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# M4M

## Migrants for Migrants

**Integrated Service for migrants,  
social and multicultural dialogue**

**Guide for integration services' professionals  
& volunteers (O5)**

*2022*



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COMPASS – Austria

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KMOP – Greece

Associazione di Volontariato Onlus San Giuseppe – Italy

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Migrants for Migrants

Using the buddy system  
to foster integration  
of asylum seekers in  
the society

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## I. Introduction

Migrants for Migrants (M4M) is an EU-funded project that targets newly-arrived migrants and refugees in the process of settling in a new host country as well as Integration Services' professionals and volunteers. The project is implemented in Portugal, France, Austria, Greece, Italy and Romania.

The general objective of the M4M project is to foster the inclusion of refugees and migrants in their host society by using the Buddy System and more specifically, mentoring. Inclusion can be achieved through the empowerment of migrants and by creating links and sustainable contacts between refugee associations, social services, local administrations and volunteer associations.

Mentoring can be defined as a process which involves the interaction between two individuals in which the mentee is in a position to benefit from the knowledge, skill, ability, or experience of the mentor. The mentoring process is marked by the absence of unequal roles (Finnegan et al, 2010). The Buddy System (here, mentoring) is centred on the mentees' needs and aspirations. Thus, it is adapted to the context and to the specific circumstances and challenges that the mentee is facing, whilst considering the available resources. Furthermore, the Buddy System is a model of co-construction: a process built together by mentor and mentee, foreseeing a degree of flexibility on the construction path where the mentor should guide the mentee along a path that can lead them to a better life (Hudson, 2012).

The purpose of the Buddy System is to aim for personal, social and professional development, bringing also benefits to the community. The Buddy System is frequently used in cases of cultural insertion, with the specific purpose of helping the social and cultural integration of one person in the host-community by a mentor whose experience or knowledge in that host community can be of help (MPATH, 2017). The Buddy System allows migrants and refugees to develop a social network, to build a trusting relationship that provides stability and support, where the mentors (also referred to as "buddies") provide an emotional anchor, and support for the orientation in the new culture, and a contact point for questions and integration obstacles (SOFIE, 2017).

The M4M mentoring programme is based on the programme "Mentors for migrants" (Portugal), which was voted by the M4M partners as the best European Practice, considering aspects such as accommodation, education, labour market integration, access to care, social activities and culture.

In the frame of the M4M project, the following outputs have been created, which are publicly available on the M4M project [website \(https://www.migrants4migrants.eu/\)](https://www.migrants4migrants.eu/):

- **Evidence review on the current conditions and services offered to newly-arrived migrants in partners' countries**, a synthesis report based on the

analysis of conditions, services and practices to migrants in the partner countries (Portugal, France, Austria, Greece, Italy and Romania).

- **Buddy System service Model**, a guide specialising in offering mentoring and support to newly arrived migrants and refugees.
- **Training curriculum**, in other words, training modules targeting integration services' professionals and volunteers with a step-by-step process aiming to inform and build/ enhance their capacities on mentoring.

The aim of the Guide is to provide instructions to professionals and volunteers from integration services for migrants or NGOs in order to use the M4M project outputs in the implementation of mentoring programmes. The guide begins with a short analysis of the importance of multicultural dialogue and instructions to professionals working in integration services or volunteers that wish to be engaged in a mentoring programme.

Then the structure and steps of the M4M mentoring programme are presented; a chapter on training workshops on the implementation of mentoring and quality indicators. After that, a specific chapter is dedicated to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), revised following the pilot implementation of mentoring in the partner countries. At the end of the guide, the objective of migrants' integration is analysed through two different aspects: chapter VI refers to the practices in Europe that were considered at the initial stage of the project, while the final chapter elaborates on policy recommendations according to the circumstances in the partner countries.

## II. Instructions about Integration Services for migrants, social and multicultural dialogue

### The role of mentoring and multicultural dialogue in migrants' integration

Services offered to migrants in the host country include various support measures: language lessons, social and cultural orientation, professional training, and assistance in accessing the primary services, including health and education.

Numerous actors are involved in these integration dynamics since it is a process that involves three levels: individual, local and national. Among the stakeholders most engaged in this discourse, we find local authorities, social service providers, voluntary associations, NGOs, etc. Despite the commitment that these organisations put into welcoming and guiding migrants through accessible programs and services, over time, it has been realised that using mentors to promote the integration of migrants is effective.

However, it is essential to consider that mentors (often volunteers and additionally, often belonging to a migratory background themselves) follow the objectives and steps according to the planned mentoring programme. In general, mentorship is an experience between the mentor and the mentee. They form the first meeting and clarify the programme's objectives to transfer knowledge and methodology in terms of soft skills<sup>1</sup>. A relationship is established in a non-formal context with mutual learning, sharing knowledge and information based on trust, respect, and understanding. Therefore, the main goal of mentoring is to avoid the spectre of exclusion and marginalisation of the migrant, favouring, instead, their full involvement in the host society. In other words, the mentor will have a crucial role by helping to create space for an accurate exchange of ideas, knowledge and skills by supporting and guiding the migrant in an informal and personalised way in the orientation to services, but also to the understanding of the language—the culture and values of the host society.

From this point of view, the real challenge of mentoring lies in fostering a multicultural approach and intercultural dialogue, intended as a crucial step towards successful migrants' integration. This implies, therefore, that the role of mentors will also include encouraging decoding and knowledge of the context in which they find themselves, promoting concrete actions of inclusion and integration.

Starting from this vision, it is possible to understand that policy makers have realised the impact intercultural communication may have on integration processes nowadays. Intercultural communication sometimes serves as a tutorial for migration governance and management. In Italy, for example, the migration governance process was based on principles of intercultural communication.<sup>2</sup>

The role that multicultural dialogue plays in the integration of migrants is of fundamental importance. It creates the conditions for cultural practice and cultural heritage transmission by the majority and minority populations to promote equality and non-discrimination. We often speak of multiculturalism, as a theoretical and policy model that recognises the value of diversity for society, as well as the importance of culture and identities in the integration process, particularly those of minority groups, to prevent segregation of diverse cultural groups and to build cross-cultural trust and cohesion<sup>3</sup>.

However, in order to be successful on the integration path of the beneficiary, but also the motivational and professional level of the operators (mentors), specific training courses must be followed to make the relationship between mentor and mentee effective and strong, promoting interventions to orient and enhance multilingualism,

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<sup>1</sup> Linguistica Educativa e contesti migratori

<sup>2</sup> Michaela Čiefová, Intercultural education as a tool for migrants' integration.

<sup>3</sup> Intercultural integration strategies: managing diversity as an opportunity Model Framework for an Intercultural Integration Strategy at the National Level



intercultural training of operators (mentors) and teaching practices to promote intercultural dialogue.<sup>4</sup>

### Enhancing social and multicultural dialogue

If it is true that the migratory phenomenon arose with the birth of the human species and has always characterised the history of people and individuals; It is equally valid that towards the 1980s, there was an increase in international migration, which led companies to confront the questioning of the cultural and social models of reference, as well as the mechanisms for governing this diversity. The presence of a variety of cultures and even languages coexisting in the same place has meant that we start talking about multicultural dialogue, which is "an open and respectful exchange of points of view between individuals and groups belonging to different cultures, which leads to a deeper understanding of the global perception of the other".<sup>5</sup>

In other words, nowadays, it is no longer possible to exempt oneself from a choice of dialogue with cultures different from one's own and one cannot limit oneself to an exclusive confrontation with those with whom parts of tradition and history are shared. Our cities welcome many foreigners, and mutual cultural knowledge is the cornerstone of coexistence and assistance. For those who welcome, and support the migrant, in the case of the mentor the greatest challenge is to know and search for forms of communication to transmit fundamental elements of their culture so that they can remain present in the social life of the hosting community.

However, today there are many challenges that the issues of intercultural dialogue and integration urge us to face. First, it is necessary to reflect on the memory and values of migrants. They increasingly manifest the desire to establish a dialogue with the host societies to be recognised as human beings with their own culture, history, and tradition. The second point is that of religion; in the migratory phenomenon, a demand for recognition and respect emerges.

Language barriers represent the third challenge: not knowing the other's language is an obstacle to dialogue. It is not just a matter of having a common language but also the difficulty of finding terms that correspond to the translation of what you want to say since not all words in one language can be translated into another. This makes it necessary to privilege the meanings and values the other bears, respecting and showing interest in different cultures. Finally, there are poverty, exclusion, and discrimination, all of which risk undermining the practice of intercultural dialogue.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Catarci, Fiorucci 2014

<sup>5</sup> *Autobiografia degli Incontri Interculturali. Contesto, concetti e teorie*, Divisione delle Politiche Linguistiche del Consiglio d'Europa, marzo 2008

<sup>6</sup> Catherine Withol de Wenden, *Il dialogo interculturale in prospettiva europea*, in Mara Clementi (a cura di), *La scuola e il dialogo interculturale*, Quaderni ISMU 2/2008



The M4M partners have developed specialised material on the subject of multicultural dialogue and communication, which is publicly available in the M4M project [website<sup>7</sup>](https://www.migrants4migrants.eu/).

### Recommendations for integration service providers and professionals

In order to optimise the social, economic and professional integration of newly-arrived migrants and refugees, integration service providers and professionals should:

- Develop communication skills: in order to encourage open communication and process of continued and self-directed learning, whilst providing relevant information to migrants.
- Work as role models: they should be a model in social behaviours and exemplify the cultural values, whilst leading by example.
- Be motivated and positive: they should have a positive outlook and build up the migrants' self-confidence.
- Practice active listening: through active listening they can make a conscious decision to listen with intention.
- Develop empathy: understand migrants' difficulties and concerns.
- Provide honest feedback
- Prioritise helping the newly arrived to cope with everyday life in the host-communities (SOFIE, 2017).

Consequently, integration services providers and professionals must have some **competences** such as:

- Good communication skills:
  - Verbal and non-verbal communication (tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures, body language, eye contact, the way the person is dressed). An examination of non-verbal communication conventions, norms, and patterns can be highly beneficial especially across cultures.
  - Oral and written communication
  - Overcome barriers to communication (MPATH, 2016)
- Resilience: ability to develop positive attitudes adjusted to deal with problems, overcome obstacles and resist pressure. Factors that contribute to resilience: positive attitude, optimism, ability to regulate emotions and ability to look for failure as a useful form of feedback (MPATH, 2016).
- Conflict management: conflict is a process between individuals/ groups that generate tension caused by different perspectives and/or negative feelings

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.migrants4migrants.eu/module-v.html>

- It may be destructive, with negative feeling development and high energy expenditure
- If well managed, it may be constructive, releasing emotion and stress, managing tensions, whilst offering an opportunity to find a way out of the conflict together (MPATH, 2016).
- Awareness of the process needed to create an effective relationship: promote and create a relationship of trust, strengthen the progress and the development of empowerment, promoting decision-making and ensuring confidentiality (MPATH, 2016).
- Long-life learning and continuous development: professionals must engage in continuous skills development and advanced training to develop their expert skills (MPATH, 2016)
- Awareness of the systemic & ecologic model: the ecological/systemic model defends that people live and interact in different contexts and are thus influenced by them, since childhood (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). This awareness is particularly relevant when working with migrants and refugees as it might raise professionals' awareness towards certain reactions, ways of thinking and barriers that migrants might have/face. Example: In some cultures, direct eye contact is normal, while in other cultures it might be considered rude and intrusive.
- Skills of intercultural competence: means to be sensitive to other people's perceptions and value systems, whilst having an awareness of one's own cultural context. The basis of intercultural communication and co-operation is mainly based on: observation, listening and sensitiveness (SOFIE, 2017). Adaptability, flexibility and compassion are crucial skills when working with migrants and refugees. Furthermore, refugees expect professionals to demonstrate knowledge about the social and legal system (especially about the asylum system, rights and responsibilities of refugees/asylum seekers, public authorities) and to show a multicultural understanding (SOFIE, 2017).

### III. Guidelines to Buddy System application and organisation of trainings

#### The Buddy System Service Model

The Buddy System Service Model is a framework to provide a well-managed service guide specialised in offering mentoring and support to newly arrived migrants and refugees. It includes key elements and guidelines to build a non-formal/ peer learning methodology.

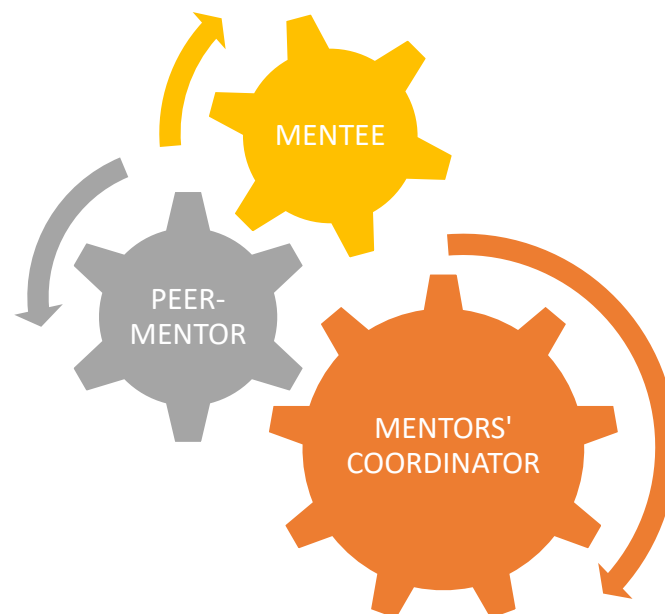
This detailed framework is like a blueprint to get an overview of how a buddy programme could be developed: What individual steps are necessary to set up such a programme? How do the individual steps interact? Which players are involved and what are their roles and tasks in the programme?

In its general chapter, the roles of the persons involved in the buddy programme are described: from the mentee to the mentor to the mentors' coordinator, as well as the importance of a trusting, but also well-defined mentoring relationship and on which basis this must be documented in writing.

The methodology is based on a participatory approach (co-construction method) which means that the overall goal is to foster the mentee's own initiative and responsibility, as well as integrate the mentee's existing resources, so that the mentee's active participation is encouraged and enabled.

The individual steps of the mentoring programme are thoroughly analysed in the IO2 Buddy System service Model, available on the project's [website](https://www.migrants4migrants.eu/io2.html)<sup>8</sup> in terms of theory and activities, while at the Annexes of the Buddy System service Model the reader can find useful templates for the implementation of each step.

## Roles in mentoring



### The Mentor

Mentor could be any person who is willing to use his/her experience to model positive behaviours in a constructive way and preferably on a voluntary basis to a migrant

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.migrants4migrants.eu/io2.html>

person. The mentor is responsible for engaging in the mentoring relationship to support a mentee (the person receiving support), for preparing, conducting and evaluating the mentoring sessions according to the scope and purpose of the programme, and for sharing with mentors' coordinator any issues. The mentor should have cultural sensitiveness and be willing to commit time and effort to support newly arrived migrants. He/ She could be a migrant or refugee that has been living in the host country for quite some time or even be born local with a migration background and be familiar with the language and the procedures by local authorities. He/ she will work as a "bridge" between them and the mentee. Regarding their qualities, being a mentor requires an open-minded approach, active listening, as well as a good degree of empathy.

### The Mentee

The mentee is a migrant, refugee or asylum seeker. He/ She is the individual who receives mentoring, and who is willing and motivated to devote time and effort in order to develop personal, social and basic skills to support his/her integration process in the host country. He/ She is willing to cooperate in the mentors' coordinator creation of an action plan with the mentor and to meet him/her on a regular basis to implement it. The mentee should be open to receive advice and have optimistic but also realistic goals.

### The Mentors' Coordinator

The mentors' coordinator is an experienced professional, preferably one who has been a mentor before or a professional of an authority/organisation working with migrants and refugees. The coordinator needs good knowledge of this methodology because he/ she plays the role of management and supervision of the mentoring programme, in order to assure that it goes as planned and that goals are achieved. The responsibilities of mentors' coordinator are to recruit, develop and retain mentors and mentees, match appropriate mentees to mentors, help mentors define the mentoring purpose and supervise the overall process (Gonçalves & Farcas, 2016). Therefore, the coordinator should be in contact with both mentors and mentees so that mentees are also able to report any issues or problems arising during the mentoring process.

### The Mentoring Relationship

The most important aspect of the mentoring relationship between mentor and mentee is to establish trust. The Mentors should be provided beforehand with guidelines on the way to communicate with the Mentee to establish trust and make them open up and cooperate. The Mentors should be prone to discuss the inputs and concerns of the Mentee and avoid being judgmental. They should refrain from prejudice and stereotypes of any kind. Also, they should respect confidentiality of the information the Mentee shares with them.

Although mentoring is generally defined as a relationship that helps the mentee and the mentor, problems in the relationship may arise if the bounds of the relationship are not clearly understood. A mentee may be overly dependent on a mentor, asking

for micromanagement instead of advice and guidance. A mentee may also ask for personal favours or expect involvement with the mentor's work. Mentors should separate their position and insist on having a say in the career decisions of the person they are mentoring.

The relationship may become too personal if boundaries are not taken into consideration. However, problems with mentoring may be surpassed when both parties have clear expectations of what mentoring can do and what it should not do. In general, personal reflection about the mentor relationship both before initiating it and throughout its course, by both the mentor and mentee, will contribute to a robust, growth-oriented relationship. Finally, both the mentor and mentee are human beings, so empathy, forgiveness and patience will aid in overcoming any problems that may arise in the mentoring relationship.

What is essential is a Code of Ethics by which the Mentors ought to abide. This Code should include principles on rules of behaviour and limits considering the help and guidance they can provide and the consequences when violating them. The [Code of conduct and ethical guidelines for mentoring pairs](#)<sup>9</sup> produced by the University of Southampton as well as the Guidelines for Code of Ethics in Mentoring included in Annex 1 of the [Buddy System Service Model](#)<sup>10</sup> can be a good basis to create a Code of Ethics. It may be complemented by the main rules of the organisation which implement the mentoring programme.

### The steps of the Buddy System Service Model

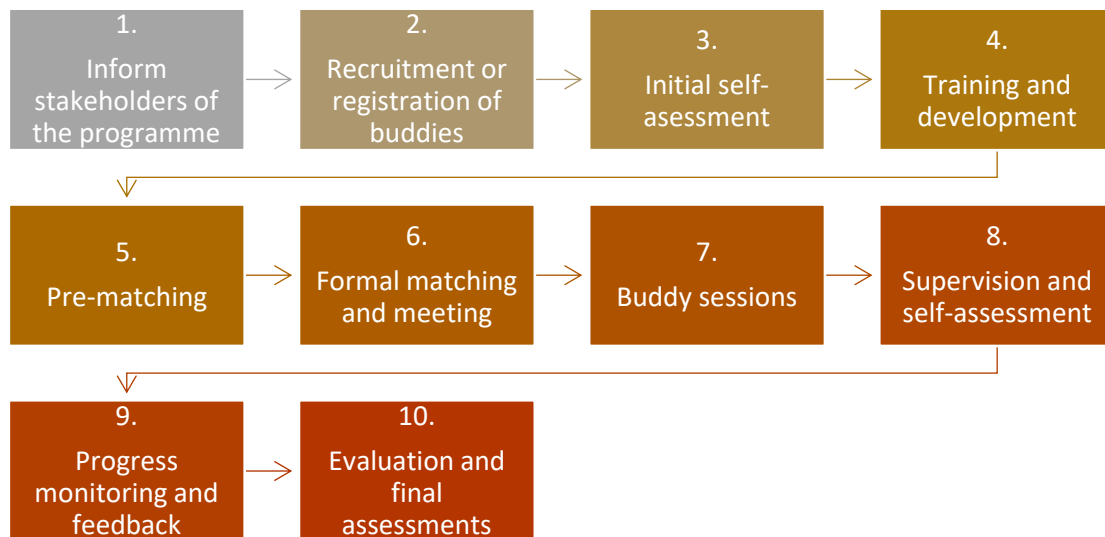
The Buddy System is composed of 10 steps from the very first approach to any stakeholder until the effective implementation of the programme, ending up at the evaluation. Even though the steps are presented chronologically in a linear way, there are temporal overlaps that need to be taken into account during planning. For this reason, the overall concept must always be kept in mind. In the elaboration of the steps, you can find cross-references to previous and subsequent steps.

Below is the process map (flowchart) of the steps:

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.southampton.ac.uk/professional-development/mentoring/mentoring-guidelines-in-a-nutshell.page>

<sup>10</sup>

[https://www.migrants4migrants.eu/uploads/8/0/6/2/80629992/m4m\\_report\\_io2\\_eng\\_final\\_vers%C3%A3o\\_final\\_18\\_out.pdf](https://www.migrants4migrants.eu/uploads/8/0/6/2/80629992/m4m_report_io2_eng_final_vers%C3%A3o_final_18_out.pdf)



**Table 1: the process map (flowchart) of the steps**

As the service model contains all the important elements and information for a buddy programme, it serves as a basis on which a professionals' and/ or volunteers training for mentoring to migrants can be worked out.

The training material available includes seven elaborated modules on the following topics, which is publicly available on the project's [website<sup>11</sup>](https://www.migrants4migrants.eu/buddy-system-mentoring-training.html):

- Contemporary initiatives to welcome migrants
- Buddy system
- Buddy system process
- How organisations can organise the mentoring process
- Multicultural dialogue
- Be a mentor
- Migrants' empowerment

Each module is structured as follows: It contains a module description, learning objectives, theoretical and contextual background, subtopics and supporting material for practising, understanding and implementing the method. In addition to the elaborated module contents, self-assessment questionnaires are available for each module to check the learning, as well as exercises and e-capsules in the form of illustrated texts, motion pictures, interviews and spoken texts.

### **Planning and organising a professionals' and/ or volunteers training**

In general terms, separate trainings are suggested targeting professionals and volunteers, as the requirements can be quite different.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.migrants4migrants.eu/buddy-system-mentoring-training.html>



The following topics are especially relevant for professionals and implementing organisations:

- Contemporary initiatives to welcome migrants
- Buddy system
- Buddy system process
- How organisations can organise the mentoring process
- Migrants' empowerment

Of course, it is also important for mentors to know what roles are included in the mentoring programme and who is responsible for them. However, this does not have to be covered in detail.

The following topics:

- Multicultural dialogue
- Be a mentor
- Migrants' empowerment

should not be missing from any buddy training, because they aim to prepare the future mentors for their area of responsibility.

The presented training format is described as blended learning format. The face-to-face training aims at clarifying open questions, deepening the online content and gives space for exchange between the participants.

### Methodology

- Workshops: either in one day or separately
- Time frame: 2 hours each workshop, 120 minutes or longer
- Online study combined with face-to-face training. In face-to-face training alternating social forms from plenary presentations to group work and work in pairs to discussions and reflections are suitable.

### Guideline for a combined online and face-to-face training for VOLUNTEERS

Possible workshop divisions and contents are listed here. The exercises and methods can be retrieved from the training material available on the project's [website](#) and adapted but also extended if required.

| WORKSHOP 1<br>2 hours | CONTENT   |
|-----------------------|---|
| INTRODUCTION          | - Introducing and getting to know each other: I am good at ...I am afraid of ... Bio-poem style;  |
| BE A BUDDY            | - Definition of Buddy: What is a buddy (mentor)? What does a buddy do?<br>- Characteristics of buddies: self-assessment exercise: Am I ready for being a buddy? |



|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| BUDDY SYSTEM    | -What kind of roles are involved in a mentoring programme?<br>- What are the tasks of the implementing organisation? What do you expect from the organisation?   |
| ONLINE MATERIAL | Presentation of the online material available at the project's <a href="#">website</a> .<br>Relevant modules: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE</li> <li>● BE A BUDDY</li> <li>● MIGRANTS EMPOWERMENT</li> </ul> |

| WORKSHOP 2<br>2 hours  | CONTENT   |
|------------------------|---|
| WARMING UP             | Collecting feedback on the training material: What was helpful, what was not helpful?   |
| INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE | <u>The story of my name</u> <sup>12</sup> or activity from the training material<br>Culture - what is it? <a href="https://rm.coe.int/1680700aac">https://rm.coe.int/1680700aac</a> from page 28:<br>'Trailing diversity': Name two simple (or silly!) characteristics (stereotypes) which a foreigner might associate with the country you live in or you come from, for example, Switzerland = watches and banking, Russia = vodka and fur hats.<br>Questions: Are these things an important part of your identity? |
| BUDDY SYSTEM (PROCESS) | The 10 steps of the Buddy System, their importance and interdependence: go through and present in more detail, sharing. Brainstorming after each step.  |
| BE A BUDDY OR MENTOR   | Being a buddy: Challenges and benefits: Collecting and completing from the module BE A MENTOR available at the project's <a href="#">website</a> .<br>What questions do I need to ask myself in advance? Connect with own experiences and assessments: What might be meant by this?   |
| HOW CAN A BUDDY HELP   | What are the possibilities and where are the limits?  |

| WORKSHOP 3<br>2 hours   | CONTENT  |
|-------------------------|--|
| WARMING UP              | Review and summary from the previous workshop  |
| EMPOWERMENT OF MIGRANTS | - Empowerment of migrants: What does that mean? Buddies with migrant background can link to their own experiences: What was helpful? What was counterproductive?<br>- What do I need in terms of training and knowledge? |
| MATCHING                | Matching: Which mentee could I support well?<br>Matching exercise from the training material   |
| CONCLUSION              | - Summary<br>- Outlook: What's next?   |

<sup>12</sup> <https://practice-school.eu/activity1-story-of-my-name/>

### Guideline for a combined online and face-to-face training for PROFESSIONALS

Possible workshop divisions and contents are listed here. The exercises and methods can be retrieved from the training material available on the project's [website](#) and adapted but also extended if required.

| WORKSHOP 1<br>2 hours          | CONTENT   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| INTRODUCTION                   | Introducing and getting to know each other: What does our organisation stand for? What is it particularly good at? What is missing from your point of view?   |
| OWN EXPERIENCE                 | Experience with buddy systems or mentoring programmes and/or being a buddy yourself   |
| POTENTIAL OF A BUDDY PROGRAMME | Initial brainstorming: To what extent could a buddy system complement your own offering? What does it need?<br>What kind of cooperation and support?<br>On which levels do the migrants need more support?  |
| ONLINE MATERIAL                | Presentation of the online material available at the project's <a href="#">website</a> .<br>Relevant modules: WELCOMING INITIATIVES – BUDDY SYSTEM – BUDDY SYSTEM PROCESS - HOW ORGANISATIONS CAN ORGANISE THE MENTORING PROCESS: content, exercises, questionnaires, supporting material |

| WORKSHOP 2<br>2 hours      | CONTENT   |
|----------------------------|---|
| WARMING UP                 | Collecting Feedback on the training material:<br>What was helpful, what was not helpful?  |
| BUDDY SYSTEM (PROCESS)     | The 10 steps of the Buddy System, their importance and interdependence: go through and present in more detail, sharing. Brainstorming after each step.  |
| PLANNING A BUDDY PROGRAMME | What is already in place in our organisation, what is not yet?<br>Infrastructure, personnel, financial resources; concept;<br>What parameters lend themselves to my organisation?<br>Which programme? Which target group: 1:1; group buddying; minors? Families? Parents?<br>What time horizon is to be set and then evaluated?<br>Which number of buddy pairs is realistic? What could be the total number of people?<br>Each organisation works out a rough draft and presents it to the group. |

| WORKSHOP 3<br>2 hours | CONTENT                                       |
|-----------------------|---|
| WARMING UP            | Review and summary from the previous workshop |

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| MATCHING<br>PROCEDURE      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Matching the pairs: challenges: Exercise from the training material</li> <li>- Inviting an experienced organisation that can give an insight in their practical work.</li> <li>- Where to get support from experienced organisations? See also links to successful buddy projects</li> </ul> |
| EMPOWERMENT OF<br>MIGRANTS | <p>Definition of "empowerment"</p> <p>How can a buddy programme ensure empowerment of mentees and buddies?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Objectives</li> <li>-Duration of the buddy programme</li> <li>-Selection and empowerment of buddies</li> <li>-Monitoring and evaluation</li> </ul>                             |
| CONCLUSION                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What are the initial findings?</li> <li>- What is still open?</li> <li>- Outlook: What's next?</li> </ul>  |

## E-Capsules and Online Content

In addition to the face-to-face content, the Buddy System training programme includes e-learning content. These capsules consist of videos made in motion design, interviews and illustrated texts that allow to go deeper into some topics covered in the modules. Online resources for each step of the mentoring process are also available in the Guide of the Buddy System.

You will find here a short description of the training capsules and the links to find them on the M4M website.

| THE E-LEARNING CAPSULES |  |   |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| MODULE<br>N°            | TITLE AND DESCRIPTION  | LINKS TO M4M<br>WEBSITE   |
| <u>2</u>                | <p><b>"Introduction to Buddy System and its impact"</b></p> <p>This motion design video (7 minutes) presents the value of the Buddy System to foster the integration of migrants, through the relationship between Sara, a migrant newly arrived in her host country, and Julia, her mentor.</p> | <a href="https://video.irtshd.fr/m/f7350cf0b44b7d2cf2eed7e9d5ba129167df7ef420ed6df56aac4f17c4df2ca6aaa677137deb7a006960289b420620dfec374138cafcd08e89e88c49462d3eb">https://video.irtshd.fr/m/f7350cf0b44b7d2cf2eed7e9d5ba129167df7ef420ed6df56aac4f17c4df2ca6aaa677137deb7a006960289b420620dfec374138cafcd08e89e88c49462d3eb</a> |

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|                   | <p><b>“Features of the Buddy System”</b></p> <p>In two pages, this illustrated text recalls the principles of the Buddy System, the possible challenges that mentors may face, the competences expected to be a 'good' mentor and those of the mentee, as well as the obstacles to the Buddy System, from the point of view of the mentors, the mentees but also of the organisations implementing the process.</p> | <a href="https://www.migrants4migrants.eu/uploads/8/0/6/2/80629992/features_of_the_buddy_system_vd_-_ang_compressed.pdf">https://www.migrants4migrants.eu/uploads/8/0/6/2/80629992/features_of_the_buddy_system_vd_-_ang_compressed.pdf</a>   |
| <a href="#">3</a> | <p><b>“The Buddy Sessions”</b></p> <p>This video describes in 5 minutes the issues and the process of the sessions between the mentor and the mentee. The answers to four main questions help to understand how these sessions work, where they take place, how long they last, and how mentors and mentees are accompanied during and outside the sessions.</p>  | <a href="https://video.irtshd.fr/m/b68b54692a95a2fe7ebb0678190f6cef26d59a4fb958e02497ad61ca755d5db820cd0dc042cbcd0451c20509c2ab2893c67c2fcf34cc04fba2b638dad456aaf3">https://video.irtshd.fr/m/b68b54692a95a2fe7ebb0678190f6cef26d59a4fb958e02497ad61ca755d5db820cd0dc042cbcd0451c20509c2ab2893c67c2fcf34cc04fba2b638dad456aaf3</a> |
|                   | <p><b>“Pre-matching of the mentoring pairs”</b></p> <p>This three-page illustrated text focuses on step 5 of the Buddy System, the pre-matching of mentor and mentee pairs, which is the phase that precedes the formal matching. What are the pre-matching criteria? How do you find the ideal pair? A playful example is presented to practice this crucial step in the mentoring process.</p>                    | <a href="https://www.migrants4migrants.eu/uploads/8/0/6/2/80629992/pre-matching_of_the_mentoring_pairs_vd_-_ang_compressed.pdf">https://www.migrants4migrants.eu/uploads/8/0/6/2/80629992/pre-matching_of_the_mentoring_pairs_vd_-_ang_compressed.pdf</a>   |
| <a href="#">4</a> | <p><b>“How to plan and coordinate mentoring process”</b></p> <p>This motion design video presents in 6 minutes how to implement a mentoring programme in your organisation, through the story of Thomas, project coordinator in an NGO.</p>   | <a href="https://video.irtshd.fr/m/dc31d5a80e92de8b7177c6c77976afca5d3810828736d03cbd8c7d818d24c594c5c792706f880791148284515784813579c748b2dcbad3baa63c7931d5d49227">https://video.irtshd.fr/m/dc31d5a80e92de8b7177c6c77976afca5d3810828736d03cbd8c7d818d24c594c5c792706f880791148284515784813579c748b2dcbad3baa63c7931d5d49227</a> |

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|   | <p><b>“Considerations to implement a successful mentoring process”</b></p> <p>This 5-page illustrated text describes the key issues and tools for a successful mentoring program. It covers the essential principles for strong and effective mentoring relationships, the importance of the mentor's role in the process, and the various ways to implement a mentoring program. Two pages are devoted to the tools (self-assessment, application form, supervision, evaluation report, etc) to detail their purpose and when to use them.</p> | <a href="https://www.aproximar.pt/uploads/4/3/4/4/43445821/considerations_to_video_ang.pdf">https://www.aproximar.pt/uploads/4/3/4/4/43445821/considerations_to_video_ang.pdf</a>   |
| 5 | <p><b>“Beauty from Sierra Leone”</b></p> <p>This 4-minute video is an interview of Beauty, a young migrant from Sierra Leone who has settled in Italy.</p>  | <a href="https://video.irtshd.fr/m/872bb05c2dac82bde5971f7f2380c0597753d64827369e8eeced12c403a995ff210dc9d6e76eda815f2b157f7cf457c16af15e03b097c693fb215ac09191bcca">https://video.irtshd.fr/m/872bb05c2dac82bde5971f7f2380c0597753d64827369e8eeced12c403a995ff210dc9d6e76eda815f2b157f7cf457c16af15e03b097c693fb215ac09191bcca</a>   |
|   | <p><b>“Nice to meet you, I am ...”</b></p> <p>This illustrated text explains the four phases of an exercise to be carried out with mentors during their training. Its aim is to foster intercultural dialogue and communication, making future mentors reflect on each other's cultures, ways of life and beliefs that are different from one individual to another.</p>  | <a href="https://www.aproximar.pt/uploads/4/3/4/4/43445821/nice_to_meet_you_video_ang.pdf">https://www.aproximar.pt/uploads/4/3/4/4/43445821/nice_to_meet_you_video_ang.pdf</a>   |
| 6 | <p><b>“Interview with a mentor”</b></p> <p>In this 5-minute video, a mentor explains how to provide support to a migrant who has just arrived in Europe, the benefits of becoming a mentor, and what to avoid.</p>  | <a href="https://video.irtshd.fr/m/ad46932bd3e0d366794dac4dd23ec8908d6acb87f6178a43f68da13f1736fb1f0d0878257c0c1c0f359b19669ac14cb4d1a5891bf b9a4507be089f0ff6808791">https://video.irtshd.fr/m/ad46932bd3e0d366794dac4dd23ec8908d6acb87f6178a43f68da13f1736fb1f0d0878257c0c1c0f359b19669ac14cb4d1a5891bf b9a4507be089f0ff6808791</a> |

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|                   | <p><b>“Be a mentor”</b></p> <p>This illustrated text (3 pages) recalls the interest of becoming a mentor, the benefits in terms of personal development, and the role of the mentor in several types of integration. Mentors can also find tips on how to effectively help mentees, understand the challenges they may face, and the limits of the support they can provide.</p> | <a href="https://www.migrants4migrants.eu/uploads/8/0/6/2/80629992/be_a_mentor_vd_-_ang_compressed.pdf">https://www.migrants4migrants.eu/uploads/8/0/6/2/80629992/be_a_mentor_vd_-_ang_compressed.pdf</a>   |
| <a href="#">Z</a> | <p><b>“Interview with Ahmed Y.”</b></p> <p>In this video (5 minutes) Claude, a social worker from the AFEJI organisation, interviews Ahmed, a young Bangladeshi who arrived in France in 2017, describing his journey and his life in his host country.</p>  | <a href="https://video.irtshd.fr/m/dee99e6de35cd7547f431ca8471f0112c1c0a9ed41af37d7c0723716d7b87bdf184d2a6c31c4ef32d47ed44c9685ca0d46e3639c3033a60671ce250b467452e9">https://video.irtshd.fr/m/dee99e6de35cd7547f431ca8471f0112c1c0a9ed41af37d7c0723716d7b87bdf184d2a6c31c4ef32d47ed44c9685ca0d46e3639c3033a60671ce250b467452e9</a> |
|                   | <p><b>“Interview with Samir H.”</b></p> <p>In this video (5 minutes) Theodora, international project coordinator at AFEJI interviews Samir who left Afghanistan in 2010 to come to France. He is now a social worker and translator for AFEJI.</p>   | <a href="https://video.irtshd.fr/m/f5e7ef76334cca741dd0db3ac7366612236bf6f2ab67adb89be9e05c29fb099dafab1fc8334b2c0c23c9baf824382e7522e897fd6c094394ca4fab2e9693e3eb">https://video.irtshd.fr/m/f5e7ef76334cca741dd0db3ac7366612236bf6f2ab67adb89be9e05c29fb099dafab1fc8334b2c0c23c9baf824382e7522e897fd6c094394ca4fab2e9693e3eb</a> |

## IV. Guidelines for quality standards in terms of providing mentoring

- ***Safeguarding the quality of a mentoring programme***

As already mentioned above, mentoring is a process which involves the interaction between two individuals in which the mentee is in a position to benefit from the knowledge, skills, abilities, or experience of the mentor (Finnegan et al, 2010).

In order to guarantee a high quality and effective implementation of the mentoring programme, the following features should be considered:



- **Typology.** Peer vs non-peer: mentors can either have or not have common characteristics with the mentees.
- **Relationship.** One to one or in group; each mentor works with one mentee individually, or with a group of mentees.
- **Focus.** Goal-oriented and open-ended; the mentoring process has a specific goal to achieve set by the individual programme and each pair, but it can also address collateral aspects of the mentee's life.
- **Duration and frequency.** Mentoring process should last around 6 months. It is recommended to have weekly sessions, at least at the beginning of the mentoring process, that can be adjusted to one session every 2 weeks later on. It is important to highlight that the mentor should organise sessions with a duration of 60 to 90 minutes. It is also recommended that mentor should make regular, short calls to understand if everything is ok with the mentee; this is even more important when the mentoring process has only 2 sessions per month.
- **Format.** Face-to-face vs online. It is recommended to deliver the sessions in a face-to-face format, especially at the beginning of the mentoring process, to establish a deep relationship based on trust between the mentor and the mentee. However, due to constraint measures taken during the Covid 19 pandemic, such as geographical distance or health issues, a digital approach should also be considered. Mentor and mentee should discuss the place for the mentoring sessions, which could be a public place and a place where both feel comfortable and safe.

In addition, results from previous Erasmus+ initiatives (MPATH<sup>13</sup>, M4All, Rising<sup>14</sup>, Parent'r'us<sup>15</sup>), allow to draw useful conclusions regarding success factors that should be taken into consideration when planning to implement a mentoring programme in the areas mentioned below.

## Recruitment

When disseminating the initiative, consider the development of attractive brochures and other dissemination materials, that can catch people's attention. It is important to include key information as the benefits of the programme and why people should engage in a mentoring relationship. Consider delivering open sessions, meetings and presentations to staff, key organizations, and personal/ professional contacts; use a digital approach, with the dissemination through social media channels, digital newsletters, etc.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.eurosc.eu/en/projects/development-education-of-vulnerable-groups/31-mpath-exploring-pathways-toward-employment>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.rising-project.org/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.parentrus.eu/>



It is important to highlight that the number of mentees that will be recruited depends on the resources of the organisation to implement a mentoring programme, i.e., the number of professionals and volunteers that will undertake the role of the mentor.

## Matching

It is crucial to collect and analyse all necessary information about participants (mentors and mentees), before considering the matching process. If a pair (mentor and mentee) does not feel comfortable with the person that they are going to work with, they should not be any pressure to continue the mentoring process; on the contrary, the organisation should consider finding another mentor/ mentee for that pair.

After the matching process, at the first session of the mentoring programme, it is important that mentor and mentee establish ground rules / boundaries that will be taken into consideration from the beginning until the end of the mentoring process.

## ***Supervision and self-assessment, progress monitoring and feedback, evaluation and final assessment***

Referring to supervision, there are two factors that are considered of utmost importance: availability and punctuality. The mentors' coordinator has a key role in the supervision phase of the mentoring programme. He/she should create a smooth environment to allow mentors to feel comfortable to share their perceptions and motivated to be engaged in a mentoring process. The mentors' coordinator should be aware of their responsibility for actions taken by the mentor, as he/she represents the organisation/ mentoring programme in the implementation. The mentors' coordinator should reinforce the mentors in a positive way and be realistic about commitments that he/ she can (or cannot) keep.

The method, frequency and indicators for monitoring progress are defined in the evaluation plan drawn up by the mentors' coordinator together with the stakeholder and if existent the team of professionals mobilised on the mentoring programme. They set up questionnaires and deadlines in line with the objectives defined in the personalised mentoring programme.

In order to have an effective progress of the mentoring process, mentors and mentees should meet regularly – ideally, in the beginning of the mentoring process, it should be a weekly meeting, and then mentor-mentee can negotiate the possibility to have one session every two weeks (2 sessions per month). This frequency will depend on the purpose of the programme (higher objectives intend a more intensive mentoring process), on the needs of the mentee and also on the availability of both the mentor and the mentee. It is important to highlight that the mentor should plan sessions with

an average of 1 to 1.5 hour, taking into consideration the time that should be given to listen the mentee and provide him/ her with useful information and resources, which will attend his/her needs.

And effective progress of the mentoring process also includes regular calls or fixed meetings between the mentors' coordinator and the mentor in order to discuss their process, challenges and worries. These meetings can also give an opportunity to improve skills or concepts that need to be reinforced.

Monitoring mentoring process in an effective way also includes providing consistent feedback, which contributes to the development of a relationship of trust and listening between the mentor and the mentee. Mentors and mentees are encouraged to give each other oral and if possible written feedback at each session while respecting certain elements. Indeed, feedback should be sincere, specific, focused on actions, constructive and useful.

The self-assessment is also an important step to better understand the impact of the mentoring process in the key-actors involved. Each participant must fill in a self-assessment questionnaire, the questionnaire being different for each role (mentors' coordinator, mentor, and mentee). The questionnaire can be based on a Likert scale from 1 "Totally disagree" to 4 "Totally agree", evaluating items that describe knowledge, skills and attitudes that the person should take into considering during a mentoring process. It can also include a list of strengths, so the person is able to choose those who represent him/her best (e.g., "Ability to identify priorities"; "Manage new and unexpected needs in autonomy").

It is important to highlight that the self-assessment questionnaire is not a tool of judgment, but it reflects the strengths and weaknesses of each participant, so it will be possible to improve those areas/ skills and make the participant feel more confident during the mentoring process.

In terms of evaluation and final assessment, it is important to respect the timeline agreed to apply evaluation tools, which should be clear and objective.

It is important that the mentors' coordinator, mentor and mentee create a moment for closure. It can take the format of a group activity where all the involved parts can have a moment to self-reflect about the mentoring sessions, considering if the aims were reached and if it was an effective process. Mentors' coordinator, mentors and mentees can also think about the main opportunities and challenges they faced during the mentoring programme, giving a perspective of all sides of mentoring roles – for example, through a SWOT analysis. During the evaluation process, it is important to analyse the general results and outcomes of each mentoring process and take into consideration the recommendations and areas for improvement, in order to implement even more effective mentoring processes in the future.

The temporality of the evaluation depends on several factors intrinsic to the project that will be implemented: its duration, the chosen indicators for the evaluations, and the public's concern among the migrant populations. It can also be implemented by external stakeholders if necessary (master's or doctoral students, academics, study office, etc.). When arranging the evaluation with external stakeholders/ organisations, the organisation implementing a mentoring programme should not forget to provide the results.

It is important to develop a final evaluation report to have an overview of the results and outcomes of the mentoring processes. A special attention should be taken for the topics with less positive evaluations, so it will be possible to identify areas of improvement for the future and, consequently, make an effort to deliver effective mentoring programmes.

More details and resources are available at the project's website.

- IO2 The Buddy System Model (<https://www.migrants4migrants.eu/io2.html>) - including key elements and guidelines in order to build a non-formal/peer-learning methodology and templates.
- IO3 Buddy System Mentoring Training (<https://www.migrants4migrants.eu/buddy-system-mentoring-training.html>) - a learning course curriculum targeting Integration Services Professionals and Volunteers with a step-by-step process to systematically promote newly arrived migrants' integration through the Buddy System is needed.

### ***Code of conduct/ ethics***

Last but not least, when implementing mentoring processes, it is crucial to take into consideration some basic ground principles in terms of conduct/ethics.

### **Responsibility**

Mentors' coordinators should be aware that they act as role models for mentors, who consequently act as role models for mentees. In this way, both mentors' coordinators and mentors must take into consideration that their behaviours and attitudes may have an impact on mentees. In this way, positive behaviours and attitudes tend to lead to more successful mentoring processes, benefiting all involved with the empowerment of social and soft skills, besides the specific objectives of each mentoring process.

### **Beneficence**

Mentors should take into consideration the rights of the mentees, so it is important to consider individual needs and objectives, promoting their best interest as much as

possible. It is good to keep in mind that the participation in a mentoring programme is strictly voluntary, so it is necessary to make known the benefits for both parts.

### **Nonmaleficence**

Mentors should avoid harm to mentees (i.e., neglect, abandonment, exploitation, boundary violations) and be attentive to changes in a mentee's behaviour. Sessions are confidential and the mentor should respect it in terms of information that the mentee shares, although it is important to highlight that if the mentor is confronted with situations in which he/she consider that it is not able to maintain confidentiality, he/she must make these clear with the mentee (e.g., knowing a situation that it is harmful for the mentee or for others).

### **Limits and boundaries**

In mentoring, boundaries help both mentees and mentors to understand and explore the expectations of the mentoring relationship. It is important to highlight that when boundaries are too loose, the relationship can be jeopardized and have no limits or basic standards, but when they are too rigid, they can also incapacitate the relationship in terms of building trust and a close relationship. If the mentor finds issues in negotiating boundaries with the mentee, he/she must ask for advice of the mentors' coordinator.

### **Patience**

Mentors should take into consideration that their main role is to provide the necessary support to the mentee, according to his/her needs. In this way, it is expected that mentors should give enough time to the mentee. Regarding this aspect, it is important to take into consideration expectations, both of the mentor and the mentee, regarding the role of each other and of the outcomes of their mentoring process. Initial expectations of the mentoring process can become an obstacle for building trust, so they must be discussed and clarified in the first sessions to avoid further disagreements or lack of motivation.

### **Autonomy**

A possible challenge in a mentoring relationship is the mentee becoming too dependent on their mentor (e.g., messaging every time they have a problem or a question) and taking up time beyond the agreed session or scheduled time. In this way, it is important to strengthen mentee's independence and maturity, being motivated to stand on his/her own. Positive reinforce is crucial to raise autonomy, giving credit to mentees' achievements so they can feel motivated to take initiative.

### **Inclusiveness**

Mentors and mentees often have different political, normative, religious, and cultural backgrounds that can lead to small and/or major misunderstandings. In a successful

mentoring relationship, these differences should not be seen as barriers, but variables that can lead to a more enriching and fruitful process.

### Dealing with conflicts

Conflicts are often seen as negative situations, but it is important that mentors' coordinators and mentors can be open to see them as an opportunity for personal and/or professional development and that can lead to positive changes and strategies (Lulofs & Chan, 2000). This point of view is crucial to better deal with conflict situations that can emerge and, consequently, have a positive impact on the people involved. When the conflict results in a positive impact, it raises the opportunity to improve the relationship of the involved parts, and improve their ability to solve problems in an effective way in the future (Jhonson & Jhonson, 1996).

### Privacy

Privacy is crucial in the implementation of all mentoring processes, being the information shared in confidence during the mentoring sessions. Feedback moments are also situations in which privacy should be ensured. It is also important to discuss the concept of confidentiality with the mentees, guaranteeing that records or private conversations are kept confidential.

### Competence

Mentors should be aware of their own knowledge and competences when providing key information to mentees. When a mentor does not feel comfortable or does not have the necessary knowledge to answer a question of the mentee, it is recommended to discuss that topic on a further session, rather than providing wrong information.

## V. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

This Chapter refers to common questions regarding the implementation of a mentoring programme.

### Q: Which are the main roles in a mentoring programme?

**A:** The mentoring process is built upon three main actors who perform different roles, as follows:

- Mentee

The mentee is a migrant, newly arrived in the host community that is willing to devote time and efforts to develop personal, social and basic skills to facilitate their integration. The mentee cooperates with the mentor in the creation of an action plan, adjusted to his/her (mentee's) individual needs and works to achieve the set goals.

- Mentor

The mentor is a person willing to use their experience to model positive behaviours on a voluntary basis to the mentee. The mentor is responsible to prepare, conduct and document the progress in terms of achieving the goals set in the action plan. The mentor could be a migrant living in the host country for quite some time or a native that is fluent in a language also spoken fluently by the mentee.

● Mentors' coordinator

The mentors' coordinator is an experienced professional, preferably one who has been a mentor in the past or a professional working with migrants and refugees. His/her role is to manage, supervise and evaluate the mentoring programme. The responsibilities of mentors' coordinator are to recruit mentors and mentees, to do the "matching", and to support the mentors in the process (Gonçalves & Farcas, 2016). The coordinator has contact with both mentors and mentees and remains available for reports of issues that may arise during the mentoring process.

**Q: Which are the main steps of mentoring?**

**A:** According to the M4M Buddy System Service Model, a mentoring programme is composed of 10 steps; however, the steps do not necessarily take place in a linear order, and at the same time, they can be adjusted according to the circumstances of the organisation that will implement the mentoring programme (*coordinating organisation*):

1. Informing and engaging stakeholders in order to recruit mentors and mentees
2. Recruitment / registration of mentors
3. Initial self-assessment
4. Training and development
5. Pre-matching
6. Formal matching and meeting
7. Buddy sessions
8. Supervision and self-assessment
9. Progress Monitoring and feedback
10. Evaluation and final assessment

More information about each step can be found in the M4M IO2 Buddy System service Model, available at the project's [website](#).

**Q: Which is the usual duration of a mentoring programme?**

**A:** The mentoring sessions (also called "buddy sessions" in the M4M Buddy System Service Model) are held on a regular basis and usually cover a period of 3 to 6 months, depending on the individual action plan.

**Q: Which are the qualities of a successful mentor?**



**A:** Being a mentor requires an open-minded approach, active listening, as well as a good degree of empathy. The mentor should have cultural sensitiveness and be willing to commit time and effort to support newly arrived migrants.

In more detail, there is a number of qualities and skills that the mentor should have or exercise in order to properly provide mentorship for migrants such as:

- Social, psychological and organisational skills (flexibility, availability, network, showing care and interest to help others, proactivity, self-confidence, good planning skills)
- Communication skills (knowledge of different languages, different and mixed techniques to communicate verbally and non-verbally, assertiveness, clarity and objectivity; creativity to engage in new and innovative ways of communication and overcome obstacles; being open minded and willing to share and exchange experiences)
- Resilience skills (persistence, self-confidence, teamwork; feeling and transmitting hope to the mentee)
- Conflict Management skills (non-judgemental attitude, neutrality, sense of humour)
- Integration and inclusion skills (promoting personal and social skills, involving the community, capability to adapt to multicultural environments)
- Self-learning and self-development skills (ability to observe adversities through an open minded, admitting own mistakes, learn from others, continuous training and searching for resources)

**Q: Should the mentee have specific characteristics?**

**A:** Mentees should be willing to collaborate, to be challenged and guided, be sure of their goals and expectations, being able to trust (Neal, 2014). The mentee should from the beginning clearly share with the mentor their needs, expectations, and objectives, so mentor and mentee can approach together a path that fills the mentee's needs.

**Q: Are candidates obliged to attend a training in order to become mentors?**

**A:** Mentors are not obliged to attend a training. However, the organisation responsible to implement the mentoring programme (coordinating organisation) are advised to organise trainings in order to engage well-prepared mentors. The training on mentoring can include an induction training for mentors and an info-day for mentees. In the frame of M4M project, training modules were developed which are available in the project's [website](#). The more thoroughly the expectations of both mentors and mentees are balanced beforehand, the greater the likelihood of a successful programme.

**Q: How should the coordinating organisation match mentors and mentees?**

**A:** The following criteria can be taken into consideration for the matching:



- Language and ethnicity
- Age (having some difference in age between mentor and mentee could be helpful but is not compulsory)
- Gender (taking into consideration that different cultures have different expectations about the role of a male or a female)
- Cultural or educational background (however, they do not necessarily have to be the same)
- Personality characteristics and interests.

It should be remembered that the pre-matching criteria are just an instrument; the most appropriate are those most effective to achieve the set objectives.

### **Q: How is a mentoring relationship established?**

**A:** During the initial self-assessment, the coordinating organisation gets the profile of mentors and mentees to make the pre-matching easier, as well as to determine the baseline point for both roles in the process. The mentors' coordinator collects the information and makes a matching proposal. Then, an informal consultation of both mentor and mentee follows, aimed at providing a description about the potential counterpart. If mentor and mentee agree, an informal meeting can be scheduled. After this informal meeting, the mentors' coordinator contacts the participants individually; if they are positive to proceed, then the official matching takes place.

The first formal meeting is organised by the mentors' coordinator, who has to be present, to guide and supervise the procedure. The mentors' coordinator prepares an interview guide with key questions and provides it to the mentor: this should focus on mentee's needs, goals, concrete steps and tasks. A draft contract can also be prepared to be shared with the mentee.

The procedure of the first formal meeting is analysed below:

- Mentor and mentee introduce themselves (if a pre-matching meeting was not organised before)
- The mentee's needs and goals are clarified
- The mentor informs the mentee about possibilities, limits and boundaries
- The mentee elaborates on their aims, expectations, fears and boundaries
- Based on all these, mentor and mentee agree on the next steps: time and place of the next meeting, tasks for both mentor and mentee (the details should be written)
- If both agree, a draft/ final contract can be presented and signed during this meeting or the next.

After this meeting, the mentors' coordinator and mentor establish a personalised programme taking into account the mentee's situation, the expressed needs, expectations and goals as well as the possibilities of the mentor in terms of expertise and time resources. However, objectives may change as the process unfolds, i.e., in case of failure or change of circumstances. A final contract should be agreed and signed by the mentors' coordinator, mentor and mentee at the second meeting latest.

Documentation of the mentoring sessions and the results by the mentor is essential in order to make visible the mentee's progress, the steps achieved, the next possible steps, any events planned etc.

**Q: Do mentors and mentees need to have the same origin/ ethnicity and/or speak the same language?**

**A:** No, mentors and mentees are not required to come from the same country of origin or to speak the same native language. However, when possible, mentor and mentee should share the same culture and language as it can facilitate better communication and collaboration. Mentors that belong to the same ethnic group as a mentee may confer certain benefits such as: language acquisition, role modelling, assisting with assimilation; and negotiating cultural conflicts. In addition, mentors who are culturally competent are more likely to appreciate the norms, culture and expectations of a mentee. In any case, culturally relevant topics should be included in the training to mentors. The coordinating organisation should create linkages with other organizations (such as migrant communities or faith-based institutions) that could complement and enhance the cultural competence of the mentoring programme.

**Q: How often should the mentoring pair meet?**

**A:** The mentor and mentee meet regularly in order to implement the personalised programme. The frequency of meetings depends on the needs of the mentee from weekly to fortnightly or monthly, lasting 1 to 2 hours each. The total number of sessions will depend on the mentee's starting point, which means the mentee and mentor can agree to have a more intense frequency of meetings.

**Q: Where is the best location for the meetings of the mentoring pair?**

**A:** The meeting place is jointly defined by the mentor and the mentee and may vary throughout the process. However, it is advisable to choose a neutral location for both; not their home or workplace.

**Q: What means of communication should be used in a mentoring programme?**

**A:** Mentors can use any type of communication channels to streamline mentoring sessions, either in person or online (e.g., phone, email, Skype). However, it is suggested at least 1 in person session per month (MPATH, 2017).

**Q: Who is responsible for the supervision and evaluation of mentoring?**

**A:** In terms of mentor's supervision, it can be conducted by an experienced and trained mentors' coordinator or a qualified external supervisor. Supervision is a place for reflection and sharing, creating the opportunity for progress review and planning. Self-assessment of mentors makes visible their expectations as well as any limitations or

problems. Self-assessment tools are classic questionnaires, questionnaire with self-perception and perception of others.

On a regular basis, the coordinator will ensure supervision at least once a month, lasting 2 hours, for the general period of the mentoring process. The mentors' coordinator must be available for any questions or to support any difficulties taking place during mentoring sessions. The coordinator must also meet the mentees regularly, to get to know them, understand their goals and expectations, and support the mentors' work.

Mentoring evaluation includes drafting an evaluation plan, gathering information regarding the progress of mentoring in terms of achieving the set goals, as well as the mentoring relationship among mentor and mentee and the preparation of a final report, which will describe the results and impact of mentoring, referring to the achievement of objectives included in the personalised action plan.

The coordinating organisation should make sure to continuously support the participants during the mentorship, to keep engagement high by assisting in solving potential challenges along the way, to get knowledge about the results and development of the mentees, and to be careful to set realistic criteria for success.

In terms of evaluation, the mentors' coordinator plays an important role as they are in contact with both mentor and mentee, who can provide feedback on the involvement of the mentoring programme.

The coordinating organisation in collaboration with the mentors' coordinator monitor progress, i.e., the change observed in the mentee's situation but also in the mentor/mentee relationship. However, it is advisable that an evaluation plan is created beforehand which will allow the monitoring of the process on the basis of specific indicators and objectives. The evaluation plan is drawn up by the mentors' coordinator together with the coordinating organisation and it can include questionnaires and deadlines in line with the objectives defined in the personalised mentoring programme. The indicators follow the specific objectives of the mentoring programme.

Regarding the evaluation plan, a qualitative tool for the final assessment of the mentoring programme could be life story interviews; a quantitative tool could be a short survey (i.e., via a Google form) that both mentor and the mentee will complete after a certain number of mentoring sessions.

**Q: How should the coordinating organisation react in case the mentor or the mentee reports misconduct by the other part?**

**A:** The organisation should establish a case management protocol to ensure that the mentors' coordinator has regular contact with both mentors and mentees about their relationship in order to allow mentoring relationships to flourish and endure. Regular contact between coordinator and mentors and mentees may help avoid and manage conflict (MENTOR, 2005). A Code of Ethics by which mentors and mentees ought to abide is essential to safeguard that the mentoring pair is aware of ethical issues and

can deal with them successfully. A Code includes principles, rules of behaviour and sets boundaries considering the help and guidance mentors can provide. The Code should also refer to treatment of minors. Guidelines on the Code of Ethics for Mentors are available in Annex 1 of the IO2 Buddy System service Model, available at the project's [website](#).

### Q: What is e- mentoring?

**A:** E-mentoring refers to any type of mentoring that includes the use of information and communication technology (ICT). Considering the impact of the Covid 19 in daily life, ICT has become more and more relevant, including in mentoring processes. Therefore, using emails, online platforms for mentors and mentees to communicate has become more usual. This specific format of mentoring is recommended at least once a week over a period of six months (MENTOR, 2019). E-mentoring has the particularity of being very flexible and can occur in mentoring programmes that include both in-person contacts and technology-assisted interactions. In addition, e-mentoring programmes can provide mentors to people geographically or socially isolated (MENTOR, 2005).

## VI. Practices regarding migrants' integration considered in the frame of M4M project

There are significant differences between countries in the type and quality of integration services they offer. During the first phase of the M4M project, the partners involved were responsible for collecting the best practices related to welcoming migrants in their country. Governments, Public institutions, Associations and NGOs coming from several European countries were invited to take part in these activities, and upon completion of research, project partners collected **five European best practices** related to welcoming migrants, as follows:

### 1. Mentors for Migrants (Portugal).

It is a mentoring programme for migrants, promoted by the High Commissioner for Migration and developed throughout the country by a set of local partners. It aims at creating links between mentors (Portuguese citizens) and mentees (migrants). Mentors are tasked with supporting mentees in the development of their professional goals and integration in the host community through the provision of support, monitoring and guidance for resolving difficulties or concerns. There are about 600 mentors available nationwide, and this diversity allows them to find the most appropriate support for the needs and conditions of each mentee.

Source: [Portugal: Mentors for Migrants Programme | European Website on Integration \(europa.eu\)](#)<sup>16</sup>

## 2. Family Side by Side (Portugal).

This good practice aims to integrate migrants in Portugal more effectively, especially refugee and immigrant families. This project strengthens social relations by promoting the cultural diversity of the country. To this end, a family agrees to host a family they do not know in their home in order to form family peers for a convivial lunch. This practice emphasises respect and understanding of the cultural differences of families.

## 3. KomIn - Kompetenzorientierte Intensivberatungen (Austria).

The programme targets newly arrived migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and third country nationals; it aims at their labour market integration in the hosting country. In fact, the project offers counselling in various languages, as well as workshops on certain topics connected to the labour market (e.g., application process, digitalisation) and a competency mapping course called "Competence Kaleidoscope". There is an individual path for each participant, depending on the current life situation, needs and possibilities. The project has been implemented together with the local labour market service and it's growing at a very high speed. In fact, the practice is a very updated and innovative approach, as it combines technologies and digitalisation for helping migrants to find their best fit in the labour market.

## 4. Interreg project France-Wallonie-Vlaanderen AB Réfugiés-Social (France).

The objective of this good practice is to propose a successful integration of refugees by strengthening health and social support. It is based on three themes: interpreting, mental health and mediation. This project allows for better quality existing services, support, innovation and generalisable "experiments" to the newly arrived migrants, minors unaccompanied and asylum seekers. Mobile teams of social workers, psychologists, and "integration ambassadors" (for the interpretation of rare languages) accompany people who are going through suffering linked to migration and/ or integration in the host country. The project also promotes peer support, as the "integration ambassadors" are themselves immigrants who have been here for several months or years and have successfully completed their integration process by settling in the country.

Source: [AB Réfugiés - Social | Interreg \(interreg-fwvl.eu\)](#)<sup>17</sup>

## 5. Migrantour - New Roots (Portugal).

<sup>16</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/integration-practice/portugal-mentors-migrants-programme\\_fr](https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/integration-practice/portugal-mentors-migrants-programme_fr)

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.interreg-fwvl.eu/fr/ab-refugies-social>

The objective of the programme is to integrate migrants and refugees into the labour market through unique guided tours and awareness-raising workshops in schools. The objective of the initiative is to support the integration of migrants, building mutual understanding and respect. It gave different opportunities to find work, to create friendships and for a greater integration into the host society. It also favoured greater tolerance and empathy on all the parts involved, creating a sense of community and belonging.

The M4M partners selected the practice “Mentors for Migrants” from Portugal as the best practice in European level in terms of migrants’ integration.

### Other noteworthy best practices from partner countries

#### France

##### ***Fondation Agir contre l'exclusion (FACE), Entre voix project***

The FACE project promotes the social and professional integration of newcomers and was created to compensate for the insufficient mastery of the French language to access a job, the lack of training of professionals wishing to accompany this public and the lack of awareness of companies in the professional integration of newcomers. This project is therefore aimed at newly arrived migrants and aims to set up hours of conversation with company professionals to practice French and to mobilise companies in the professional integration of newcomers. The aim of these weekly or monthly meetings is to enable people to practice professional French and to discuss access to employment in pairs with an employee of the company. In addition, the implementation of this buddy system enables the pair to forge professional and human links that are essential for the integration of newcomers.

Source: [Entre Voix – Fondation Agir Contre l'Exclusion \(fondationface.org\)](https://www.fondationface.org/projet/entre-voix/)<sup>18</sup>

#### Romania

##### ***MINT: Mentoring for the integration of children affected by migration – Carried out by Terre des hommes organisation***

Through the MINT project, Terre des hommes (Tdh) and its partners aimed to encourage connections between refugee and migrant children and young Europeans through various joint activities. Tdh has created a peer-to-peer mentoring program, which includes training local volunteers for young people and associating them with migrant children and newly arrived refugees. Migrants and young mentors participated in individual and group meetings, focusing on educational and language support, as well as recreational activities such as group games. As part of the

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.fondationface.org/projet/entre-voix/>



mentoring program, local youth groups and migrant children identified key topics that reflect the integration experience. The groups brought the topics identified in public discussions through films promoted online and through plays or debates with schoolmates or other local offline events. Volunteers facilitated the integration of migrant and refugee children into host local communities, introducing them to other children in the community and organizing outdoor sports and socio-cultural activities. The integration of migrant children and the learning process were also accompanied by adapted online content. The friendly online resources will further help newcomers to understand the national cultural and social characteristics of the four countries participating in the project. Moreover, the children were able to learn local languages through offline and online courses offered in a language that the children understand, such as Arabic or Farsi. In total, in the four countries of the project, several hundred children will acquire the basic knowledge and skills to engage in social relations.

## Greece

### **INTEGRA-TRAIN**

The INTEGRA-TRAIN project aims to strengthen the integration of women who are beneficiaries of international protection through the provision of multidimensional integration training. The project has three main objectives which are firstly to exchange knowledge and experience in the EU on integration training for migrants from EU Member States with a high level of experience in integrating refugees to EU Member States with less experience in integrating refugees. Secondly, this project aims to increase refugees' preparation and familiarity with the legal, civic, social and cultural realities of their host country in order to integrate well in the long term. Finally, INTEGRA-TRAIN aims to strengthen the capacity of national NGOs to offer integration courses to migrants. To achieve these objectives, different actions are implemented such as knowledge exchange, experience development exchange, integration training and dissemination and transfer of ownership.

Source: [INTEGRA-TRAIN - RÉSEAU DE FEMMES MIGRANTES EN GRÈCE melissanetwork.org](https://melissanetwork.org/2019/07/12/integra-train/)<sup>19</sup>

## Austria

### **Lerncafes**

The Lerncafes are well-proven examples of good integration projects that provide free study support for children, which were established several years ago and are now established throughout Austria. This project targets children aged 6-15 from refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant families. The educational support project helps migrant children to do their homework and prepare for exams, but also to improve their German language skills. The volunteers teach the children how to enjoy learning and

<sup>19</sup> <https://melissanetwork.org/2019/07/12/integra-train/>



improve their knowledge. It has been proven that 96% of the children who receive this support have completed their respective school level and can therefore move on to the next school level. Furthermore, by learning, playing and growing with other children from all countries, the youngsters become much more open-minded and respectful towards each other.

Source: [Lerncafés - Soutien à l'apprentissage gratuit: Caritas Autriche \(caritas-austria.at\)](https://lerncafes.caritas-austria.at/)<sup>20</sup>

## Italy

### ***Decentralized reception and integration***

This practice, which targets holders of international protection and unaccompanied minors, aims to guarantee "integrated reception" interventions, to take care of the individual beneficiary and to integrate people into local development and welfare policies. The practice implements: housing assistance; socio-economic integration: to help people find a job; health care: by registering with the National Health Service; social assistance: to deal with administrative practices; education: for enrolment in school or courses

More information on the conditions and services offered to newly arrived migrants, as well as on the selection of good practices regarding migrants' integration can be found on the Evidence review report (IO1) publicly available in the M4M project [website](#).

## VII. Policy recommendations on migrants' integration

### Greece

In general, the National Strategy for Social Inclusion of Asylum applicants and beneficiaries of international protection, published in November 2021<sup>21</sup> focuses on the following pillars:

- Pre-integration of asylum seekers to secure smooth and non-discriminatory transition of adults in working life and minors in education.
- Social inclusion through intensive education and training programmes to facilitate access of beneficiaries of international protection to the labour market.

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.caritas-austria.at/international-projects/lerncafes>

<sup>21</sup> National Strategy for Social Inclusion of Asylum applicants and beneficiaries of international protection, 2021, available at <https://migration.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Εθνική-στρατηγική-για-την-κοινωνική-ένταξη-2021.pdf>

- Rights advocacy, as well as prevention and effective protection against all forms of violence by strengthening the reporting mechanisms.
- Independent living, social housing, employment and social welfare.
- Enhancement of educational and professional knowledge, training, skills acquisition and language learning.
- Equal access to quality, non-discriminatory formal and non-formal education.

Indicative actions to achieve the above-mentioned objectives:

- **Security and protection:** Ensuring that staff with diverse scientific background, consisting of doctors, psychologists, social workers operators, etc. are available in all reception facilities to enable timely assessment of vulnerabilities and referral to appropriate services; ensuring adequate housing structures of vulnerable people; promoting sexual and reproductive health.
- **Rights advocacy, access to education and public services:** Promotion of formal and non-formal education (NFE). NFE can be performed by professionals specialized in teaching Greek as a foreign language to asylum seekers in preparatory classes or, as additional support, in the formal education system. Vocational training programmes to the abovementioned population will be strengthened in order to further develop skills, based on the needs of local communities' labour market. Digital application per geographic area will be developed with all the information regarding available services. In addition, legal aid services will be strengthened.
- **Information provided in child friendly way and enhancement of children's participation in the proceedings that concern them as well as to quality education.** This included the appointment of representatives for unaccompanied minors acting as "reference people" in each host facility, aimed at protecting children and resolving issues, who will be trained accordingly and their work will be monitored.
- **Promotion of the European way of life:** Getting familiar with the democratic institutions, the way of life in Greece and Europe, rights and obligations of citizens; awareness regarding prohibition of discrimination, respect for diversity and enhancement of cohesive societies. In order to strengthen and promote skills related to daily life, are organized workshops for cooking, using public transportation, and developing digital skills.
- **Social inclusion for beneficiaries of international protection:** Development of fast-track programmes with two-way refugee participation (Refugees to Refugees), including refugees participating in the education of other refugees; promotion of training and employment of women refugees, victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), aiming to assist women with similar experiences; supporting the development of professional skills via vocational training; enhancing the knowledge of rights and obligations in Greece through electronic and / or printed material available to the relevant public services, which should be constantly updated in languages spoken by the migrant

population; linking housing opportunities with employment opportunities in the tourism or agricultural sector and providing incentives for homeowners, in order to rent houses to beneficiaries of international protection.

- **Promoting social inclusion and participation in the community:** Creating associations and regular meetings within the community on various topics.

#### Recommendations:

The National Strategy refers to important aspects regarding inclusion of refugees and beneficiaries of international protection in Greece such as security, effective protection and support of vulnerable people, accommodation, formal, non-formal and vocational education and trainings, developing digital skills and skills that are linked with the local labour market, getting to know the local language and culture by participating in associations and local meetings, as well as being informed of the rights and available services. Particular emphasis is given on minors having a guardian/representative that can act as reference person to make sure that they are protected from harm, able to attend education and that they can exercise their right to participate.

However, the national strategy mainly includes generic comments and suggestions, the implementation of which requires resources and effective collaboration of actors and professionals working with migrants.

Under this light, more emphasis should be given on actual engagement of migrants that are living in Greece for quite some time, in order to systematise their collaboration with institutions and public services. This could be combined with mentoring programmes, implemented by the state or major CSOs that have access to reception centres and other accommodation facilities of people with migrant background. The importance of having a reference person is recognised in the national strategy, however there is no specific reference on how it could work in practice.

Trained mentors (professionals, volunteers) could support the newly arrived migrants before the local authorities in order to secure a legal status and their rights and to be able to find a secure home, health care services and financial support. They could be the link between the state and the community for the transition period.

It should be noted that no integration could be possible if the migrants are not able to communicate with locals on their own; therefore, attending language lessons on a regular basis provided for free and also incentives for migrants to attend them are of utmost importance. Mentoring could be beneficial in this aspect too: Trained mentors could engage newly arrived migrants to attend lessons to learn the local language or/and English, as well as other training programmes to develop their skills (foreign languages, digital skills, vocational education) to have the opportunity to become financially independent and to participate in the social and economic life.

Last but not least, incentives should be provided to local companies to hire migrants. These incentives could be combined with mentoring programmes by CSOs, trade unions or the Ministry of Labour, where mentors could support people with migrant background to learn the local language, develop skills and network in order to be able to get a job in Greece.

## France

### **Top priority is integration through employment and enhanced protection for women and beneficiaries of international protection.**

On 25 January 2022, the Ministry of the Interior signed a policy aimed at defining the priorities of the integration policy for newly-arrived migrants. The first priority concerns work and vocational training, presented as "an essential axis of integration". This involves mobilising public employment services, financing actions to accompany refugees into employment and recognising the skills and professional experience already acquired, and paying administrative attention to the timely issue and renewal of residence permits.

The second priority prescribes special attention for women and beneficiaries of international protection (BPI). Beneficiaries of this protection are defined as being more vulnerable than others, because they 'suffer from specific vulnerabilities, notably psycho-trauma, difficulties in accessing housing and a greater distance from the French language and the labour market than other foreigners'. Women are also identified as having greater integration difficulties, "with an unemployment rate of 30% and less participation in the world of work and social life". Advocating an "outreach" approach to support them, childcare is also highlighted as a way to facilitate their integration.

Finally, the Ministry of the Interior insisted on the "essential role" of civil society in ensuring the successful integration of foreigners, and highlighted the value of projects and mechanisms such as sponsorship and mentoring. A platform for citizen sponsorship of refugees is available since November 2021 (<https://parrainage.refugies.info/>) by the interministerial delegation for the welcoming and integration of refugees (DIAIR), in order to "encourage all citizen initiatives in favour of their integration".

Source : <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/circulaire/id/45277?origin=list>

**Training social workers to provide better support for refugees.** In January 2021, the interministerial delegation for the welcoming and integration of refugees (DIAIR), and the National Centre for the Territorial Public Service (CNFPT) launched a specific training programme for social workers in local authorities, in order to secure access to the rights of migrant who benefit from international protection.

This initiative is based on the observation that "beneficiaries of international protection (BPI) have many specificities which make it all the more necessary to

generalise training focused on their needs and the mechanisms to which they can have access". The training course "Welcoming and support of refugees in France" therefore aims specifically to facilitate the integration of refugees by giving social workers the keys to understanding the problems encountered by asylum seekers and refugees in France.

Source: <https://accueil-integration-refugies.fr/former-les-travailleurs-sociaux-pour-mieux-accompagner-les-personne-refugiees/>

**Accommodation.** In France, unaccompanied minors have the right to special protection and special assistance from the government. The "ASE" (child social care) is a public service that is responsible for these children. When these children arrive in France, they are collected provisionally during their age (minority) assessment process and the state provides them with temporary emergency accommodation in hotels. However, this process is not suitable for children as they reside together with adults, which can seriously undermine the basic rights and basic needs of children entrusted to the ASE (i.e., due to a sense of insecurity, poor hygiene etc.). Therefore, it is important to reconsider the welcoming process of unaccompanied minors. At the end of the age assessment process, most of the minors are redirected to "DHIMNA" (accommodation and integration device for unaccompanied minors), which means that they are placed in centers and accompanied by an education team until they come of age. These health care and education professionals help unaccompanied minors in their studies, future job search, health care and daily life.

**Education.** In France, the right to education is guaranteed for everyone. In addition, school is compulsory for every child from the age of 3 until 16, enabling them to access education in the best conditions and as quickly as possible. Because professionals from "ASE" cannot monitor unaccompanied minors individually, professionals from "DHIMNA" take charge of the educational work. However, they sometimes face lack of training and information regarding the life path of these young people. Moreover, it is even more difficult for the unaccompanied minors who have to stay in hotels because the loneliness and isolation they experience affect their mental health and the development of their life project. Also, it has been evident that sometimes unaccompanied minors would be interested to undertake university studies but "ASE" shatters their hopes because it is considered best that these young people must be autonomous as soon as possible therefore they need to follow "professional" studies. Thus, rights defenders recommend that support for unaccompanied minors should be adapted and adjusted according to their needs.

Afeji has worked on policy recommendations for migrants, in particular for unaccompanied minors. All information collected comes from the report "Unaccompanied minors in law" (2022).



## Portugal

From the Portuguese side, information collected is based on feedback from participants of the training action and of a report with policy recommendations that merged from awareness sessions and focus groups with 15 migrant people (Costa & de Paula, 2021):

**Accommodation.** Migrants and other vulnerable people have the right for social housing, since renting is too expensive, especially in the main cities such as Lisbon and Porto. However, besides the fact that migrants often feel that they do not have enough information concerning the rights and obligations among the renter and the landlord, they often need to move to regions far from the city centre. Sometimes, they feel prejudice against them, since some landlords do not feel comfortable and refuse to rent houses due to their migrant background. In this way, it is important to “invest” in awareness sessions for communities, in general, to increase their empathy and consciousness about the challenges that vulnerable groups, as migrants, often face in several dimensions, including finding/ renting a house. It is also important to implement awareness sessions about cultural diversity, on making people more aware about cultural differences in general, and how we can all benefit from them, through learning new perspectives and respecting the values of others.

**Migrant support services.** Migrants find it difficult to get information about the work and activities implemented in organizations that support people that come to Portugal from another country. It is confusing and difficult to get effective information about the services available in the community to support migrants, and where they are located, because information is dispersed. It is important that this kind of services are made visible, using effective dissemination materials published/available in strategic communication channels, both printed (e.g., brochures and flyers in public and strategic places) and digital (Facebook, website, other social media channels). Mentoring programs for migrant people would also be of benefit for them, since the mentor can guide the mentees to the most suitable services, according to their individual needs.

**Education and Training.** Portuguese is a difficult language to learn for those who do not speak/ understand it, which is a barrier itself when migrants come to Portugal. They find it difficult to receive information about where and how to participate in useful training actions, which tend to be generic and not focused on the profile and needs of the individuals. The process to get professional/ qualified certificates tends to be bureaucratic and expensive. It is also difficult for migrants, especially coming from non-European countries, to exercise the profession or continue their educational knowledge and background from their country of origin, due to difficult training certification and accreditation processes. Taking this into consideration, it would be important that key organizations of the community provide information about educational and training activities, making the access easier for migrants. The



dissemination of such initiatives can also be made through social media channels, such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter and the websites of the organizations. It is important that this information is disseminated also in other languages (such as English), making it available to even more people.

**Health.** The website of the National Health Service is available in Portuguese, which makes it hard for people who do not speak/ understand Portuguese to navigate and find the information needed. Besides, migrants consider that there is not enough training and effective information provided by the professionals working in public health organizations, especially about rights regarding their access to the national health system. It is also usual to find difficulty in getting a registration in a health centre. In this way, it would be important to train health professionals in providing key information to foreign people (e.g., focused on the support that can be provided in the registration process in the national health centre). The website of the National Health Service should also be translated into foreign languages, or at least, to be available in English, which is a common language, therefore it could reach and be useful to more people.

Source: <http://casadobrasildelisboa.pt/relatorios/Relatorio%20Lisboa%20Acolhe.pdf>

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## Romania

**Job.** There is no systematic mentorship scheme in place for asylum seekers' and refugees' integration into the labour market. Under the general scheme of initial support provided to asylum seekers and refugees by the General Inspectorate for Migration, there may be some forms of special assistance which may be designated as comparable to mentorship, to be provided in special cases based on need (Ghinararu, 2016).

Another relevant problem is the lack of offer of professional courses which may make it easier for refugees and asylum seekers to find and keep a job, especially for those who have not received a proper education and/or professional training in their native countries. We would recommend that the Romanian State takes into consideration this problem, offering specific and more relevant incentives and funding amounts to training centres and similar institutions.

**Accommodation.** The asylum seekers have the right for social housing, but there is no record of a refugee or of an asylum seeker that had the opportunity to access social housing, because of the bureaucracy and the language barriers.

<sup>22</sup> Costa, A. P. & de Paula, C. (2021). Relatório de recomendações: políticas públicas locais para as pessoas migrantes em Lisboa. Casa do Brasil de Lisboa. Retrieved from: <http://casadobrasildelisboa.pt/relatorios/Relatorio%20Lisboa%20Acolhe.pdf>

**Education.** In the first year, minors don't have the right to become enrolled students and they can just attend classes without receiving marks. At the end of the year, they take a test in order to establish their level of education. Being observer students, they are not registered in the national system of education. The COVID-19 crisis has shown that because they were not enrolled in the national system of education, the asylum seekers' children were not taken into consideration when the Ministry of Education decided to start e-learning and to provide devices for Romanian children. We would recommend that asylum seekers' children should receive the same treatment as Romanian children.

Another relevant problem is the very long time and the bureaucratic procedures refugees have to go through in order to convert their educational certifications and make them recognized in the Romanian territory. This implies that, until their qualifications are not recognized, they are not allowed to carry on a qualified job. This condition often lasts a very long period of time, thus precluding migrants and refugees from being fully satisfied and integrated in the national territory.

## Austria

**Education.** All persons under the age of 18 who have completed compulsory schooling and are permanently resident in Austria have been obliged since the Compulsory Education Act of 2016 to pursue education or training thereafter as well. This obligation continues until the age of 18 or until the positive completion of further education or training.

This obligation should also be applied to asylum seekers insofar as they are entitled to a school or training place, especially if they have to expect long asylum procedures. So far, asylum seekers are only entitled to a school place until the age of 15.

**Labour market.** All asylum seekers should be granted a work permit from the 3rd month of their stay. This has not been the case so far. Only very complicated individual regulations apply, which are not expedient in practice.

**Health care support.** The initial reception centres and distribution centres in Austria are intermediate facilities where refugees/asylum seekers are transferred initially; they are operated by the Ministry of Interior. An initial health assessment is mandatory within 72 hours and primary health care is provided. The ORS service GmbH is commissioned by the Ministry of Internal Affairs to conduct the initial medical assessment and is also responsible for the provision of primary health care in these facilities. However, the main problem is communication with healthcare providers that is difficult due to language barriers. False diagnoses, misunderstandings and wrong medication are the consequences. To benefit from the healthcare, it is important for refugees and migrants to overcome language barriers.

**Social Services.** once refugees are registered at specific police stations or special reception centres (“Erfassungsstellen”). They have access to basic welfare support (“Grundversorgung”; including accommodation, basic care and health insurance), education and other services. After registration, they also receive their ID card (“Ausweis für Vertriebene”) which will give them access to the job market. The ID card will usually be sent to their address, so it is important that the refugees register their place of residence (“Meldezettel”).

However, most newcomers migrating to Austria don’t know the systems developed and available for supporting their integration and inclusion. Mentoring programme is a great method to provide one additional instrument to promote the integration of migrants in Austria, provide orientation and support for refugees welcomed in the host country, remove barriers to integration and promote equality of opportunity.

## Italy

**Education.** Even though migrants under the age of 18 have access to education in Italy, newcomer pupils receive little help in accessing all types of schools. The situation worsened with the pandemic because school problems encountered by migrants and their children during the current extended period of health crisis and school closures are the lack of access to distance learning and, in recent months, the lack of relations with teachers and classmates, remaining entirely out of the school circuit and from all those opportunities for interaction and of learning that are fundamental for their educational path. Italy should invest in its growing diversity of pupils and make equal access and intercultural education a reality in schools. Furthermore, it is recommended to support teachers in order to contribute to the removal of additional obstacles faced by migrant pupils.

**Health.** Healthcare services are generally accessible for migrant patients due to national and regional policies. All legal migrants and asylum-seekers have the right and duty to enrol in the National Health Service (SSN). Legally residing foreigners are obliged to register with the National Health Service (NHS) and asylum seekers and people who have received a form of international protection. Unaccompanied foreign minors and pregnant women are also included, up to six months from the child’s birth. As for illegal migrants, the absence of a residence permit does not preclude the possibility of receiving urgent and essential hospital care. In case of need, therefore, the hospital must accept undocumented migrants, registering the client and providing him with a code called “STP” (Italian acronym for Foreigners temporarily present). Furthermore, access to services by an irregular migrant must not involve any reporting to the authorities. However, the situation is not always linear, and the documentation required to access healthcare can be complicated for legal migrants and asylum seekers. It would be appropriate to provide social workers and cultural-linguistic mediators with intervention tools to ensure an effective response to the health needs of migrants. Furthermore, it would be good to pay more attention to the necessary interventions for the protection and prevention of these people's physical and mental health, who in most cases arrive in good health in our country and fall ill, instead, above all due to the living conditions and reception.

**Labour market.** Any non-EU migrant who has a residence permit enabling work or possessing an EC long-term residence permit can be freely employed in Italy. It is possible to recruit (and therefore also to register as unemployed) even if the migrant is not yet in possession of a first residence permit, in some cases provided by law. If the migrant has an expired residence permit, it is possible to hire them (and register it in the registry of the Employment Centre) under certain conditions. However, in Italy, the problem of undeclared work and labour exploitation still exists, especially in the agricultural sector. It involves both regular and irregular migrants. One of the main problems is the lack of targeted support to allow migrants to find secure jobs that match their qualifications and skills. Development policies and programs should include actions to enhance decent employment opportunities and income-generating projects to avoid the negative impact of migration and the risk of exploitation.

## VIII. Recommendations from the pilot implementation of the M4M mentoring programme in the partner countries

The professionals of the integration services who completed the pilot implementation of the M4M mentoring programme in the respective partner countries, positively evaluated it in terms of relevance, organisation, provided material and enhancement of skills to promote integration. They also made the following recommendations for improvement:

Regarding the mentoring programme, professionals considered that it should have a longer duration (Romania, Greece) especially considering the long administrative process to attain a legal status. The mentors should receive detailed information on the competent authorities to secure the legal status of the mentees (Greece). They should also be trained to enhance their soft skills with a practical approach (Romania). In addition, as migrant and refugee communities already unofficially support migrants as “mentors”, special focus should be given to enhance their knowledge and skills in mentoring so that they can be more effective in their guidance in order to facilitate integration (Greece). Some mentors stated that reintegration activities should be framed in the countries of focus, and it is very important to establish goals for both mentor and mentee with recognition for achievements. (Austria) However, the structure is necessary to maximise retention and motivate new members to keep progressing. Moreover, some participants (mentees) stated that they faced some obstacles during the process because some mentors were inexperienced, so they couldn’t reflect on their life skills to guide their mentees. (Austria) On this point, it is also important to include the mentors who have experience enough to share with mentees and have skills to transfer their life skills.

In terms of integration policies in general, professionals mentioned that the states should focus on dealing with bureaucracy as it leads in practice to not having access

to support and to be deprived of their rights (Italy, Greece, Romania). In addition, the language barrier is important (Greece, Romania) because it hinders communication with locals and finding a job; therefore, language learning sessions should be provided in a systematic way from the beginning. Mentoring could be useful to this end (Romania). Better collaboration and interaction among the authorities (legal, administrative, educational) is crucial to facilitate quick and smooth integration (Greece, Italy).

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