, as a private-public collaboration;
- ⇒ The mentoring action plan launched by the Spanish-Catalan government as a part of the Covid-recovery strategy for youth in secondary education;
- ⇒ The Belgian action plans launched by different regional labour offices and Ministries – such as ‘Convention Mentorat’ by Actiris and ‘Mentoring to work’ by VDAB - , to advance the integration of recently arrived immigrants in the labour market by connecting them to mentors from the world of work;
- ⇒ The programmes “Menschen stärken Menschen and Aufleben – Zukunft ist jetzt” set up by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth in Germany, providing support and grants for mentoring initiatives nationwide to contribute to an improved integration of migrants;
- ⇒ The Department for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) in Ireland supports and funds the continuation of the Programme for Access to Higher Education. This includes implementation of a goal to develop regional and community partnership strategies for increasing access to higher education with a particular focus on mentoring.

# Recommendations of the European Mentoring field

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## *THE MULTI-SECTORAL EFFECTS OF MENTORING CALL FOR A MULTI-SECTORAL SUPPORT OF DECISION MAKING*

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As representatives of the European mentoring field, we call for an Europe-wide recognition of mentoring as an instrument. The growing number of senior employees, youth unemployment, school dropouts, together with the ongoing flow of refugees ask for the expansion of mentoring schemes and programmes beyond borders. This can be realised by making mentoring a recognised part of European and national policy making,

concerning social inclusion and beyond. By recognising mentoring as an intervention on all levels of policy making, a broader implementation is made possible. A multi-sectoral effect of mentoring calls for a multi-sectoral support of decision making.

Governments are seeking new solutions to create a systemic change and a more inclusive society. In order to support national action, the following steps are recommended on an EU level:

- ⇒ **Recognise mentoring as a tool for connecting formal and informal learning.** Mentoring – being a mentee - is presently an extra-curricular activity; it is a voluntary action that is not part of lessons, modules or electives. The result of the learning process and the commitment is not visible in diploma's or educational certificates, and therefore it lacks a place in education. Our recommendation is to develop an assessment system for recognising the soft skill development in the mentoring relationship. One possibility is the system of micro-credentials in VET and HEI.
- ⇒ **Integrate mentoring – becoming a mentor - in academic curricula to promote the development of civic engagement and social responsibility.** Develop a national and European certification system recognising the competences gained by student mentors at universities. Through becoming a student mentor, HEI students become aware of their position in educational career, leading them to recognise the responsibility they have in being a role model to others. Student mentoring can narrow the gap between universities and disadvantaged young people, for better educational pathways.
- ⇒ **Develop a label that can be applied by corporates that commit themselves to mentoring.** Recognise their national and transnational efforts in offering the opportunity to employees to (re)vitalise their skills through becoming a mentor.

Corporates take a large role in mentoring programmes, by facilitating mentoring, network, knowledge, social support and collaboration. This is a form of ethical, social entrepreneurship with a strong vision on society. At the same time, it is a form of life-long learning, through an intercultural and intergenerational experience of mentors. A recognized label would offer companies the chance to showcase involvement in youth- and work-force development.

- ⇒ Create mentor-rich environments in community development programmes where education, government and businesses collaborate to tackle inequalities in society. These new environments that are rich of role models and mentors for people of all ages and cultural, socio-economic backgrounds, are vital to the sustainable development of people and regions. Make long-term, bottom-up approaches in connecting people, generations and cultures to promote a better access to education and employment.
- ⇒ Seek evidence and impact evaluation of mentoring on a national and European level. Encourage researchers to form a scientific committee that brings together scientific evaluation from different Member States to give recommendations on a policy level. Such meta-evaluations can form a solid basis for quality standards and quality recommendations, which are highly needed to scale services in a responsible way. Connect this action to the development of a European quality label for mentoring, to ensure the impact mentors and mentees choose for.
- ⇒ Encourage member states to develop collective structures and support, which enables mentoring schemes to scale up in all dimensions. Launch national and / or regional mentoring networks that connect individual mentoring schemes for a structured dialogue with national policy- and decision makers. Mentoring programmes and policy- and decision makers together can look for ways to connect regional, national and European social and economic challenges to different mentoring models and schemes. These new coalitions lead to new economic models for mentoring, adapted to different national contexts.
- ⇒ Put policy- and legal framework on a European, national and regional level towards the promotion of mentoring activities for different priorities and target groups. The multi-sectoral effects of mentoring calls for a multi-sectoral support of decision making. On a European level, the development of a European framework for soft skills is a possible example.

As activities of the European mentoring community showcase – see results of 3 Brussels Mentoring Meet & Match seminars by Mentoring Europe in 2017/2019/2021<sup>16</sup> – there is much political will among national and European institutions.

**We are calling the European Council to create a set of recommendations for members states to encourage a further implementation of mentoring schemes. The 2022 European Year of the Youth and the recovery strategy after the Covid-19 crisis give us the momentum to voice our ambitions for the next steps in the development of the mentoring field.**

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<sup>16</sup> [www.mentoringeurope.eu/advocacy/](http://www.mentoringeurope.eu/advocacy/)

# MILESTONES

## MENTORING EUROPE

**2015**

Sign collaboration with the US mentoring community for practice and research: National Mentoring Partnership and Center for Evidence-Based Mentoring, for the exchange of knowledge and know-how.

**APRIL 2017**

The first Mentoring Meet & Match event takes place in Brussels. This event brought together mentoring organizations and decision makers from all over Europe, in order to advocate for the multi-sectoral effects of mentoring and seek the multi-sectoral support on a European level.

**2019**

The ECEBM established committees for research, practice and advocacy

**OCTOBER 2020**

The third EU Mentoring Summit takes place online. It carried the slogan Common Challenges, Collective Solutions: Mentoring for a Sustainable and Inclusive Future.

**OCTOBER 2021**

Mentoring Europe is launched as a rebrand. The European Center for Evidence-Based Mentoring is rearranged as the research department.

**MAY 2022**

The third European Mentoring Summit takes place in Leeuwarden. This summit explored linking formal and informal mentoring, helping mentees develop according to their specific needs and life goals.

**MARCH 2016**

European Center for Evidence-Based Mentoring is launched in the presence of 200 mentoring professionals during the first edition of the European Mentoring Summit. With the mission of increasing the quality, reach and visibility of the mentoring field in Europe.

**MAY 2018**

The second EU Mentoring Summit takes place in Berlin. The summit addressed these three main topics; Improving quality for stronger mentoring relationships, the impact of mentoring on society and mentoring with migrants and refugees.

**MARCH 2019**

The second Mentoring Meet & Match takes place in Brussels. This event had two goals: participants explored successful mentoring methods based on evidence, with impact on the development of people and they learned about the transition towards the new European (post EU2020) strategy and its shaping priorities.

**APRIL 2021**

The Mentoring Meet & Match takes place for the third time, online. It was joined by representatives of the European Parliament and the European Commission as well as mentoring leaders and national delegates.

**SEPTEMBER 2022**

The mentoring community has grown to 35+ member organizations and 1700+ mentoring professionals

## STATISTICS

# MENTORING EUROPE

6 +

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

35 +

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

1,700 +

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

60 +

MENTORING EVENTS

Mentoring Europe is a collaborative effort of NHL Stenden and VHL Universities of Applied Sciences, VET Friesland College, VET Friese Poort and the European mentoring field.

*Mentoring Europe is a network organisation for mentoring practitioners, researchers and friends of mentoring in the continent Europe. Launched in 2016 as a grass-root community, the organisation has the goal to drive social and economic change by mentoring. We do that by increasing the reach and quality of mentoring activities within education, community development, governments and industry. With over 1700 people in its network, Mentoring Europe connects, advocates, leads and develops the mentoring field on a regional, national and transnational level. Our ultimate goal is to build strong mentoring relationships that lead mentees and mentors to the impact they choose for.*

@2022

### Colophon

This position paper was written by members of the Advocacy committee of Mentoring Europe: Szilvia Simon (Mentoring Europe), Mattia Troiano (Mentoring Europe), Laia Bernues (AFEV Catalunya, ES), Lena Karnalova (Big Brothers Big Sisters Bulgaria, BG), Fiona Soler (European mentoring consultancy), Julie Bodson (Duo for a JOB, BE/FR/NL), Ute Volz (Eleven GmbH, DE), Candice le Tourneur (AFEV France), Eunice Mangado (AFEV France) and Celia Keenaghan (ATU Sligo, IE).

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