

HANDBOOK SOCIAL MENTORING FOR NEWCOMERS

Initial guidelines for social mentoring programs
for newcomers

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Introduction

Mentoring has long been a common intervention to address an array of problems and inequalities and has been applied to numerous populations, settings, and goals. Some of the most common types of mentoring are youth mentoring and mentoring to or at work. While mentoring has many different definitions, it essentially involves a process in which an experienced person (the mentor) guides and supports a less experienced or more disadvantaged person (the mentee) in pursuit of a specific goal. In recent years, mentoring for newcomers has become a more widespread practice, particularly in the EU where active participation and integration of newcomers are high on the (political) agenda.

This handbook is for service providers who want to set up a social mentoring program aimed at foreign-language newcomers. We describe common practices and offer recommendations for each step of the mentoring process. This handbook is the result of the AMIF project ORIENT8 of HIVA-KU Leuven, Beyond the Horizon ISSG vzw, the Municipality of Mechelen (Belgium), the Municipality of Nikaia-Agios Ioannis Rentis (Greece), and the Municipality of Sala (Sweden) that runs from 2021 to 2022. It will be further developed, tested, and adjusted during the course of the project.

In this handbook, each part of the mentoring process will be discussed based on extant literature and the results from our own empirical research in Flanders, Belgium. Each chapter concludes with a list of recommendations based on our findings. While some recommendations will apply to any social mentoring program, others may be dependent on context and (sub)target group. The partners of the ORIENT8 project will decide collaboratively which recommendations are essential and which are optional or context dependent.

Chapter 1 focuses on the recruitment, screening, and selection of mentees. This chapter discusses different recruitment channels, participation criteria and the intake of the mentee. In chapter 2, the same topics are discussed for mentors. Chapter 3 delves into matching. It discusses the most common matching criteria and their relevance, as well as the matching procedure. The relationship between mentor and mentee, including their first meeting, duration and time commitment, activities, coordination between mentors and professionals, and other concerns are addressed in chapter 4. Chapter 5 focuses on the follow-up and support provided by the mentoring program coordinator. Chapter 6 explains the relevance and options for mentor training sessions, peer learning, and group activities. In chapter 7, the governance of mentoring programs is discussed.

1 | Recruiting, screening, and selecting mentees

1.1 According to the literature

One of the first steps of any mentoring program is the recruitment of its participants. According to Cox (2005), appropriate recruitment and selection can be the solution to many matching dilemmas. Research on recruitment, screening and selection of mentees is limited and predominantly descriptive. While it can illustrate common practices, it does not provide evidence for the effectiveness of particular recruitment channels, participation criteria, or selection methods.

In their research on mentoring-to-work projects for highly educated newcomers, Van Dooren and De Cuyper (2015) distinguish between passive and active recruitment. Passive recruitment refers to recruitment via the general marketing channels of the mentoring project. Examples could be the project's website, social media, and flyers. Active recruitment refers to methods such as having an info stand at an event or giving a presentation in a language class for newcomers. While word-of-mouth is one of the most common recruitment channels for mentees, using other recruitment channels could allow programs to reach potential mentees without extensive social networks (Mestan, 2008).

According to Mestan (2008), who evaluated the Australian 'Given the Chance' mentoring program for refugees, organizations should have a reputation among the target group as being welcoming to everyone. However, such inclusivity can also have negative consequences with some mentors of the program reporting that their mentees were not job-ready, committed to the program, or motivated. Sanyal (2017) found that recruitment of mentees who do not fully understand the context and expectations of the program can have a negative impact on the mentoring relationship and result in premature termination. Purkayastha and De Cuyper (2019) suggest that aligning a program's screening criteria with its objectives promotes more positive outcomes for the mentee.

A more selective screening process could improve the mentoring relationship and its outcomes. While programs with general participation criteria have the advantage of reaching a larger group of mentees, most programs adopt specific criteria to delineate a well-defined target group and improve the chances of a successful relationship. Programs can apply the criteria strictly but Van Dooren and De Cuyper (2015) recommend some flexibility in the application of criteria while still formulating them as specifically as possible to facilitate targeted referrals.

A mentee's motivation is a crucial criterion for participation in the mentoring program and one of the most important factors in a successful relationship (Van Dooren & De Cuyper, 2015). During the intake or screening, programs should address those issues that are necessary to know whether a candidate is eligible and to make a good match. The content of the intake is thus informed by the participation and matching criteria of the program while the best screening method is determined by the content. If programs only use objective criteria, screening can be done via an intake form. If

subjective criteria such as personality are considered, an interview is more appropriate. Van Dooren and De Cuyper (2015) have identified several benefits of personal intake interviews: 1) subjects can be discussed in more detail and more detailed information can thus be obtained, 2) it can give an insight into a candidate's personality, 3) it allows for a good understanding of a candidate's motivation and drive, and 4) a candidate's expectations can be checked and adjusted. Especially the last two benefits are crucial for a mentoring relationship to be successful and to avoid frustration and drop-out.

1.2 In practice

1.2.1 Recruiting mentees

Table 1 Mentee recruitment channels

Social worker
Language and civic integration teachers
Informal partnerships with other organizations: schools, public employment services, centres for social well-being, integration services, asylum centres, etc.
Via other projects of the organization
Giving presentations e.g. in language classes
Word-of-mouth

Social mentoring programs adopt different strategies to recruit mentees. Referral is one of the most common recruitment strategies, but programs also rely on other types of active and passive recruitment.

Mentoring programs that target newcomers - often refugees and asylum seekers specifically - tend to recruit them through professional channels involved in the early stages of arrival and integration. One common professional recruiting channel is the social worker of the mentee. Mentoring programs and social workers often have an informal partnership in which the social worker refers potential mentees to the program. Depending on the mentoring program, the social worker might be a colleague of the program coordinator or work together with them (e.g., in small municipalities) which facilitates cooperation. Programs without such a direct connection between the coordinator and the social worker often receive referrals sporadically, signalling a need for better communication and partnership.

In addition to social workers, programs also maintain informal partnerships with other professionals such as language and civic integration teachers, or others working at schools, public employment services, centres for social well-being, integration services, asylum centres, shelters, and other organizations and services that are targeted at newcomers or regularly frequented and/or used by newcomers.

Entering into partnerships with other organizations or professionals and relying on them to recruit and refer potential mentees to the mentoring program can be challenging. As mentioned, some programs only receive the occasional referral and even those referrals are often unsuitable. Social

workers often refer newcomers who do not qualify for participation in the mentoring program or whose needs require professional assistance, not a volunteer. Newcomers who are referred by social workers or other professionals are also not always properly informed. Coordinators recalled many instances in which a newcomer arrived at the intake interview without knowing what they were signing up for and/or lacking the motivation to participate in a mentoring program at all.

To solve this, some programs work or started working more closely with other professionals who they consider better equipped to refer newcomers to their mentoring program. According to one coordinator, referrals by Second Language teachers are often much clearer than those by social workers because they know the mentee better. While the social worker sees them maybe once a month, a teacher sees them in class every week and usually has a much better understanding of their needs, character, and preferences.

Other programs sought to improve their partnerships with professionals such as social workers by improving their communication. One of the mentoring programs now has an annual meeting with their referrers. During this meeting, they give a presentation in which they reiterate the purpose of the mentoring program, the target group, participation criteria, the role of the mentor, the structure of mentoring program, and any other relevant information or updates referrers need to be aware of. Another program has developed an 'information flow' document specifically for referrers and other external professionals which covers roughly the same topics. This is to help ensure that referrers are all up to date, convey the correct information to potential mentees, and know who (not) to refer to the program.

Referrers are usually expected to inform potential mentees about the mentoring program, explaining what a mentor is and can(not) do for them. To avoid intakes with newcomers who are uninformed and/or uninterested, one coordinator asked their referrers to obtain permission from the newcomer to arrange their mentoring application. While this does not always work in practice, it can significantly reduce the screening and selection responsibilities of the coordinator.

In addition to referrals, programs also adopt more active recruitment methods such as presenting the mentoring program in a language class for newcomers. The benefit is that the coordinator or other staff members can address the newcomers directly and promote the program in their own words. Those who decide to join the mentoring program are thus more likely to do so with the correct expectations and with the right motivation. Nevertheless, this recruitment strategy is not widely adopted, most likely because of time constraints.

Depending on the organization that runs the mentoring program, newcomers might already benefit from other services provided by the same organization. For example, one of the mentoring programs was organized by the Diversity department of the municipality, which caters to the target group in various ways. Most newcomers will become familiar with the department upon or soon after arrival and might even benefit from other services and programs it offers. Newcomers with a need for a mentor can then easily be identified and recruited. Other programs were organized by local governments, a local agency for integration, and a well-known non-profit organization. The reputation of such organizers among the target group facilitated recruitment by attracting newcomers who approached them out of their own volition and/or by using internal recruitment channels.

Once a social mentoring program has become more known among the target group and multiple mentees have participated, word-of-mouth advertising can also become an important recruiting channel. Potential mentees sometimes contact the program directly because they have heard about it from professionals and/or know other newcomers who have participated in the program.

Mentee

"I heard about it from other refugees in the beginning but I didn't know what it was all about. I asked my social worker and they explained it all and after that, I signed up. At that point, I had just received refugee status, ended up in [city] and I did not have enough friends in [city]. I wanted someone to help me with school work etc. I heard from someone that the mentor helped him with his driver's license, this was not the case for me but I directly got the sense that it wasn't just about the driver's license but also about doing things together, going on a city trip, doing a hobby together. So I wanted to match with someone who already lived in [city] to follow them a bit to find my way."

1.2.2 Screening and selecting mentees

Programs must screen potential mentees to determine whether or not they qualify for the mentoring program. While participation criteria are not particularly strict in social mentoring programs, there are several which are usually taken into account. Coordinators may rely on information provided by the referrer, interview the potential mentees themselves and/or use an intake form.

1.2.2.1 Participation criteria

Table 2 Mentee participation criteria

Language skills
Age
Place of residence
Immigration status
Motivation
Expectations
Absence of more immediate needs that require professional assistance

One of the main participation criteria used by mentoring programs is the mentee's language skills. To facilitate the mentoring relationship and make the communication with the mentee and between the duo easier, some programs demand at least a limited understanding of the local language. While most programs have a minimum language requirement such as A2 level, coordinators do not typically request official proof but rather observe a candidate's level of comprehension when they first meet them. Specific language requirements are usually more of a guideline than a strict rule.

Coordinator

"For us, the biggest requirement is that it has to be someone with whom we can communicate. I have already done intake interviews in French, English, Spanish, but we have already had someone say: 'but he can only speak Arabic'. Sorry but then I cannot have a conversation with that person and I cannot have a mentor because my mentors, or most of them at least, do not speak Arabic either. So then we ask: wait another month or two'. We are not going to be super strict with the language but we must be able to communicate."

Case Tandem

Tandem is a social mentoring program in Ghent, Belgium that matches newcomer families with mentors. The mentor speaks Dutch and the mother tongue or other language spoken by the family. Together, they will do activities for a period of six months and get to know organizations in the city of Ghent whose services match the needs of the family. To recruit families, Tandem works together with referrers. Their cooperation follows a number of successive steps:

1. The referrer contacts Tandem when they want to register a family for the mentoring program
2. The program coordinator provides the referrer with an intake form and the [promo video](#) of the program
3. The referrer shows the promo video to the family, fills in the intake form - preferably together with the family - and sends it back
4. The coordinator decides whether the newcomers can participate based on the program's participation criteria which are:
 - They are a family
 - The family lives in Ghent, their living situation is stable
 - The family is intrinsically motivated to participate in the mentoring program
 - The family can commit themselves to do activities with the mentor twice a month for 6 months
 - The family is willing to participate in group activities and training sessions
 - The family agrees with the arrangements made by the organization with the mentor and the family
 - The family agrees with the objectives of Tandem and respects the framework
 - The family is willing to sign the organization's privacy policy document during the start-up meeting
5. The coordinator reports the decision back to the referrer. There are three possible scenarios:
 - **The family can participate immediately.** If the family complies with all the participation criteria and a mentor is available, the family can start their mentoring at Tandem. The coordinator will contact the referrer, the mentor, and the family to schedule a first meeting
 - **The family cannot participate in Tandem.** The coordinator contacts the referrer and explains why the family cannot participate
 - **The family is placed on the waiting list.** If the family can participate but there is no mentor available, they will be placed on the waiting list. The coordinator will start looking for a mentor. As soon as a mentor is available, the coordinator will contact the referrer and the family
6. If the family qualifies and a mentor is available, the coordinator schedules a first meeting with the mentor, the family, and the referrer
7. Ideally, the mentor and family are given some time to consider the match and, if they want to move forward, invited for a final start-up meeting (this has not been implemented yet)

Some programs place less emphasis on the local language but do require knowledge of at least some common language such as English or French to communicate with the mentees and to be able to match them with mentors who speak the same language. One of the mentoring programs is unique in that it matches newcomer families with ex-newcomers who speak the same language. Mentees' language skills or lack thereof are never used to exclude them from the program. If a suitable mentor is not immediately available, the coordinator will actively recruit a mentor based on their knowledge of the mentee's language. This makes it one of the only mentoring programs that does not use language skills as one of the criteria for newcomers' participation in the program.

Other common participation criteria for mentees include age, place of residence, and status. Most social mentoring programs cater to adults and expect mentees to be 18 or older. While some programs make exceptions when they are approached by a younger person who is very eager to participate, they do not actively recruit or advertise their programs as suitable for minors. Youth mentoring programs are relatively common so candidates can usually be directed to another, more appropriate program. Mentee's place of residence is usually not a determining exclusion criteria but it is considered and if the candidate lives in a different municipality or city, they might be directed to another mentoring program in their vicinity. The importance of the newcomer's immigration status usually depends on who organizes or finances the mentoring program. Many programs are either organized or subsidized by the (local) government which means they cannot accept undocumented mentees. If a program is organized and financed by a non-profit, coordinators have a lot more leeway and can accept anyone who needs assistance, regardless of their immigration status.

One of the most important criteria considered by programs is the mentee's motivation to participate in the mentoring program. Candidates are sometimes referred to the program without fully understanding what its purpose is and what will be expected of them. Often, it is the social worker or other professional who is enthusiastic about the program rather than the newcomer. If a coordinator notices that a candidate lacks interest and motivation, they will usually deny their application. Intrinsic motivation is expected from both sides. Coordinators might be aware of a mentee's motivation because of information passed on by their referrer but they usually use the intake interview and/or intake form to properly gauge their motivation and commitment.

Coordinator

"I will also invite these newcomers to have a conversation, which sometimes shows that they do not take part based on their own request but that they are being directed a little, that the social worker says 'you have to do that because...' but it is also on a voluntary basis for our newcomers, and we must not forget that. It cannot be an obligation in the context of some agreement or contract you have concluded with the social worker, that cannot be part of it. It is voluntary work, but it is on a voluntary basis for *both* sides. If a newcomer immediately says 'actually, I don't want to, but I have to' then I say 'actually, you *don't* have to.'"

During this intake, coordinators will also check whether candidates' expectations of the program are correct. If the newcomer expects professional help rather than assistance from a volunteer, coordinators will usually refer them to other, more relevant, organizations. If a mentee's expectations are incorrect, which is often the case, but they are still interested in the program, coordinators will usually try to inform and adjust their expectations instead of excluding them from the program.

Interested newcomers may not always qualify for the program. A reason could be that they have more urgent priorities that need to be resolved before they can participate in an informal mentoring program, or their language comprehension is not at a level needed to interact with a native speaker i.e. the mentor. In case they do not qualify, programs usually offer alternatives and/or refer them to other services or programs. They might guide them to discussion groups where they can practice the

language in an informal setting before they participate in the mentoring program, or they could direct them to other, more targeted, mentoring programs. One of the social mentoring programs refers mentees who primarily seek assistance with finding housing to another project in the city that has volunteers available for this specific need. For other concerns, such as mental health problems or parenting difficulties, coordinators can also refer candidates to other professionals or (government) services.

1.2.2.2 Intake

Once a mentee has been recruited, most programs will interview them to learn more about them, their expectations and goals, and whether they qualify to participate in the program. Common topics that are discussed are the mentee’s education, profession, language skills, their needs, their interests and hobbies, their family, and when they are available to meet their potential mentor. Coordinators recommend doing this intake face-to-face to facilitate interaction. One of the programs does walking intakes, in which the coordinator and candidate go on a walk for about an hour and casually talk about the program, the mentee and any other topic. The coordinator keeps the questions on the intake form in the back of their mind but does not bring the form with them to keep the conversation as informal as possible. According to the coordinator, these active intakes lead to more interesting conversations and properly set the stage for the mentoring relationship by taking the newcomer out of the professional settings they often find themselves in during the early stages of arrival and integration.

One of the main challenges at this stage of the mentoring process is adequately informing the mentee about the purpose of the program and the role of the mentor. Setting expectations of what to expect – and importantly, what *not* to expect – is a crucial part of this first meeting. Coordinators suggest keeping the information as short and concise as possible. They usually explain the program and the role of the mentor with a few keywords and contradictions that are easy to understand, even if the mentee has a limited understanding of the language. One program explains it to mentees as follows:

A mentor is	A mentor is not
A friend, a sympathetic ear	A private tutor
Someone to do activities with	A romantic partner
Someone to practice Dutch with	A social assistant

Most programs use a similar approach. Some programs also provide materials in other languages. One of the programs has informative videos about their program in various languages while another uses a simple page with key words such as ‘mentor’ translated into multiple languages. To explain the purpose of the program and set the right expectations, some coordinators also promote the use of other visual tools. One useful strategy is to show several photos of mentors and mentees involved in different activities that are common in social mentoring programs such as having drinks, doing a cultural activity such as going to the theater or museum, and working out together.

One of the mentoring programs has a unique intake approach. Instead of scheduling individual interviews with mentees, they organize a collective information event for all interested mentor and mentee candidates. The information that is usually shared by the coordinator during individual intakes is shared in a group setting, allowing for interaction and questions. One of the coordinators suggests inviting a few ‘ambassadors’ i.e. newcomers with prior experience in the mentoring program, who can talk about their experience and answer questions. In this setting, candidates might also be able to ask questions in their own language, which can help them fully grasp the purpose of the mentoring

program and the role of the mentor. At the end of the event, those who would like to apply for the program are provided with an intake form. According to the program coordinator, seeing candidates interact can also prove useful for the matching later on.

Some programs opt to forego the intake interview and only use an intake form or the input from the referrer though this is often a result of time restrictions rather than preference. Other programs will combine several screening methods. If the mentee is referred to the program, the coordinator will often receive information about the mentee from the referrer, after which they will schedule an intake interview. During the intake, they might have the mentee fill out an intake form or use it themselves to guide the interview. By collecting this information, the coordinator can develop a better understanding of the mentee and their needs, which will help in the next phase of the mentoring process: matching.



Examples: intake forms for mentees

1.3 Recommendations

- *Programs should have clear participation criteria that align with the objectives of the program. Some of the most common criteria that programs can use are language skills, age, location, immigration status, motivation, expectations, and absence of immediate needs that require professional help*
- *Programs should use recruitment channels that are most suitable for their target group and context. To diversify their recruitment, programs can use both passive and active, internal, and external, and general and targeted recruitment strategies*
- *Programs can develop promotional materials that are made readily available to the target group online and/or via physical materials such as flyers. Promotional materials should be updated when necessary*
- *If programs rely on referrals, they should:*
 - *Maintain (informal) partnerships with other organizations and professionals who can refer newcomers to the program*
 - *Ask referrers to inform the mentee about the program and ask their permission before arranging the application*
 - *Keep referrers informed about the program and communicate any changes to its participation criteria or other relevant aspects of the program*
 - *Provide referrers with promotion materials to promote and explain the program to potential mentees*
 - *Supplement referrals with other recruitment strategies to effectively reach its target group*
- *Programs should organize regular info sessions where interested newcomers can learn more about the program in an informal setting and without obligations*
- *Programs should invite ‘ambassadors’ (former mentees) to info sessions to share their experiences and answer questions*
- *Programs should use simple, visual tools, clear language, and translation to explain the purpose of mentoring and the role of the mentor to the mentee to ensure they enter the program with the right expectations*
- *Programs should schedule one-on-one intake interviews with potential mentees and record their information on a standardized intake form*
- *Programs should refer ineligible candidates to other volunteer programs or professional services*

2 | Recruiting, screening and selecting mentors

2.1 According to the literature

According to Stukas and Tanti (2005), mentoring programs do not only have difficulty recruiting enough mentors, they also struggle to retain the mentors they are able to recruit.

In general, word-of-mouth recruitment is considered the most effective recruitment strategy. When people are directly asked to participate in a voluntary activity by someone they know, volunteerism increases. Such personal connections also help to create positive views of the organization and activity (Furano et al., 1993; Stukas & Tanti, 2005; Van Hoye & Lievens, 2009). However, research suggests that programs should use more than one recruitment method and that recruitment messages should be received by prospective volunteers on more than one occasion to be effective (MENTOR, 2015).

In order to attract reliable and committed mentors, recruitment materials should not only be clear and realistic but also have the right tone (MENTOR, 2015). Barraza (2011) found that emotional expectations were positively associated with intentions to continue volunteering, identification with the volunteer role, and predicted volunteer persistence. By promoting mentoring as a satisfying and rewarding experience, mentor recruitment and retention can be improved.

In their research on refugee befriending programs, Behnia (2007) found that motivation was an important reason for programs to target specific groups of potential volunteers. According to Van 't Hoog et al. (2012), mentors who are motivated to do something for others and have an open attitude towards cultural differences achieve the best results. When people have multiple motives for volunteering and believe their voluntary work allows them to fulfill these motives, they are more satisfied and more likely to remain a volunteer than those who have fewer fulfilled motives (Stukas et al., 2009). Stukas and Tanti (2005) further suggest that certain demographic characteristics such as being young, unmarried, economically better off, or a member of a helping profession, are associated with greater mentoring commitment though there is a lack of evidence about which mentor characteristics are most important to mentoring success.

A discrepancy between a mentor's initial expectations of the mentoring relationship and their actual post-match experiences can significantly influence the relationship. Mentors with high negative discrepancies between their expectations and experiences reported less relationship depth, were less likely to report that they 'liked' their mentees, and were less likely to express an interest to remain in the relationship (Madia & Lutz, 2004). According to the authors, these findings underline the importance of assessing candidates' expectations and adjusting unrealistic expectations, both at the beginning of the mentoring process and throughout the mentoring relationship.

Programs can avoid unfulfilled expectations and unsuccessful relationships by adequately describing the requirements, rewards, and challenges of mentoring during the recruitment stage. MENTOR (2015) suggests providing prospective candidates with written eligibility criteria in order to set realistic expectations.

2.2 In practice

2.2.1 Recruiting mentors

Table 3 Mentor recruitment channels

Word-of-mouth
Website of the project/organization
External websites
Social media
Brochures and flyers
Newspapers, magazines, radio
Internal recruitment (within the organization)
Targeted recruitment

Social mentoring programs use various passive and active methods to recruit new mentors. While word-of-mouth advertising is one of the easiest and preferred methods of recruitment, it is unreliable. Even programs with years of experience and a good reputation in the local community cannot always depend on passive recruitment methods such as word-of-mouth advertising. Programs that do manage to receive enough applications through word-of-mouth often still supplement such recruitment with active recruitment methods. According to one coordinator, relying on passive recruitment such as word-of-mouth can create a false sense of security that could actually harm recruitment efforts over time as programs start to neglect innovation and renewal.

Oftentimes, new programs benefit from their novelty as people flock to what is new, fresh and exciting. When one of the programs started in 2016, their first few info sessions would often have 60-70 attendees, with about 50 of them immediately signing up for the program during the event. Over time, as the novelty wore off and the number of local projects targeted at newcomers increased, it became more difficult to attract mentors. In response, the coordinators overhauled the entire program. They improved the organization and structure of the program, and changed their outdated lay-out in hopes of attracting a new and younger group of volunteers. While such tasks are usually not high on the list of the coordinator's responsibilities, it is often necessary to ensure the durability of the program.

Coordinators have an array of recruitment channels at their disposal. They can use the program or organization's own channels and/or external channels. Their own channels include the program and/or organization website, social media, and brochures and flyers. A unique approach was used by one of the programs at the end of 2019, when they distributed new year's cards with the message 'we wish you a buddy for 2020'. The messages were also shown on screens in city hall and in front of the city's university buildings. The campaign garnered a lot of response and gave the program a boost. Nowadays, they primarily rely on word-of-mouth advertising.

Since most mentoring programs are organized by municipalities and local organizations, coordinators can usually also benefit from internal recruitment. One of the mentoring programs is organized by a

non-profit organization that manages many similar volunteer programs. Volunteers often transfer between programs, thus providing an easy and direct recruitment channel.

Almost all programs advertise their initiative via external channels to attract a wider audience. In Belgium, common online channels are the UNHCR website, Give a Day, a well-known website that matches volunteers with organizations, ‘11.11.11’, an umbrella organization for development cooperation, and many similar websites. Some programs also promote their initiative via local media such as newspapers, magazines, and radio channels. A mentor and mentee of one of the smaller programs were interviewed on a local radio program to bring awareness to the initiative.

Some programs directly appeal to other organizations and professionals. For example, one coordinator calls local schools to ask for the contact information of teachers who are retiring that year. If provided, the coordinator contacts the teachers to inform them about the program and to ask them if they would like to become a mentor once they retire and have more time. This targeted recruitment approach can be especially useful when certain mentor profiles are missing from the mentor pool or the coordinator wants to recruit a mentor for a specific mentee.



Examples: information, flyers, brochures

2.2.2 Screening and selecting mentors

Program coordinators must screen potential mentors to determine if they are a good fit for the mentoring program. In order to check whether candidates comply with the program’s participation criteria, coordinators use the information obtained via intake forms and/or during intake interviews.

2.2.2.1 Participation criteria

Table 4 Mentor participation criteria

Expectations
Personality
Motivation
Age
Language skills
Place of residence
Ability to commit to the program

Participation criteria are informed by the objectives of the mentoring program. Since social mentoring primarily focuses on leisure activities, the participation criteria for mentors are usually not very strict.

The most important criteria tend to be a candidate’s expectations, personality, and motivation. Depending on the goals of the program, candidates may be excluded if they have incorrect expectations of the mentoring program and their role as a mentor. One of the programs expects their mentors to be general support figures who provide assistance in a number of different areas of life.

If a candidate is only interested in helping a mentee find employment or housing, the program will direct them to other, more targeted mentoring programs in the region.

Programs particularly value mentors who are social, patient, supportive, and show an openness to diversity. In the beginning of the mentoring relationship, most mentees will not feel comfortable to take the first step. Mentors will usually have to show initiative and make the mentee feel at ease. Candidates who are reserved, lack social skills, or expect the mentee to take initiative from the beginning might be asked to reconsider their application to the mentoring program.

Over the course of the mentoring relationship, mentors will be faced with cultural and religious differences, miscommunication, and different customs in terms of scheduling and meeting, etc. Patience and an open attitude to such differences are necessary to be a good mentor. Coordinators will often inquire about a mentor candidate's views on diversity and cultural differences during an intake interview. If the candidate has views or expectations that are incongruent with the program's expectations or ideals, coordinators may deny a candidate's entry into the program.

Coordinator

"You have to be open to diversity and be able to deal with it because there are also cultural differences, the way you meet up with people is sometimes different. Sometimes not everything is clear in messages or on the phone, or there is miscommunication, misunderstanding. You can't let yourself get derailed too easily."

According to one of the coordinators, the most desirable mentor profile is:

Coordinator

"Definitely someone who is enthusiastic, who is eager to get started but also someone with social skills of course, that's a vague term but I think it is important that someone can keep a conversation going. It's intimidating the first time for a resident to meet someone they don't know so that person must have the personality to make someone feel at ease. That doesn't mean that they have to be super talkative. Also, someone who does not have too high expectations. Someone flexible because you have to be able to deal with appointments that are cancelled last minute, or the resident doesn't show up or is late. I think it is important to have a little patience and perseverance because it often takes a while before things start going well."

One coordinator argued that the paternalism and inequality that sometimes characterizes mentoring relationships can, to a large extent, already be filtered out during the intake. By talking to the candidate, it can become clear that they are mainly interested in being a control body for the mentee or that they place an overwhelming emphasis on learning the language and integrating as soon as possible so as not to be 'a burden on society'. Even though excluding such candidates could mean the program loses out on potentially competent mentors, one of the coordinators argued that such differences in views and expectations should at least be discussed with the candidate and if truly incongruent and insurmountable, should be basis for exclusion in order to retain the integrity of the program and prevent potential conflict later on in the mentoring process.

Other participation criteria for mentors that are often used by mentoring programs include age, language skills, and place of residence. Social mentoring programs usually cater to adults and thus have a minimum age requirement for their participants. Most programs require mentors to be at least 18 years old. While the minimum age requirement for mentees is not always strictly applied, the age requirement for mentors is usually upheld to ensure candidates have the maturity and experience needed to be a good mentor.

In order to participate in the mentoring program, mentors must speak the local language. All programs enforce this requirement though the level of comprehension can differ based on the goals of the program. One of the programs matches newcomer families with ex-newcomers who speak the same language but also requires the mentor to speak the local language. The difference with other programs is that the mentor does not have to be fluent. Since the program matches newcomers with ex-newcomers, it uses an additional participation criteria not used by any other program: the candidate's migration background.

Coordinator

"Personally, I think it is an added value for both the organization and the participating families that the mentors are persons with a migration background who themselves have often gone through an integration process. Because of this, the mentors have insights, experiences, and are often able to assess the reality and needs of the participating families."

While a candidate's place of residence is usually not a determining participation criteria, it is taken into account by most programs. If a candidate lives in a different municipality or city, they will be directed to mentoring programs in their own community.

Even if participants comply with all the aforementioned participation criteria, they might be excluded from the program if the coordinator expects or knows they are dealing with personal circumstances that could interfere with their mentoring. When one of the programs received mentor applications from a psychiatric clinic who wanted their residents to mentor newcomers as part of their daytime activities, the program directed them to other volunteer work that requires less commitment and personal assistance. As mentioned by another program's coordinator, candidates need to have the time and mental capacity to commit to a mentoring relationship and meet their mentee at regular intervals over the course of several months (at least).

2.2.2.2 Intake

Most programs schedule an individual intake with the mentor candidate. The intake is preferably face-to-face to improve communication and get a better 'feel' of the candidate. Coronavirus restrictions forced one of the programs to introduce an alternative intake format. Instead of meeting in the organization's office, the coordinator invites the mentor candidate for a walk to inform them about the program and discuss the candidate's motivation, expectations, and background. During the walk, the coordinator keeps the questions on the intake form in the back of their mind and notes all the information down once they return to the office. According to the coordinator, changing the setting of the intake to something as informal and 'active' as walking allows for more interesting conversations. Candidates will casually share information that they would not mention in a more formal office setting or might not even consider important for the coordinator to know but are yet very telling and useful.

Most programs invite mentor candidates to regular intake interviews that usually take place at their office. During the interview, coordinators use an intake form to guide the conversation and document any information they might need to match the candidate to a mentee. Alternatively, some programs ask the mentor to fill out the intake form themselves, which may be done before or during the intake.

During the intake, coordinators will inquire about the mentor's motivations, expectations, and preferences. An important task for the coordinator is to set the appropriate expectations to avoid disappointment or conflict later on during the mentoring relationship. At the beginning of the mentoring process - either during the intake and/or info event - mentors are given clear information

about what is expected of them but also, importantly, what is *not* expected of them. They are often given some simple frame of reference that explains their role as a mentor, such as the one used by IN-Gent's Tandem program:

A mentor is...	A mentor is not...
A person who does (fun) leisure activities with the family	A Dutch teacher
A person who introduces the family to new places and organizations in the city and helps them find their way around Ghent	A person who fills out administrative documents
A person who passes on requests for help to the project coordinator	A social worker or counsellor
	A person who will look for housing, employment, ...

While some programs explain this during one-on-one intakes, others organize info sessions that either replace or supplement individual intakes. Info sessions are particularly useful for larger mentoring programs that do not have time to interview each candidate individually. They are usually advertised via the program's recruitment channels or directly communicated to interested candidates, and held at regular intervals. Some programs require candidates to attend the info session before they can become a mentor. According to one coordinator, mentors who attend the info session are much better informed than those who do not.

During the info session, the coordinator can discuss the purpose and structure of the mentoring program and ensure all candidates enter the program with the right expectations and intentions. To improve candidates' understanding of the program and their own role as mentor, programs often invite former or current mentors to share their experiences and answer candidates' questions. While coordinators can provide the same information, the concrete examples, personal experience, and exchange between former or current mentors and new mentors enhance understanding and create a community feeling among volunteers that some programs strive for.

To further improve understanding and prepare candidates for their mentoring relationship, some programs use case examples. One of the programs provides attendees with several illustrative examples of situations their mentors often have to deal with such as the mentee not showing up for their appointments. By allowing candidates to share their views and discuss the best course of action, the program is able to frame their expectations and set the stage for a successful mentoring relationship.

Coordinator

"It takes about 1,5 hours. We tell something about the reception center, how a reception center works, then about the mentoring work itself so about activities they can do together, the expectations from us, expectations that they may have towards our center, how it is organized, [...] and then there are always a few mentors who testify. That is always the nicest thing of course. We always try to have three mentors who talk about their experience and then they can also be asked questions. [...] I find the info session to be of great value because it gives a lot of information beforehand. The mentors who were present at the info session are much better and more extensively informed, also partly because of those testimonies. Because of those testimonies, they hear what is difficult about the project, so that they do not start with false expectations."



Examples: intake forms for mentors

Compagnons infomap for mentors

2.3 Recommendations

- *Programs should have clear participation criteria that align with the objectives of the program. Some of the most common criteria that programs can use are ability to commit to the program, motivation, expectations, personality, language skills, age, and location*
- *Programs should develop a variety of promotional materials that are made readily available to the target group online and/ or via physical materials such as flyers. Promotional materials should be updated when necessary.*
- *Programs should use a variety of recruitment channels to attract a diverse group of candidates and improve the sustainability of the program. A mix of passive/ active, internal/ external, and general/ targeted strategies is recommended*
- *Programs should organize regular info sessions for interested candidates where they can learn more about the program in an informal setting*
- *Programs should require candidates to attend an info session before they can start their mentoring*
- *Programs should invite former or current mentors to info sessions to share their experiences and answer questions*
- *Programs should use simple language and (written) tools to explain the purpose of mentoring and the role of the mentor to ensure candidates enter the program with realistic expectations*
- *Programs should schedule one-on-one intake interviews with potential mentors and record their information on a standardized intake form*
- *Programs should refer unsuitable candidates to other volunteer programs or professional services*

Case Leuven

The social mentoring program in Leuven, Belgium is organized by the Diversity and Equal Opportunities office of the city of Leuven. Every few months, they organize an info session for interested volunteers. Attending the info session is a prerequisite for becoming a mentor.

During the info session, the coordinators discuss:

- The context and goals of the mentoring program
- The trajectory of a refugee including the journey, arrival, asylum process, and integration
- The newcomer profile
- The mentor profile including participation criteria, expectations, and role of mentor
- The organization of the mentoring program with an explanation of each step of the mentoring process
- The support available to the mentor including trainings, activities, and support and follow-up by the coordinator

During the info session, the coordinators show videos of mentors and mentees of the program to illustrate what mentors do in practice. If possible, they also invite a former mentor to the info session so they can share their personal experience and candidates can ask questions. According to the coordinator, visual tools and concrete examples improve candidates' understanding of the program and helps with setting the right expectations.

In the past, the coordinator organized one-on-one intakes with volunteers but due to the success of the program, individual talks were no longer feasible. Benefits of the group info session are that it requires less time, there is more exchange between volunteers and attendees usually ask more questions. A drawback is that the coordinator does not have an opportunity to talk with each mentor candidate. The matching is thus primarily based on the information provided on the candidate's intake form.

3 | Matching

3.1 According to the literature

Matching mentors and mentees is one of the most important instruments to ensure a successful mentor-mentee relationship and an effective mentoring program (Van 't Hoog et al., 2012; Allen et al., 2009; Uytterlinde et al., 2009). Studies on matching for newcomers are still limited and often focus on other types of mentoring such as youth mentoring or mentoring-to-work. They tend to offer different and at times contradictory results concerning the impact of specific matching criteria and methods on the mentoring relationship and the program's success.

Research by Neuwirth and Wahl (2017) in which they studied the impact of an Austrian mentoring-to-work program for migrants, found no relation between objective similarity in the sociodemographic background (sex, age, country of birth and vocational background) of mentors and mentees. Perceptions of subjective similarity did result in better evaluations of the program. Career functions, psychosocial functions, program satisfaction, quality of the training, and effectiveness of the program were all evaluated more positively the more similar mentees perceived themselves to their mentors. Similarly, research by Eby et al. (2013) shows that surface-level similarity (gender, race) is not associated with mentees' perceptions of instrumental and psychosocial support or relationship quality whereas deep-level similarity (attitudes, beliefs, values, personality) has a strong positive influence on such perceptions, especially in terms of psychosocial support and relationship quality. Menges (2016, 116-8) assessed the impact of personality similarities on received mentoring support and found that similarities in openness to experience – “intellectual curiosity, creativity, imagination, open-mindedness, and attentiveness to emotions” - and conscientiousness – “a tendency to show self-discipline, act dutifully, and be organized, task-focused and persistent” - improved the psychosocial support mentees received. Similarities in extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism had no effect.

Other research has found some positive effects of similarity in the sociodemographic background of mentors and mentees, though such studies focus on other forms of mentoring such as youth mentoring and mentoring in higher education. Blake-Beard et al. (2011), for example, found that similarity in terms of gender did not influence the academic outcomes of students but did have a positive influence on the help students reportedly received from their mentors. According to Campbell and Campbell (2007), matching students with mentors based on gender did not have an advantage whereas matching based on ethnicity resulted in higher academic performance overall. In their research on matching in youth mentoring programs, Raposa et al. (2018) found that similarity in terms of race or ethnicity resulted in longer match durations than dissimilar race or ethnicity matches.

Cox (2005) has argued that, through careful mentor selection and training, matching of mentors and mentees is unnecessary, except in terms of geographical location and time availability. In their study on two corporate mentoring programs, Eby and Lockwood (2005) found that geographical distance and scheduling difficulties were two common problems reported by mentors and mentees. One of the suggestions for program improvement made by both groups was thus to carefully consider such

factors in the matching process. Allen et al. (2006), however, found that while geographical proximity and interaction frequency are moderately correlated, proximity was not related to greater career mentoring, psychosocial mentoring, role modeling or mentorship quality.

Research on the matching process or method is underdeveloped. In terms of the general approach to matching, Blake-Beard et al. (2007) have identified three common options: administrator-assigned matching (program coordinators match mentors and mentees based on their own criteria and assessment, with no input from participants), choice-based matching (mentors and mentees choose, either through one-sided or mutual selection), and assessment-based matching (mentors and mentees are matched with the help of assessment tools).

The involvement of mentors and mentees in the matching process is a recurring topic of discussion. Blake-Beard et al. (2007) observed substantial differences between matches in which some choice was allowed compared to those determined by the program coordinator. Benefits of allowing some input from mentors and mentees include greater commitment to the relationship, more willingness to spend time together, greater ability to work through conflict, greater access to mentoring partners, and increased interest in maintaining the relationship after the formal conclusion of the mentoring program. Allen et al. (2006) found that mentors' and mentees' input in the matching process positively influence the perceived program effectiveness, mentor commitment, and program understanding. The positive influence of including participants in the matching process is also emphasized by Drew et al. (2020) who found that mentors who believe their preferences were considered during the matching process, were less likely to feel that they would be better matched with someone else and were therefore more committed to maintaining their current mentoring relationship. The importance of soliciting input from mentees and mentors in the matching process has been further substantiated by Menges (2016) and Wanberg et al. (2003).

3.2 In practice

3.2.1 Matching criteria

While most of the literature on matching criteria focuses on mentoring-to-work programs or youth mentoring, social mentoring programs for newcomers often adopt similar criteria. They use a variety of matching criteria, of which some are supported by the academic literature and are common across programs. Other criteria have either produced conflicting results in terms of the mentoring relationship and program's success, or have until now not been discussed in the academic literature.

Table 5 Matching criteria

Mentee's needs/goals/expectations
Mentor's offer and expectations
Mentor's skills and professional background
Mentor's knowledge
Interests and hobbies
Language skills
Availability and time commitment
Geographical location
Age
Gender
Family
Attitudes/preferences
Personality

One of, if not the most important matching criteria identified by program coordinators is the needs, goals and expectations of the mentee. Almost all program coordinators take this into consideration when matching the mentee with a mentor. In the context of social mentoring for newcomers, the mentee's needs, goals, and expectations might be learning the language, getting to know the city, expanding their social network, receiving administrative and practical assistance (e.g. help with official documents, access to services, finding housing etc.), or simply spending leisure time with a native born citizen. One of the coordinators stressed the importance spending adequate time mapping out a mentee's needs, goals and expectations in order to ensure the best possible match.

Coordinator

"When the Public Centre for Social Welfare has a client who is new to [city] and needs a mentor, we look at it together: what are the needs and how can we best meet them?"

Coordinators usually try to determine the needs, goals, and expectations during the intake interview and/or via the intake form. One of the intake forms, for example, gives the following options for why the mentee might want to participate in the mentoring program:

- o I want to meet new people
- o I want to speak Dutch more often
- o I would like to get to know the city better
- o I want to do more in my spare time
- o Other

Coordinator

"During the intake, I already check, for example if it is about leisure time, if there are children, what would they like to do? And I check whether there is a link with the mentor or whether they can play a role in this. For example, we have a play-and-meeting space in the city for children up to four years old and the parents can go there but for many asylum seekers and refugees, there is a barrier to go there, and the mentor can then for example go along with them."

Some program coordinators also talk with other professionals such as the mentee’s social worker and/or referrer to ascertain what the mentee’s needs are. Having a clear understanding of such needs also helps coordinators in their assistance of the mentor, who can be informed of the needs of the mentee before the relationship commences and can, if necessary, be given concrete tools such as relevant training sessions.

In order to match the mentee based on their needs, goals and expectations, coordinators also consider what the mentor’s offer i.e. what the mentor is willing to do and/or help with, and their expectations. Most mentoring programs give several options on the intake form or ask mentors what they would (not) like to help the mentee with during their intake. One of the mentoring programs even differentiates between different types of mentors: welcome mentor, housing mentor, general mentor, language mentor, leisure mentor, and ‘other’. Mentees can indicate what type of mentor they are looking for and mentors can choose the type of mentor they would like to be. Based on their answers, the coordinator will make a first selection of possible matches.

Programs that do not make such a clear distinction between different types of mentoring still try to take the needs, expectations and offer into consideration though the importance of these matching criteria also depends on how clearly defined the needs of the mentee and offer of the mentor are. If a mentee’s needs are very specific, for example if they need assistance with looking for housing, ensuring a good fit between the needs of the mentee and the offer of the mentor is necessary to avoid conflict, loss of interest, and dissatisfaction with the mentoring program. If a mentee’s needs are so general that they can be matched with almost any mentor, other matching criteria become more important. The importance of this matching criteria is thus dependent on the specificity with which participants define their needs, expectations, and offer.

Coordinator

“Very simply put, we have two groups of people, either it’s super specific or it’s people I can match with anyone: I like to hike, I like to bike, I like to go to the museum, I like to go for a drink. To me, those are pretty much the all-rounders, those are the easy ones.”

In addition to the mentor’s offer and expectations, every program also considers the skills and professional background of the mentor. While social mentoring programs are not meant to facilitate the labor market integration of newcomers, certain skills or professional backgrounds could still be beneficial to the mentoring relationship. One mentor’s background in special needs education, for example, made it easier for her to communicate with mentees with a very limited or no understanding of the local language. While the mentor’s skills/professional background and knowledge are often grouped together in the academic literature, knowledge unrelated to one’s profession could prove very useful in the context of social mentoring. Some mentors may know a lot about the local housing market or schools and children’s services (because they themselves have children of the same age, for example) or local sports facilities, or clubs and associations. Such knowledge, while not professional in nature, is worth considering when matching mentors and mentees.

In the coordinator’s pursuit of a good match, deep-level factors such as interests and hobbies can often be decisive. Every social mentoring program takes interests and hobbies into consideration. Mentors and mentees with similar interests and hobbies are expected to connect more easily than those who do not share interests and hobbies. In case the mentor and mentee cannot talk at length (yet) due to language restrictions, having a hobby such as biking or painting in common can facilitate the relationship and allow for informal language learning while being active or engaged in something else that does not require them to sit at a table and talk constantly.

Coordinator

"I found a match and I thought it was such a beautiful match cause they both like to read, both like to be in nature. One is a writer, likes going to the theatre, and the other performs in the theatre. And both the same age. So, I thought 'that's a perfect match'. [...] They are most likely going to read books and then talk about those books together during walks."

Coordinator

"There is a newcomer couple of painters [...] and there is also someone who is super artistically inclined and also professionally, they are an art restorer. And they have actually become the mentor of that family. Then we are talking about a few years ago, and they still have a lot of contact. But yes, that was so nice, a mentor like that is the best, because you have a common interest. And that also involved the sale of paintings, and we organized an exhibition that we also organized ourselves. And for those people it was their first exhibition in [city] and the mentor helped set it up with me."

Most programs take the language skills of mentor and mentee into consideration when matching. In order for mentoring to be effective, mentor and mentee need to be able to communicate with each other. While some programs expect duos to communicate in the local language to facilitate the mentee's language learning, mentees are often only at a basic level of understanding when they start their mentoring relationship. Some programs will thus prioritize relationship building and allow for matching based on other languages participants have in common such as English or French. If programs prioritize language learning, matching based on another common language may be disadvantageous since mentees may not develop their local language skills if they can easily communicate with their mentor in another language. The importance programs assign to this criteria is thus dependent on the goals of the program though almost all social mentoring programs do take it into consideration.

One of the programs is unique in that it matches newcomer families with ex-newcomers who speak the same language. The program was developed to help newcomers who do not speak the local language yet but would benefit from mentoring. Consequently, language is the program's main matching criteria.

Coordinator

"I have now paired two people, someone from Angola, so they speak Portuguese and a bit of Spanish and a bit of French, and I have a mentor who also speaks Spanish and French so we said: 'ok the Dutch will come later but we'll start with French, Spanish and it will grow from there.'"

Almost all programs also consider participants' availability and time commitment in the matching process. Regular meetings are necessary for a successful mentoring relationship. Some mentees will also require more assistance than other. To ensure that they receive the assistance they need, and the mentor does not become overwhelmed, it is useful to know when both participants are available and how much of their time they want to commit to the program.

To illustrate, one of the programs' intake forms includes the following questions related to availability and time commitment:

- o When can you (usually) make time?
During the day/in the evening/weekend/during the week/no preference
- o How much time can you/do you want to spend on mentoring?
- o Are there periods when you are less available?

While this can be difficult for participants to indicate ahead of time, programs typically try to avoid matching mentors with very busy lives who only have time to meet once a week for two hours with mentees who require a lot of support and assistance. Matching participants with conflicting agendas and expectations in terms of commitment will most likely result in an unfulfilling mentoring relationship or even conflict. Mentees who require more assistance are thus often matched with retirees or people working parttime jobs.

A few programs also take the geographical location of mentors and mentees into consideration during the matching procedure. Geographical proximity is conducive to more frequent interactions which in turn helps foster a better relationship. Living far away from each other will not only be difficult in terms of travel time and transportation but will also impact the extent to which the mentor can help the mentee. If the mentor is not familiar with the locality where the mentee lives, they might not be able to guide them to relevant services, clubs and associations, leisure activities, schools et cetera.

The relevance of this criteria depends on several factors. Since some programs already exclude participants who live in a different city or municipality during the recruitment and selection phase, it might be unnecessary to consider geographical location during matching. The need for this criteria also depends on the size of the city in which the program operates. If the mentoring program is active in a small municipality and only accepts participants from that municipality, location will most likely be an unnecessary criteria to consider at the matching stage. If the program is available to participants from a multitude of municipalities or is located in a large city, matching based on location could be more relevant.

While location is usually considered to avoid matching people who live too far away from each other, one coordinator argued that the reverse could also be relevant. Matching two people who live very close, for example in the same street, might be unwelcome. Participants might want to avoid unannounced house calls and keep some distance between their mentoring relationship and their private life. However, another program accidentally matched two people who lived next to each other without problems. To safeguard participants' personal boundaries, programs can ask for participants' approval before matching.

Other common criteria that most programs consider are age, gender, and family situation. Some programs try to match people who are similar in age such as one program that matched two young newcomers who needed a lot of support with the internet, phone subscription and similar matters, with a young mentor. The coordinator matched them on the assumption that a young person would be better equipped to help them with their questions though they also emphasized that such decisions are largely based on a 'gut feeling'.

Matching based on gender can be difficult with many programs having a large pool of male newcomers and female volunteers. In some cases, programs may still try to refrain from matching people of different genders. After matches between Afghan male mentees and female mentors failed due to the mentees' traditional gender customs, including restrictions on male-female interactions, several programs became more hesitant to match men from Afghanistan with female mentors. The coordinator of a mentoring program that also caters to underage mentees will usually avoid matching a young female mentee with a single male mentor but if the mentor has a family who will also be involved in the mentoring, they might be considered a possible match. In general, coordinators seem to prefer matching people of the same gender though such decisions are often based on assumptions and the previously mentioned 'gut feeling'.

While there is no mention of the matching criteria ‘family situation’ in the literature, almost all programs use it, especially if the mentee has children. To best assist them, programs will usually match them with mentors with children. The expectation is that a mentor with children can better assist with tutoring, communication with the school, arranging childcare support or other services, or figuring out local arrangements for afterschool care and children’s activities, while also providing opportunities for the mentee’s children to meet more native speakers and other children.

Coordinator

“In the intake we do ask about age and whether they have a family and about hobbies, both with the mentor and with the newcomer, to see if there is a link. For example, I had a conversation about two months ago with a family from [country] with two children, a boy, and a girl of 7 and 10. And right after that I met someone from [city], a teacher in secondary education, who was of exactly the same age as the couple and who also had three children with the two youngest being about the same age as their two children. [...] So, the first meeting went pretty smoothly, and they immediately agreed to meet up a few times to take the children on a walk so they could play together in the park. So those are the things you look for, but is that the perfect match? I’ll have to see when I call in a month whether that worked out well or not.”

While some programs use their own judgment when matching based on criteria such as age, gender, and family, they usually base these decisions on the preferences of the participants. Even though it is not always possible to take every preference into consideration due to a limited pool of available mentors and mentees, coordinators do attempt to comply with explicitly mentioned preferences. Some mentees may indicate that they do not want to be matched with someone of a different gender or someone too different or similar in age. Mentees with children may prefer to have a mentor with children so the children can also make friends and interact with more native speakers. It is, however, always important to gauge *why* someone has a certain preference. As explicitly mentioned by several coordinators, social mentoring programs are not dating services and people deliberately asking for mentees or mentors of the opposite gender for no apparent reason raises questions.

Coordinators will usually try to ascertain participants’ attitudes and preferences during the intake. If there are indications that there are cultural, religious or personal reasons for why someone would not want to be matched with someone of a different gender, age, or sexuality, coordinators will take this into account during matching. Though this information is never asked directly or via intake forms, the coordinator can take it into consideration if it comes up in conversation. For example, if one of the programs realizes a mentee is very conservative, they will refrain from matching them with a mentor who they know identifies as LGBTQ+.

Even though coordinators often struggle to define the relevance of participants’ personality to the matching decision, some of them do mention it as a criteria. If someone is timid or open, they might take this into account when looking for an appropriate match. For example, one of the coordinators matched a quiet, shy mentee with a very caring and supportive mentor who could stimulate and care for the mentee. The programs that take personality into account will usually match quiet people with more open, extroverted people to avoid a lack of communication or initiative.

Coordinator

“What I take into account, for example, is how does that person come across? Is that someone very energetic, very social, then a very timid person can be placed with them but if there is someone who does not ask a lot of questions or talk, we will try to place a person there who perhaps talks a lot themselves.”

While matching criteria are used by every mentoring program, the importance of coordinators’ ‘gut feeling’ should not be underestimated. Almost every coordinator either explicitly mentioned this gut

feeling or referred to their professional experience, arguing that they sometimes simply ‘felt’ or ‘knew’ that two people would make a good match. A coordinator might meet a mentee during their intake and immediately know who they want to match them with, without properly considering all the matching criteria officially used by the program. This gut feeling is difficult if not impossible to capture by matching criteria and no matter how many criteria programs adopt, a coordinator’s experience and gut feeling will likely continue to play an important role in matching.

Even if matches are based on matching criteria and/or the coordinator’s gut feeling, there is no guarantee that they will work in practice. Many coordinators stress that it is sometimes impossible to know why one match works and another fails. A successful mentoring relationship is in part determined by the ‘connection’ between mentor and mentee. While matching criteria and the coordinator’s gut feeling can attempt to account for all the different characteristics and circumstances that might make two people connect, fully understanding why some people get along and others do not is near to impossible.

3.2.2 Matching procedure

While the academic literature on mentoring identifies several approaches to matching, social mentoring programs adopt roughly the same matching procedure: administrator-assigned matching, in which the matching is done by the program coordinator. Since most social mentoring programs are small-scale programs with a limited pool of mentors and mentees, matching is usually not a very elaborate and structured process. Due to the small number of possible candidates, the coordinator cannot use all the matching criteria available to them to match each mentor and mentee. Even the ability to match candidates on multiple criteria is usually limited.

Instead, participants might be matched because they have a common interest such as climbing, or because they both have children, or because the mentee prefers to be matched with a man and there is only one male mentor available. In practice, matching is often as simple as that. Being able to take multiple criteria into consideration for each match is a luxury that many small social mentoring programs simply do not have.

The coordinator of one of the larger mentoring programs used to do the matching in Excel but changed to a more visual and hands-on approach. They now create a small note for each candidate with some key information such as age, languages, preferences, and interests. By using physical notes, they can quickly get a sense of the group and arrange and rearrange to find the best matches. Even just the act of writing the notes, seeing them and moving them around helps to memorize the candidates and find connections.

For most coordinators, even this simple approach is often more elaborate than necessary. Sometimes, coordinator will do an intake interview with a mentee and immediately know which mentor to match them with. This could be because they recognize a common interest or a need that they know one of their mentors can help with. If the choice is less obvious, there might be a few possible candidates to choose from but even then, coordinators might easily exclude some because of conflicting availability or mentors’ unwillingness to offer specific assistance that the mentee needs, such as help finding housing. With a limited pool of options, there is often hardly any matching ‘process’ to speak of.

An alternative to administrator-assigned matching that some coordinators expressed interest in is the speeddating approach. This matching procedure is more common among mentoring-to-work programs and involves a speeddating event in which mentors and mentees can meet each other.

Afterwards, they are asked to provide a list of preferences, which the program then consults to find the right match. One mentoring-to-work program that uses this matching strategy does influence the speeddating event somewhat by deciding who will 'date' who based on several criteria such as level of education and location. While some social mentoring program coordinators had considered a speeddating approach, none had implemented it. One coordinator decided against it because a speeddating event required the program to have a group of mentors and mentees ready for matching at the same time, something which was difficult to manage without forcing some candidates to wait months until the matching event. To avoid long wait times, they decided to stick with administrator-assigned matching.

One of the larger mentoring programs did try a somewhat similar, though one-sided, matching approach. During the info session for mentors, they used two walls, one to (anonymously) display information about single mentees and the other to display information about mentee families. Mentors could read the information and indicate their preferred matches on their intake form. By using this approach, they did not only involve the mentor in the matching process but also alleviated the coordinator of most of the work involved in matching. Unfortunately, the mentee was excluded from this process, a shortcoming that could be solved by adopting the speeddating approach or organizing a similar info session for mentees where they can choose their preferred mentors in the same way.

While almost none of the other mentoring programs allow such direct involvement of the candidates in the matching process, they usually do allow some input though the extent of this input differs from program to program. The preferences that participants can usually indicate during the intake interview or via the intake form already afford them some influence on the matching process. Once the coordinator has found a match, they will contact the participants via phone or email to invite them to their first meeting. Some programs will first contact the mentor to share some information about their potential mentee. At this time, the mentor can give their input and can choose to accept or decline the match. If the mentor accepts, they or the coordinator will contact the mentee to schedule a first meeting. Mentees are usually not asked for input before the first meeting.

Coordinator

"We send a long mail to the mentor, only to the mentor and the referrer of the newcomer, with all the information of the newcomer so: who is the newcomer, what does he do, what did he do in his home country, which languages does he speak, what level of Dutch does he have, what support would he like, who are his friends, does he have a large network, is he socially isolated, what is his financial situation? So, we put all the necessary information in the mail. [...] And ask, 'does this seem like a possible match to you?' And they may say no, they may say yes. If yes, they may continue with the contact and the next steps that I then explain in the email. If no, they can still ask for another match. And then we also put in a sentence that they may use when they contact the newcomer so: who am I, from whom did I get your contact information? [...] when are you available, can we go to the coordinator at that time? [...] And then they can contact us, and in that first mail, I also give the times that I am available in my schedule, that week, or the week after. They can make an appointment together [...] and then they usually visit me at the office, and we move on to the official matching."

One of the programs does not give participants time to accept or deny the match before their first meeting. Instead, the coordinator invites them to a collective event where they will meet for the first time and find out who they are matched with. According to the coordinator, even if given the option, participants will usually not decline a match before the first meeting and if they do, it is probably for the wrong reasons i.e. due to assumptions and prejudices. The coordinator tries to avoid this as much as possible by not giving participants time to consider the match before they first meet.

Regardless of the matching approach, most coordinators stress the importance of matching within a few weeks after the intake. If there is no possible match at the time of application, coordinators may allow some waiting time but they do not wait for the ‘perfect match’. Matches that seem perfect on paper often do not work out, and vice versa. Rather than having participants wait for a match for months, which often leads to frustration and a loss of interest, most programs try to find the best match with the pool of candidates that are available at that time. If a candidate has specific preferences, for example concerning gender, and there no candidates that fit those preferences, programs often propose an alternative match which the candidate can accept or refuse if they would rather wait for someone who matches their preferences. This is the only instance in which a mentee might be given input in the matching decision before the first meeting with their mentor.

Coordinator

“What I do now is match faster. I used to wait until the perfect match. I don't do that anymore. When people come to us for an intake interview, I want them to be helped as quickly as possible, but only if I have a good feeling about it.”

3.2.3 Rematching

Once participants are matched, they might still choose to reject the match after the first meeting or terminate the relationship after some time. If one or both of the participants want to terminate their mentoring relationship, the coordinator will usually schedule a meeting or speak to them over the phone to discuss the termination. Unless there is a reason to exclude participants from the program based on their behavior during their terminated relationship, programs will try to recuperate candidates. Because of the information provided during the info session and/or intake interview, participants are usually already aware of this option for rematching.

If participants realize early on that they do not have a connection or their relationship is not going to work for other reasons, they often want to be rematched. Those that terminate their relationship due to conflict might not. According to one of the coordinators, a negative experience can be very decisive and make the participants not only want to quite the mentoring relationship but their association with the program in general. Depending on the structure of the program, participants who want to be rematched will either be 1) rematched immediately or as soon as there is a new match available, or 2) matched when the next official mentoring period starts.

3.3 Recommendations

- *Programs should use matching criteria that align with their objectives. Common criteria include: 1) the mentee's needs, goals, and expectations, 2) the mentor's offer and expectations, 3) the mentor's skills and professional background, 4) the mentor's knowledge, 5) interests and hobbies, 6) language skills, 7) availability and time commitment, 8) geographical location, 9) age, 10) gender, 11) family, 12) attitudes and preferences, and 13) personality*
- *Programs should decide which criteria are most important for their program and/or each candidate and prioritize those when it is not possible to use all criteria*
- *Programs should ask participants about their matching preferences and take them into consideration as much as possible*
- *Programs should allow the coordinator to do the matching between mentors and mentees. Options include administrator-assigned matching or a speeddating approach in which participants can communicate several preferences, but the coordinator decides the final match*
- *Programs should try to match candidates within a few weeks after their intake, but preferably as soon as possible, to avoid losing potential participants*
- *Programs should inform candidates if there is no (immediate) match available and let them decide if they want to accept an alternative match that does not fit their preferences or wait for a better match*
- *Programs should inform both candidates once they have been matched and invite them for a first meeting with the coordinator*
- *Programs should offer rematching if a relationship ends prematurely unless the reason for termination is cause for excluding someone from the program*

4 | The mentoring relationship

4.1 According to the literature

Two of the most important elements of any successful mentoring relationship are its duration and intensity (i.e. contact frequency).

Generally speaking, longer-term relationships are found to have more benefits for mentees than shorter-term relationships (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Uytterlinde et al., 2009). Eby et al. (2013) found that mentees in longer relationships perceived greater psychosocial support and relationship quality though relationship duration was less strongly associated with instrumental support. According to Grossman and Rhodes (2002), the impact of mentoring increases as the relationship develops. In their research on the effects of duration in youth mentoring relationships, they found that youth who were in relationships that lasted a year or longer reported significant improvements in academic, psychosocial, and behavioral outcomes. Effects were progressively fewer the shorter a relationship lasted.

Van der Tier and Potting (2015) even argue that a mentoring relationship of less than a year will show little to no effects. According to Griffiths et al. (2009), shorter mentoring durations may not allow enough time for the development of the relationship and trust between the duo. This can affect the extent to which the mentee benefits from long-lasting effects associated with mentoring, such as increased confidence, self-esteem, and awareness of and access to support services. Nevertheless, programs with more targeted and limited goals have been able to achieve significant results with relationships of a shorter duration (MENTOR, 2015).

Perhaps even more important than a relationship's duration is the frequency of contact between its members. Frequent and meaningful interactions are a recognized characteristic of high-quality relationships (Kram, 1985). According to Eby et al. (2013), interaction frequency is associated with mentees' perceptions of instrumental support, psychosocial support and relationship quality. In their evaluation of a co-housing mentoring program in Antwerp, Mahieu et al. (2019) found that the amount of contact between duos had a significant effect on (perceived) integration outcomes such as overall Dutch language skills, frequency of usage of Dutch, institutional knowledge of Flanders/Belgium, and understanding of Flemish/Belgian habits. The authors suggest that mentees who had more contact with their mentor gained more skills and knowledge that could facilitate their participation in Belgian society. The importance of regular and frequent contact between mentor and mentee is further emphasized by Bagnoli and Estache (2019), Bayer et al. (2015), Haggard et al. (2011), Lankau et al. (2005), and Menges (2016).

In their research on youth mentoring, Keller et al. (2020) found that more favorable mentoring outcomes were achieved when participants balanced relationally oriented activities with goal-oriented, instrumental activities. Programs can support their duos by, for example, providing a list with activity suggestions, which is associated with longer average relationship durations and better match retention (MENTOR, 2015). According to Miller (2007), programs that provide monthly activity calendars,

offer tickets to events, and/or offer opportunities to participate in structured events usually have better outcomes.

Successful, long-term mentoring relationships are characterized by trust, authenticity, empathy, collaboration, and companionship (Lester et al., 2019; MENTOR, 2015; Spencer, 2006). Relationships that are perceived as such by mentees result in better outcomes than other relationships. To sustain the relationship, both parties need to be invested and committed to the match (Rhodes, 2002, Spencer et al., 2020). Karcher et al. (2010) found that the quality of a mentoring relationship is significantly higher in mentor-mentee duos that make decisions collaboratively rather than unilaterally.

It is this mutuality that is thought to contribute to a close, interpersonal bond. Lester et al. (2019) found that mentors and mentees in youth mentoring programs understand mutuality as 1) shared relational excitement, or a willingness by both participants to invest in the relationship and 2) experiential empathy, or the process through which mentors connect with, advise, and normalize the experiences of their mentees by sharing their own experiences. The interpersonal connection that develops because of such mutuality can, in turn, contribute to positive mentoring outcomes.

4.2 In practice

4.2.1 The start, duration, frequency

4.2.1.1 The first meeting

Coordinator

"That first introductory meeting is incredibly important to create trust for both and to see them step outside, almost hand-in-hand."

Once the match has been finalized and the mentor and mentee have agreed to meet, the program will schedule a first meeting. Usually, the coordinator of the program is also present during the meeting though some choose to stay only for a while to get the conversation going and then leave opportunity for the mentor and mentee to get to know each other by themselves. Some programs also involve the social worker in the meeting, especially if they referred the mentee to the mentoring program and/or if the program sees a need for communication between the mentor and social worker. In such circumstances, the first meeting will also be an opportunity for the mentor and social worker to meet and exchange contact information. If another professional referred the mentee to the program, they might be asked to attend as well, though involving social workers or (other) referrers in the first meeting is difficult in terms of scheduling so it tends to be more exception than rule.

The first meeting is an opportunity for the mentor and mentee to get to know each other and get their mentoring relationship off the ground but it is also an occasion for the coordinator to reiterate or further inform them about the program, expectations and other important information. Coordinators usually explain why they matched the mentor and mentee during this meeting. They may refer to a common interest or a specific need of the mentee that the mentor will be able to help with. Once again delineating what the role of the mentor is – and also specifically what it is *not* – is also an important part of this first meeting. Both participants should leave knowing exactly what is

expected of them and when they should ask for help from the coordinator or request a referral to professional assistance. For programs who do not interview mentors and/or mentees individually before the first meeting, this is especially important but even those who have already had individual interviews often use this meeting to repeat the key information one more time before the mentoring begins.

Coordinator

"I personally think it is important to clearly frame and delineate the tasks and roles of the mentor so that the mentor and the participating family know at the outset what to expect and what not to expect."

Coordinator

"I first start with 'do you know why you're here today?' I start with that and then they say 'yes, yes, yes'. I say: 'but can you explain to me in your own words: what is a buddy?' And then that stops and it's like 'hmm... someone who helps?' [Laughs]. So, then the ice is broken and then I go on maybe in their own language, use a lot of words from their own language, usually I also speak a little bit of Arabic. And I also pass along five things with my fingers. I always say [using fingers to indicate each point]: a buddy is 1) someone who is a volunteer, who works for free. That's very important to mention that. Some think they really work for me, they say 'they work for [name coordinator], for the city so they are paid to help me', while that is not the case at all. 2) A buddy has a family and friends. 3) A buddy also works. 4) A buddy also has a hobby. So, they do all kinds of things. And then I say: 5) they have a little bit of time every week to help someone, they have a good heart, don't they? And then they really laugh like 'wow, this person has so many things and yet they have some time for me'. So, what does that mean? That that appointment is very important to that person because of all those other things. That they also include you, they also give you an hour or two a week to learn Dutch, to create a friendship with you, to go on walks with you, to cycle with you ... [...] You really need to have this feeling of: this person is going to walk out of here and they will know: this is a person who is going to help me."

Coordinators stress the importance of scheduling the next meeting between the mentor and mentee during this first meeting. If this is not done immediately, participants might never schedule another meeting, whether due to fear on the part of the mentee or for other reasons. But if you sit them down together and decide then and there 'next week on Wednesday 2 o'clock you will meet each other in this park...', it works much better.

Some programs give the mentor and mentee opportunity to consider the match based on the first meeting and get back to them to let the coordinator know whether or not they want to move forward with the mentoring relationship. In practice, participants usually agree on the spot that they want start their mentoring relationship together. This, of course, leaves little opportunity to refuse the matching as this would require rejecting someone to their face but according to coordinators, participants hardly ever reject the other person this early on the relationship.

According to one coordinator, participants should not even be given opportunity to refuse the match. The program has a unique first meeting in which not only the matched mentor and mentee are brought together but all mentors and mentees are invited. Everyone is introduced to each other, after which they receive some identifying image such as an animal and then they have to find their match in the crowd asking others 'hey, I am a horse, do you know if there are any other horses?' Such a collective and participatory first event can contribute to a sense of community among participants and more engagement later on during the mentoring period, for example in terms of participation in group activities or peer learning. It does not, however, leave much room to decline the match, a deliberate choice that the coordinator justifies as follows:

Coordinator

"This is not about friendship for me. Does it become friendship? Then that's great, but I can't guarantee that. I think people have to step into it with a kind of trust that something can grow out of it but I can't accept that someone says at first glance: no this isn't it. And if you give someone a reflection period of 5 days, what are you going to think about? About what someone looks like? I don't want to go along with that. Just let it grow and also have a bit of trust in me, but if it's really, really wrong, then that will become evident, but it rarely does."

But a mentee of the program disagreed:

Mentee

"In the beginning, you are just automatically matched to your mentor and then your six months officially starts. [...] I would like it if you first have a meeting between the two persons and then can decide 'do I want to continue with this mentor?' because when I was [at the collective event] there were some mentors that I really didn't want to be paired with. I think that is the case for everyone. There were so many people, it is also an exciting moment: who is going to be your mentor? But there are also certain people with whom I really don't feel comfortable. I don't think it's a bad idea to let those two people have a conversation and then let them decide."

4.2.1.2 Duration and time frequency

Coordinator

"They start from the premise of needs and wants, you can't really put a time limit on that."

While some social mentoring programs have a clearly defined duration and closing moment, others choose to leave the duration open-ended. This second approach is sometimes favored because the process of integration is long and newcomers' needs and requests for assistance cannot, usually, be resolved in only a few months' time. Not having a fixed end date could also facilitate a more casual friendship to develop.

Nevertheless, it does come with some difficulties worth considering. Entering into a commitment with no predetermined duration could scare some potential mentors off who do not want to commit to something so potentially long-lasting or simply cannot commit for longer than a set period. An example are students who will move away once they graduate but could still be great mentors for several months.

Once a duo is matched, they might not develop a relationship worth maintaining for the long term, they might run into problems, or perhaps they simply lose touch after a while. Having a clearly defined duration and closing moment can then also offer some relief and a nice way to wrap things up without having to deliberately ask the coordinator to terminate the relationship or letting the relationship fizzle out over time.

In terms of follow-up, a predetermined duration is straight-forward. Coordinators offer assistance and follow-up for that duration and if duos want to maintain their relationship after, they can but not within the context of the mentoring program. Not having a closing moment can complicate the follow-up. When do you stop contacting the duo? Continuing to offer assistance and follow-up for years, for example, is not only inefficient but also takes away time that could be used to match and follow-up on other duos. Nevertheless, some, often small-scale, programs do still keep in touch with old mentors, though this is usually in a more informal and irregular manner than the first few months of the mentoring relationship.

Also consider that mentors who finalize their mentoring relationship after six months can, with their consent, be recuperated and matched with a new mentee. This not only eases the task of constantly having to find new mentors, it also opens the program to more newcomers.

Coordinator

"The first three years we mainly worked as in: everytime someone joins, we consider them, do the intake, matching... but we noticed that we often lost the overview, it was very difficult in terms of follow-up, to know when, where etc. so there was not really a good system. So, with [program] 2.0 we looked at that properly and now we work with a new group every 3 months, new set-up, and where there is actually an end, namely after 6 months. We did that because we noticed during intervisions with mentors that it was sometimes difficult for them that there was no end, especially if things did not go as well or if the contact was reduced after some time. So now we actually say to the mentors and mentees: look, a trajectory of 6 months during which you are a duo, then there is a kind of farewell reception and then of course they choose whether they want to continue. For the matchings where it goes well, we know that it will continue naturally because they have become friends or 'family'. And the ones for which it did not go so well can wrap it up in a nice way, which is very important for mentors, also if you want to recuperate them for example."

Programs with a predetermined duration usually set it at six months. After those six months, some will officially terminate the mentoring relationship though those duos that want to continue their relationship can of course do so, but without the assistance of the program. For some programs, six months is a guideline that, while generally adhered to, can be extended for a shorter period of one or two months if participants indicate a continuing need for mentoring. Other programs offer extensions of six months. If duos want to continue their relationship after six months, they can extend it for another six months, during which they will continue as before and receive assistance from the program if needed and participate in organized activities.

Coordinator

"We ask for at least 6 months and then back in blocks of 6 months so that it is actually extended. But we see in practice that many more go towards that year or year and a half rather than stopping at 6 months. After 6 months you are actually only just getting started."

While some programs leave the decision on contact frequency entirely up to participants, most programs set at least some minimum expectations. Mentors and mentees are typically expected to meet a minimum of two times per month. The exact frequency, day and time of meeting, location, and activity is to be decided by the mentor and mentee.

Even though mentoring programs set frequency expectations and communicate these expectations at the beginning of the mentoring period – usually during the intake and/or first meeting between mentor and mentee – the extent to which they check whether participants uphold such expectations varies. Two programs require participants to communicate each meeting and activity to the program. This is required for the insurance that participants benefit from during their involvement in the mentoring program but it also happens to be a convenient way to keep up with the duos and their contact frequency. In case participants have not informed coordinators about their activities and meetings in a while, coordinators will know to contact them to inquire about their progress. Most other programs choose not to check the contact frequency of participants, often due to time constraints or because they do not want to impose too many restrictions and responsibilities on participants. Nevertheless, coordinators usually contact participants every so often via mail or phone to check up on them so those instances offer less formal opportunities to inquire about contact frequency, among other matters.

4.2.2 Activities during the mentoring relationship

The activities mentors and mentees engage in as part of their mentoring relationship vary depending on the goals of the mentoring program and the goals, needs and interests of the mentor and mentee themselves. While some programs restrict social mentoring to leisure activities, others allow for more all-round mentoring. The duos are usually given considerable freedom to decide the specific activities they want to do together though many programs offer suggestions via monthly emails, newsletters, or activity calendars. One program provides participants with WELCOME-pack with information and free entrance tickets for three attractions or activities in the city while another cooperates with local businesses and organizations to provide discount vouchers for participants of the program.



Example: monthly newsletter for mentor

Activities can be divided into two broad categories: leisure and assistance.

Table 6 Mentoring activities

Leisure	Assistance
Everyday activities: cooking, having dinner, going shopping, hanging out at home, walking the dog	Administrative assistance: reading and translating letters, tax forms, making appointments
Family activities: going to the playground, toy library, petting zoo	Educational assistance: tutoring, helping with applications
Cultural activities activities: museum, theater, cinema, special events	Housing assistance: looking for housing, liaising between mentee and landlord
Active activities: walking, hiking, running, biking, swimming	Employment assistance: looking for work opportunities, preparing for job interviews

Leisure activities include a wide range of activities that are commonly done among friends. Mentors often take the mentee to discover places throughout the city such as parks, museums, theaters, cinemas, libraries, and sport clubs. They can participate in creative activities or go to local events but more often than not, duos engage in very ordinary, everyday activities. They will simply hang out together, cook together or for each other, eat at home or at a restaurant, have a drink, walk the dog, and go shopping. If mentor and/or mentee have children, they often do activities together with the children such as going to a playground or petting zoo, or discovering the local toy library.

Sports are also a very common activity, either simply for leisure or because the mentee wants to learn a specific skills such as swimming or biking. One of the mentees wanted to learn how to swim so the mentor taught him over a period of several months. They continue to swim together even now, three years later. Another mentor arranged a bike for their mentee and they now meet twice a week to bike or run together. Some of the sports duos do together are walking, hiking, running, biking, swimming, climbing, and rollerblading. Working out together does not require constant communication which makes it a good activity for those who do not (yet) share a common language.

Language acquisition is usually an integral part of a social mentoring program. While some mentors and mentees may choose to approach this very deliberately by preparing for the mentee's classes and exams, mentees usually improve their language skills by simply spending time with a native speaker and having opportunities to practice and ask questions while engaging in other activities. Since communication might be difficult in the beginning of the relationship due to language restrictions, doing something active, such as working out, is often preferable to meeting up for drinks, for example.

Coordinator

"Certainly the first few times, we do recommend doing an activity because just sitting at the table together and talking is very difficult. But we also say it is certainly not necessary to 'make' time for your mentee but try to involve the person in daily activities, in things you do anyway so going to the store or cooking or going for a walk. [...] As example we give that does not require language is, if they meet at home, to sit together behind the computer and listen to Youtube. The mentee can have the mentor listen to music of their country or look on Google Earth where they come from and they can tell how they came to be here."

In addition to doing leisure activities together, mentors may also help mentees with more practical concerns. As new inhabitants, mentees will usually have to arrange various forms of assistance, services and other necessities. Even if the focus of the mentoring is supposed to be leisure activities, mentors will usually assist mentees with these tasks by sharing information, translating letters and other important documents, helping them with their taxes, and accompanying them to appointments with the municipality, doctor, school etc.

Assistance may also include helping mentees look for housing and/or liaising between the mentee and their landlord, finding employment opportunities and preparing the mentee for job interviews, tutoring them or their children, and accompanying them to parent-teacher meetings, among others. One of the mentors arranged a job interview for their mentee and accompanied them to the interview while another taught their mentee how to drive a car. These are far-reaching tasks and are often considered outside the realm of social mentoring but they are common in practice. Some coordinators allow these forms of assistance as long as both participants have no problem with the mentor providing assistance of this kind. Other programs will intervene and refer the mentee to relevant professionals.

The relationship between mentor and mentee often develops over time and so do the activities they engage in. Mentees often require more practical assistance in the beginning but once those immediate needs are met, the relationship will usually primarily revolve around leisure activities with perhaps the occasional question or request for assistance if a need arises for the mentee. One of the mentees required considerable study guidance at the beginning, from helping with homework and preparing for exams to scheduling. Over time the mentee did not only improve their knowledge of the local language but also became more independent and confident in their abilities. Nowadays, the mentor and mentee are friends and primarily engage in leisure activities.

While duos often terminate their relationship at the end of the formal mentoring period, others continue their relationship as friends. Over time, they may even celebrate holidays together, go to each other's birthday parties, and go on trips together. In some exceptional cases, former mentors and mentees referred to each other as family.

Mentor

"The experience with [mentee] was very fascinating and still is. It has evolved in the meantime. Now I don't consider him a refugee anymore, he's just a citizen of [city] and we do things together, we go out to eat or

cook or play sports or go to the theater. He's just one of my friends. You don't think about it anymore, or almost never at least. We've also been on trips together. It doesn't necessarily have to be that way but if it is, that's pretty cool."

Coordinator

"We also tell the mentors it's not all doom and gloom of course, it's about going for a walk, about social interaction, to get to know each other's culture. We have mentoring couples who have been celebrating holidays together for years now, or who are invited to each other's birthday parties, who just cook together once a week, and that's all part of it. We also don't want to reduce the mentor to someone who just puts out the fires or fills in the gaps left by the professionals, nor do we want only those mentors who are going to solve the world's problems and who are only there for relief assistance. We always say: it's about connecting and getting to know people."

4.2.3 Coordination with professionals

Mentors in social mentoring programs participate on a voluntary basis. As such, there are limits to what can be expected of them and what they should be allowed to do. A mentor is not supposed to replace the mentee's social worker and/or other professionals but works alongside and in addition to such professional forms of support. This is exactly because mentors can do what professionals cannot: spend quality time with the newcomer, accompany them to organizations, sport clubs, and events, and offer small administrative and practical assistance such as reading and translating letters.

Oftentimes, the assistance offered by mentors goes far beyond what is expected of them. Mentors will become involved in the mentee's search for housing, education and/or employment, or in some cases even in their asylum cases and communication with lawyers and other professionals.

While some programs refrain from intervening and let the participants decide how involved they want the mentor to be, most will step in if they think the mentor is taking on tasks that are supposed to be handled by professionals. Mentors may have good intention but their lack of expert knowledge can have unintended and detrimental consequences. Examples include a mentor who gave the wrong advice to their mentee which made them almost lose their immigration status or a mentor who suggested to their mentee that they should refuse to pay their rental deposit.

While this is difficult to avoid entirely in practice, it can be significantly reduced by improving communication with both professionals and participants. One aspect of this is setting expectations at the start of the program and clearly delineating what a mentor can and cannot do. This is preferably done in cooperation with, or at least with input from, the social worker and, if relevant, other professionals assisting the mentee, and communicated to both mentor and mentee. According to coordinators, ongoing communication with professionals is also important to ensure that they have the correct expectations of the program and the mentor and will not delegate their own responsibilities to the mentor.

Coordinator

"I recently had an intake between a mentor and mentee, which took place in the Public Centre for Social Welfare itself with the presence of the social worker of the mentee and in that way, the mentor also knows the social worker, and they can exchange information with each other. For example, a social worker had asked: would you like to go to the housing service together with the mentee? So, the tasks or role of the mentor are already defined so that there is no double work. And it is also not the intention that the mentor becomes the social worker of the mentee, so, if possible, the social worker is present [during the first meeting]."

Failing to clearly delineate the tasks and role of the mentor may lead to conflict between the mentor and professional because either 1) the mentor thinks the professional is not doing enough for the mentee and relying too much on the mentor to offer assistance that goes beyond their voluntary commitment or 2) the professional thinks the mentor is doing too much for the mentee and in doing so interferes with the work of the professional.

Depending on the situation, the coordinator will then have to contact the mentor and/or professional in hopes of resolving the conflict or incorrect assignment of responsibilities.

Another way to improve the coordination with and between the mentor and professionals is to stimulate communication between them early on in the mentoring process. Some programs opt to have the mentor and referrer meet during the first meeting with the mentee while others provide contact information and give the mentor the option of contacting the professional. At the same time, some programs reason that coordination between mentor and professional assumes that there should be responsibility sharing when in reality, the mentor is only supposed to do leisure activities or offer small assistance, neither of which require coordination with professionals. According to them, mentors should not be burdened with unnecessary tasks and responsibilities that go far beyond their voluntary commitment to the program.

4.2.4 Exchange based on equality and respect

A mentor and mentee relationship is prone to asymmetry and paternalism. Even if programs advocate for equality between mentor and mentee, truly achieving such equality is difficult if not impossible.

While equality between participants may be difficult to achieve, coordinators emphasize that the relationship should not be entirely one-sided and should benefit both mentee and mentor. The benefits for the mentee are more obvious. They often improve their language skills, become more involved in their local community, and receive other practical support that helps them get settled in their new city. In addition to all the practical ways that mentors assist mentees, mentees also benefit in more indirect ways. Through their mentoring relationship, they gain more confidence and become more independent. However, even if the benefits for the mentee are more pronounced and emphasized by mentoring programs, mentors benefit from the relationship in a number of ways.

According to one mentor, their relationships with several mentees increased their empathic abilities. The mentor became more aware and knowledgeable about the struggles refugees face and developed a deeper sense of respect for them. Almost all mentors expressed similar personal developments. While they were all supportive of refugees before their involvement in the mentoring program, their relationship with the mentee had a significant influence on their thinking. Mentors became more vocal about immigration policy and diversity and would call out friends if they said something harmful or ignorant. They became more knowledgeable about the mentee's religion and developed more respect for religious differences. One creative mentor started incorporating themes of diversity, migration and belonging in their art.

Mentors also benefited in other ways. Mentees would show their appreciation and reciprocate by showing an interest in the life of their mentor, cooking for them, and inviting them into their home. One of the mentors taught the daughter of the family she was mentoring how to ride a bike and swim and when she was ill, the family would visit her and bring food to her door. Preparing food for the mentor was one of the main ways that mentees showed their appreciation. Such signs of appreciation

help the mentor feel valued and create a feeling of reciprocity and appreciation that can be difficult to achieve otherwise.

Another mentoring duo attributed their successful relationship not only to similar interests but also to a sense of mutual respect and interest in each other's lives. Their ability to have good conversations about almost any topic, including culture, religion and politics, helped to create a strong and long-lasting bond. At the beginning, the mentee was still finding their place and figuring out how to practice their faith in a new country. Having a mentor who was very open to talk about such matters, who listened and asked questions without judgment, was exactly what the mentee needed at that time and set the stage for a friendship that is still strong, even three years after the official mentoring period.

According to several coordinators, mentors and mentees, this reciprocity and mutual interest and respect are important characteristics of successful mentoring relationships.

Mentor

"You should be open to other cultures. [...] Not always saying: 'yes but in Belgium we do it like this.' I said that a lot in the beginning until I thought, well that is actually discrimination, it's like saying we do it better. You need to get away from that idea a little bit."

Mentee

"You can't know in advance who you will end up with but what I think is very important is that those two people really respect each other. That is really the basis to build on. But on the other hand, I also expect you to be very honest with each other and build a trustworthy relationship. For example, in my case, I can trust [mentor] in all aspects. [...] I would like to think a mentor is a person you can talk to about almost anything, that would be an ideal situation for me, that you have respect for each other and build a reliable relationship and are honest with each other. Everything else you can figure out later."

One important demonstration of reciprocity and mutual respect is the commitment participants have to the mentoring relationship. In situations where one was more committed than the other, the relationship was usually terminated prematurely. After a mentee family failed to show up for their appointments with the mentor, did not cancel or apologize, and called the mentor late at night multiple times, the coordinator scheduled a meeting with all parties to discuss the relationship. When there were no improvements after two interventions, the mentor decided to put an end to the mentoring relationship. Without mutual appreciation and commitment, a mentoring relationship is bound to fail.

However, the mentor will usually have to take initiative, especially in the beginning of the relationship. They will have to schedule meetings with the mentee and suggest activities. While this may change as the relationship develops, coordinators often inform mentors before the mentoring commences that they will likely have to take initiative and stress that this does not signal disinterest on the part of the mentee. Not every mentee will feel comfortable enough to take the first step to contact the mentor. This may be due to cultural differences or because the mentor is a volunteer who already does a lot for them and they might feel uncomfortable 'burdening' the mentor. This 'restraint' is not necessarily only related to cultural differences. Perhaps the mentee perceives a difference in social status or time availability. Not every mentee will have the confidence to take the first step right away.

Coordinator

"Of course, in the initial period, we often see that the initiative comes mainly from the mentor [...] but as the relationship improves and we see that it is going well, we also expect that the newcomer does not sit and wait but that they also dare to ask help from the mentor. [...] It goes well the moment that the newcomer asks some questions, takes pictures of questions they have for example a letter they received and a 'can you translate that for me?'. So, the more it comes from the newcomers' side, the better it goes. Because a mentor may think: 'does it always have to come from my side?'"

When asked what is important for a match to succeed, one of the coordinators said the following:

Coordinator

"If the mentor has the feeling that they can really mean something to the newcomer, that the newcomer trusts them and that they are also inviting towards the mentor. We have some mentors who are insecure in that respect and then you get those uncomfortable situation where the mentor sometimes asks: 'does this newcomer actually like me?' And then they get a bit uncomfortable. So that feeling of trust or confirmation and some eagerness on the part of the newcomer, we see that this is really equality because otherwise we sometimes have the case that mentors become very insecure or they start to do more than usual or they won't do their best anymore, so yes, that trust and confirmation."

Even if a relationship is successful, there may still be times when one of the participants is asked or expected to do something they do not feel comfortable with. This could be a request from the mentee that the mentor does not want or know how to solve or a mentor who takes their mentoring too far. One coordinator recalled a situation in which a mentor became too involved and persistent, pressuring the mentee to study or work so much that they eventually stopped answering the mentor's messages.

The importance of setting and guarding boundaries is emphasized by all program coordinators. In social mentoring programs, problems with boundaries often arise when the mentor is expected to or willingly takes on responsibilities of professionals such as the mentee's social worker. Programs typically offer mentor training sessions on the topic of boundaries and discuss its importance during the intake and/or info session. Even though programs can inform and support participants on setting and guarding their own boundaries, it is up to participants to decide what their boundaries are and to communicate them to their mentor/mentee if necessary. Coordinators can guide them on how to do this and can intervene when boundaries are crossed.

4.3 Recommendations

- *Programs should have a clearly defined mentoring duration (e.g., 6 months) that can be extended upon request*
- *Programs should set expectations in terms of contact frequency (e.g., at least twice a month)*
- *Programs should schedule a first meeting with the mentor, mentee, and coordinator before the mentoring relationship starts. If the mentee was referred to the program, the referrer should also be invited to the meeting*
- *Programs should use this first meeting to reiterate the main objectives of the program, their expectations, and the role of the mentor*
- *Programs should have duos schedule their next meeting during this first meeting in order to prevent early drop-out*
- *Programs should give both participants an opportunity to decline the match after the first meeting*
- *Programs should let participants decide what activities they want to do but set expectations at the beginning and provide an overview of acceptable (and unacceptable) activities*
- *Programs should provide suggestions for activities, for example via a newsletter or activity calendar*
- *Programs may seek partnerships with local businesses and organizations to arrange free tickets or coupons for their participants*
- *Programs should inform mentors that they will be expected to take initiative, especially at the beginning of the relationship, but that, over time, decisions should be made collaboratively*
- *Programs should facilitate communication between the mentor and professional assistance when necessary to avoid conflict or other problems*

5 | Follow-up and role of the coordinator

5.1 According to the literature

Providing monitoring and support for mentoring relationships is one of the primary responsibilities of program staff and crucial to the success of a mentoring program. Martin and Sifers (2012) found that relationships that are monitored and supported by program staff are associated with greater mentor satisfaction within the relationship.

Research on youth mentoring found that regular contact between participants and program staff is linked to longer-lasting relationships, stronger relationships, and more frequent meetings between the mentor and mentee (Herrera et al., 2013; Herrera et al., 2000). Mentors' perceptions of the quality of support were positively associated with mentee reports of better relationship quality (feelings of closeness and growth/goal orientation), and with the duration of the relationship (Herrera, 2007; Herrera et al., 2013). The importance of quality follow-up and a good relationship between staff and mentors to the retention of mentors has also been reiterated by Behnia (2007).

In their study on youth mentoring, Herrera et al. (2013) found that most mentors who receive support phone calls from the mentoring program consider them helpful in strengthening their relationship. Receiving consistent feedback from the program could also impact mentors' feelings of self-efficacy with greater self-efficacy resulting in higher satisfaction with the relationship, more frequent meetings with their mentees, fewer challenges in the mentoring relationship, more perceived benefits for mentees, and higher overall quality of the mentoring relationship (Karcher et al., 2005; Martin & Sifers, 2012; Parra et al., 2002).

According to Herrera et al. (2013), more capable coordinators are able to foster relationships that are higher in quality and last longer. In addition to providing support and monitoring, coordinators can promote participation in the program and retention of volunteers by recognizing and celebrating their achievements (Bayer et al., 2015). Culp and Schwartz (1998) found that volunteers consider informal, intrinsic rewards such as thank-you notes and 'a pat on the back' more meaningful than formal, extrinsic rewards.

To provide closure at the end of the mentoring relationship, it is recommended that programs communicate closure policies and procedures to both parties over the course the relationship (Spencer & Basualdo-Delmonico, 2014). Early termination can have negative consequences for the mentee, especially if the relationship ends abruptly or due to conflict (Rhodes, 2002). Even if the relationship lasts its ended duration, a formal closure procedure is necessary to allow each party to the mentoring relationship an opportunity to reflect on and process the relationship, discuss its impact, offer suggestions for program improvement, and to prevent negative emotional outcomes (Spencer & Basualdo-Delmonico, 2014; Spencer et al., 2014).

5.2 In practice

5.2.1 Support and follow-up

Program coordinators' responsibilities do not stop after they have successfully matched a mentor and mentee. One of the most important tasks of the coordinator is support and follow-up. While all programs offer some level of support, the extent of this support can vary significantly, from more close to more distant. Close monitoring involves personal contact, is proactive, and occurs on a regular basis (e.g. monthly). When monitoring is more distant, the contact may be via email, is rather reactive in nature, and occurs sporadically. Social mentoring programs differ significantly in their monitoring approach.

Close follow-up can include both formal and informal moments of contact between the coordinator and participant. One of the most common formal monitoring options is follow-up via phone in which the coordinator contacts the participant(s) on a regular basis to inquire about the course of the relationship, any difficulties and/or questions. Coordinators who use this follow-up strategy usually do so especially during the first few months of the relationship, after which they will likely stop or reduce it, depending on how the relationship is progressing.

In-person one-on-one support is not common among social mentoring programs. Coordinators usually only see their participants one-on-one or as a duo when a problem arises. If one or both participants indicate that there is a conflict or problem, the coordinator will usually invite them to their office to discuss the matter and find a solution that works for both.

Other informal moments of contact often take place during program activities such as mentor training sessions, peer learning sessions, or group activities. Many programs struggle to provide regular follow-up for all individual participants so group activities offer convenient opportunities to follow-up with multiple people at once.

Organizations may also have other programs or activities such as a language cafe where newcomers can practice their language skills by talking to native speakers and other language learners in a very informal setting. Other common opportunities for interaction include other informal language classes or learning opportunities, walk-in hours at the organization, or other activities organized by the organization but not exclusive to the mentoring program. Such activities are usually accessible to anyone, voluntary, and organized on a regular basis (e.g. once a week, once a month, etc.). If the coordinator of the mentoring program is present, such collective events provide opportunities for interaction and informal follow-up with participants of the mentoring program. This is especially important on the side of the mentee. Most programs focus their regular follow-up efforts on the mentor so when they meet mentees at collective events, it provides a unique opportunity to get their input and perspective on the mentoring relationship.

More distant support may involve sending sporadic follow-up emails but coordinators who adopt this monitoring strategy will usually expect the participant to contact them if they have a problem and/or need advice. This is a reactive approach. Social mentoring programs usually adopt this approach due to time constraints though some deliberately want to maintain the voluntary and informal spirit of the program and do not want to make too many demands of the volunteers. As a result, coordinators are not always aware whether and how the relationship is developing. In case of conflict, they often become aware when it is already too late. Most coordinators agree that more

regular follow-up is preferable. Ideally, they should contact participants every so often, even if only to signal that the participant is not on their own and their voluntary commitment is appreciated.

To an extent, all programs, even those with more close monitoring, will require participants to reach out to them in case of problems. Even with regular follow-up, it can be difficult to remain up to date on all duos, especially for larger mentoring programs. In order to get participants to contact the coordinator when the need arises, the program and coordinator should feel approachable and accessible.

According to mentoring program coordinators, approachability and accessibility are some of the most important characteristics of a successful mentoring program. The monitoring approach of the coordinator had no influence on the importance they placed on being approachable and accessible to participants.

Approachability and accessibility relate both to the coordinator and the program itself. Participants should feel comfortable contacting and talking to the coordinator, and the coordinator should be easy to reach and readily available for help and advice. Coordinators usually try to explain their role during the intake or first meeting with participants. During these early stages of the mentoring process, they will usually establish themselves as the go-to person for advice and support.

The mentoring program's approachability and accessibility is largely determined by the atmosphere created by the coordinator and organization. One coordinator stressed the importance of creating an atmosphere that is easily distinguishable from the formal settings newcomers often find themselves in when they first arrive in a new city. When they visit the coordinator, it should not feel as though they are at their social worker's office or immigration service. Participants were free to walk into the office any time during working hours and could contact the coordinator at almost any time, even in the evening or during the weekend. The coordinator could be reached by phone, social media, and/or Whatsapp and participants had many opportunities to meet the coordinator and each other. According to one coordinator, creating this 'familial' atmosphere was more beneficial to mentors than any formal training session could ever be. The informal, accessible character of social mentoring is exactly what sets it apart from other programs and forms of assistance. It is this informality and accessibility that many coordinators consider pivotal for a successful social mentoring program.

Coordinator

"We are always available to them. They know that we can be reached 24/24 with their questions. [...] And certainly before corona, the mentors often dropped in on us. We encourage that too, we say: 'if you are in the neighborhood, drop in. Let us know how it goes and not only when there are problems, but also when it's going well.' We just like to be kept informed. There are some mentors who just drop by or give us a call to catch up. Only we still miss the newcomers' side of things, we really want to ask them how they experience their participation in the mentoring program. I think that is the biggest shortcoming we have. Of course, we can't do everything at once, we have expanded, we have set everything up, we have focused on the side of the mentor but I think there is still a lot to do on the side of the newcomer."

Coordinator

"Personally, I am of the opinion that the professional [program coordinator] should be a clear and accessible point of contact during the mentoring process that a mentor and family go through. The coordinator follows up on requests for help from families if these can be followed up within the framework of the mentoring program and/or the organization and/or refers them to the organizations which are competent for a specific matter. The professional is also available to support the mentor and should ensure that the context is appropriate and accessible so that the mentor can function and carry out the volunteer work properly. For

example: clear use of language, customized training, communicating through tools that are user-friendly, providing information on activities that the mentor and family can participate in, etc."

A main shortcomings of social mentoring programs is that the follow-up and support tend to be directed at the mentor and contact between coordinator and mentee is limited to non-existent. One of the mentees never once had contact with the program once they were matched to a mentor, something which they considered an important point for improvement. Having the coordinator contact the mentee every now and then would have been preferable and appreciated.

According to most coordinators, this lack of follow-up of the mentees is primarily due to time constraints. They will rely on the mentor to pass on relevant information to the mentee and to inform the coordinator in case the mentee experiences problems or has a need for professional assistance. This one-sided follow-up could lead the coordinator to miss important information about the mentoring relationship and does not contribute to the equality between participants that social mentoring programs often strive for.

5.2.2 Concluding the mentoring relationship

After the predetermined duration of the mentoring relationship, most programs will organize some type of closing moment, which may be an event for all mentors and mentees, a meeting with the duo, or a meeting with the mentor and/or mentee separately. Programs without a set duration and/or consistent follow-up may not have a final event or meeting or will only organize it at the request of (one of) the participants. As a result, relationships in such programs often dwindle over time without a satisfying conclusion.

Some programs organize a collective event to wrap up a mentoring period. This works well for programs that recruit and match participants for a specific period (e.g. january to june) so that a whole group of mentors and mentees start and end at the same time. For programs with continuous recruitment and matching, which is especially common for programs in small municipalities who will usually struggle to assemble a group large enough to match them all at once and have them start at the same time, a collective closing event usually does not make sense as duos will start and finish at various times. Usually, such programs will have a talk with the mentor or the duo after the mentoring period to discuss their experience and possible points of improvement.

One of the programs changed their approach after peer learning sessions with mentors revealed that it was sometimes difficult for mentors that there was no specific end, especially when the mentoring was less successful or the mentor and mentee lost touch after a while. Nowadays, the program organizes a closing event so that participants can properly wrap up the mentoring period and decide whether they want to continue their relationship outside of the program and/or whether the mentor wants to mentor a new mentee. At the event, participants are also asked to share their opinion of the program via evaluation forms. This not only contributes to the improvement of the mentoring program but also provides another opportunity to hear from the mentees who are usually not included in follow-up, training, and peer learning. According to the coordinator, the evaluation forms gave them some indication of the evolution of a mentee's language skills in writing.

According to one of the coordinators, this event is also the perfect opportunity to thank mentors and mentees for their participation in the program. This show of appreciation for participants and especially the volunteers (mentors) can contribute to the recuperation of mentors and to recruitment of new participants through positive word-of-mouth.

Coordinator

"A project stands or falls with its volunteers. And you have to pamper them, you have to really appreciate them. And we think it is normal that every once in a while, they get a thank you or in a different way, that they get the feeling that they are really appreciated, which also means you can keep them involved in the project more easily. And they will propagate it to the outside world."



Example: thank you card for mentors

Another program organized a group activity to wrap up a group's mentoring period. They invited mentors and mentees to the townhall where they receive a guided tour after which they could evaluate the program via a phone quiz app. When this was no longer possible due to COVID-19, they went on a group walk and had drinks. Participants were later emailed to ask for their feedback. Mentors were also asked whether they wanted to be recuperated into the program.

Mentors and mentees can also terminate the mentoring relationship prematurely. In that case, they will usually contact the coordinator themselves to discuss their request for termination. Some coordinators choose to not spend too much time on such terminations, especially if the person has already made up their mind. They will discuss the matter via phone and leave it at that, sometimes without contacting the other participant. Others will schedule a meeting with the mentor and/or mentee to discuss the reason for the premature termination, to receive their input on the program, and, if relevant, to ask if the mentor wants to be recuperated and/or if the mentee wants a new mentor.

5.2.3 After the mentoring relationship

Once the mentoring relationship ends, most programs will no longer offer support and follow-up. Mentors and mentees can of course choose to remain in touch. This is usually not explicitly discussed by the parties involved but is instead an organic progression of the relationship between the mentor and mentee. Most duos that continue their relationship after the formal conclusion do so because they have become friends.

Even if programs no longer offer formal follow-up, they often continue to email former participants and invite them to events, unless participants request to be taken off the mailing list. Some programs and organizations also offer other events and activities that former participants will frequent which allows the coordinator to remain in touch with some of them. For example, one of the programs organizes a get-together once a month where former and current duos as well as the general public can interact. Another program, which is organized by a non-profit organization, observes and supports the transfer of volunteers within the organization. While some of their volunteers may no longer be involved in the mentoring program, they will still be active within the overarching organization and therefore often continue to be in touch with the program coordinator.

Programs without a predetermined mentoring duration and end date will usually continue to provide support for as long as the relationship lasts. It should be noted, however, that programs without a set duration are usually the same programs that offer minimal support and follow-up in general. The support they do offer will usually lessen over time as the mentoring relationship either turns into friendship or dwindles until it stops altogether.

Cases Samen Gentenaar & Samen Thuis in Hasselt

The different approaches to support and follow-up can be illustrated by comparing two social mentoring programs.

Samen Gentenaar is a social mentoring program for newcomers in Ghent, Belgium. It is organized by IN-Gent, an independent agency that bears responsibility for the operational implementation of Flemish integration policy in the city of Ghent. Samen Gentenaar operates within a clear framework and structure, and offers considerable support and follow-up to its participants.

While the program has no fixed start dates, it usually starts three times a year for a duration of six months, with groups overlapping. Once the waiting list is long enough, the coordinator will schedule a collective info session. Attendance at the session is a requirement for participation in the program. During the info session, the coordinator provides information about the program and candidates can fill out an intake form. Once the coordinator has matched all mentors and mentees, they will be invited to a collective start event where they will meet their match for the first time. During their mentoring relationship, duos must communicate each activity they do to the coordinator. While this is an insurance requirement, it also allows for regular monitoring. Participants are also invited to intervisions of which there are three during each mentoring period: one for mentors, one for mentees, and one mixed. In addition, the program organizes group activities, mentor trainings, and OPEN-BAR, a monthly meet-up. After six months, duos are invited to a collective closing event and asked to fill out an evaluation form. Support and follow-up cease after the event though former duos will still be invited to OPEN-BAR.

Samen Thuis in Hasselt is a social mentoring program for newcomers that is organized by Avansa Limburg. Avansa is a socio-cultural organization with twelve other regional offices throughout Flanders and Brussels. Samen Thuis in Hasselt offers minimal support and follow-up and describes their approach as follows: “we give you an opportunity to meet and then it’s up to you.”

Interested candidates are invited to an individual intake interview with the program coordinator. During this interview, they will be informed about the program and asked about their motivation and other information necessary for screening and matching. The program has no collective start event. Duos can start their mentoring relationship any time during the year. Once the coordinator has found a good match, the mentor and mentee will be invited for a first meeting. The coordinator attends the meeting for the first 15 minutes, asks the duo to schedule their next meeting, and then leaves them to get to know one another. Once the mentoring relationship starts, the coordinator takes a step back. They will follow-up with the mentor and mentee after a month and again at the end of the mentoring period. Follow-up is done via phone. Participants are expected to contact the coordinator if they need assistance but they do not have to register their activities. Mentors are informed about external trainings but are not required to attend. While the program used to organize intervisions, they stopped due to low turn-out. Starting next year, they will organize an annual group activity for all participants of the program.

5.3 Recommendations

- *Programs should offer proactive follow-up at regular intervals to inquire about the progress of the relationship, difficulties, and questions*
- *Program should provide follow-up to both mentor and mentee*
- *Program should have at least one in-person follow-up moment during the mentoring period*
- *Programs should have a monitoring mechanism in place and ask duos to share their progress and activities regularly*
- *Programs should be accessible and easily approachable for all participants. The coordinator should be easy to reach and talk to and readily available for help and advice*
- *Programs should recognize the achievements of mentors, for example through thank you cards, to stimulate commitment and retention*
- *Programs should intervene and schedule a meeting with the duo if there is a conflict or need that needs to be handled before the relationship can continue*
- *Programs should have a clear closure procedure that is communicated to mentors and mentees before they begin their mentoring relationship*
- *Programs should schedule a closing talk at the end of the mentoring period or in case of premature termination*
- *Programs should organize a final group activity to wrap up each mentoring period*
- *Programs should ask participants to evaluate the program and use this input to improve the program*
- *Programs should cease support and follow-up once the relationship ends. They may choose to keep former participants somewhat involved in the program by, for example, inviting them to group activities*

6 | Training, peer learning and group activities

6.1 According to the literature

According to Allen et al. (2006) and Neuwirth and Wahl (2017), the success of a mentoring program is positively related to the presence of training programs and their quality. Programs with ongoing training show better mentoring outcomes for their mentees than programs that do not offer trainings (DuBois et al., 2002). In their study of a community-based youth mentoring program, Parra et al. (2002) found that mentors' perceived quality of training was a positive predictor of mentor efficacy ratings, which in turn showed a positive association with contact frequency, fewer relationship obstacles, and greater involvement in program-relevant activities.

Allen et al. (2006) found that the hours spent in training related positively to psychosocial mentoring but was negatively associated with mentor-reported relationship quality and role modeling. The authors suggest that a greater investment in the mentoring program through training may intrude too much into the busy schedules of mentors or disproportionately raise mentor expectations of the program. Nevertheless, Martin and Sifers (2012) found that the amount of training is positively associated with mentor satisfaction with the mentoring relationship and beneficial mentoring outcomes. According to Herrera et al. (2000), mentors who receive more than six hours of training develop the closest and most supportive relationships with their mentees whereas mentors who receive two hours of training or less develop the least close relationships. However, Parra et al. (2002) note that even a limited amount of training can lead to better mentoring results.

Trainings should vary according to the stage of the mentoring process (Kupersmidt & Rhodes, 2013). Pre-match training has been shown to contribute to mentors' feelings of self-efficacy, which can, in turn, improve the quality of the mentoring relationship and the outcomes for the mentee (Karcher et al., 2005; Martin & Sifers, 2012). According to Allen et al. (2006), pre-match training can make the mentoring relationship more rewarding by identifying the objectives of the program, the parameters of the relationship, and by establishing mutually agreed-upon expectations. By setting mutual expectations at the beginning of a mentoring relationship programs can contribute to mentor satisfaction and engagement and prevent early drop-out (Drew et al., 2020; Madia & Lutz, 2004). Post-match training can be useful once mentors have had some experience with mentoring and have specific questions or concerns. According to Strapp et al. (2014), post-match training could help mentors deal with setbacks and maintain or restore commitment to the program and relationship.

According to Reeves (2017), mentor competence in navigating cultural and other differences could contribute to more fruitful mentoring relationships. Johnson-Bailey (2012) has identified several practices that can help mentors during their mentoring relationship with their mentee: 1) a willingness to extend beyond normal mentoring expectations, 2) an understanding of the psychological and social effects of racism, 3) cultural competence, 4) an understanding of the mentors' social identity and 5) an acceptance of the risk and possible discomfort implicit in mentoring across racial lines. Cultural competency training and mentor-to-mentor contact have been shown to have a positive influence on mentor satisfaction and retention (MENTOR, 2015; Stukas and Tanti (2005). Van 't Hoog et al.

(2012) recommends mentor intervention or ‘peer learning’ as a good way for mentors to exchange tips and experiences on how to deal with cultural differences.

6.2 In practice

6.2.1 Mentor training

6.2.1.1 Practical considerations

Social mentoring programs usually offer training sessions to mentors though their approach differs. One recurring point of consideration mentioned by program coordinators is whether trainings should be voluntary or mandatory. In practice, participation is almost always voluntary though some programs require mentors to attend specific trainings such as one program which organizes a mandatory training on the social map of the city. In order to be a good mentor, the coordinators of the program consider it necessary for mentors to know the various organizations and services throughout the city that could be beneficial to the mentee. However, in general, mentor trainings in social mentoring programs are voluntary.

Most coordinators want to maintain the voluntary and informal character of their programs and do not want to impose too many responsibilities and expectations on the mentors. Nevertheless, several coordinators reference the Armen Tekort approach as an interesting alternative. Armen Tekort is a non-profit organization that connects disadvantaged residents (mentees) with advantaged residents (mentors) in order to lift them out of their disadvantaged position. Mentors are required to educate themselves through various trainings before they are matched to a disadvantaged person for a two-year mentoring period. Trainings are thus not only mandatory but also primarily take place before the mentoring, and even the matching, starts. While several coordinators of social mentoring programs for newcomers show interest in this approach, they prefer to maintain the more informal, accessible character of their programs.

Coordinator

Sometimes we have the feeling that we might not be there enough for our mentors, as in that it might be a bit too noncommittal. We have already thought about that a lot because, for example, you also have Armen Tekort, which is also a mentoring project, but it has quite a high threshold because in order to become a mentor, you first have to follow a very long training course, followed by many interventions, so the guidance is very intensive. I think that is very interesting for the mentors but it does make it a high threshold to become a mentor. And that might also put off many people. On the other hand, we think it is nice that we do not have such a high threshold and they have a lot of freedom, we want to maintain this low threshold to attract as many volunteers as possible, but that is a difficult balance."

In most social mentoring programs for newcomers, trainings are offered throughout the mentoring period. Some also incorporate some training elements into their info session or have one mandatory training session such as the social map training, which is offered at the start of the mentoring period so that mentors can use the knowledge to improve their support of the mentee. According to one of the coordinators, requiring volunteers to participate in the trainings becomes more difficult by the time they have already started their mentoring relationship. By offering training sessions before the mentoring starts, programs can easily make them obligatory for participation.

Since most trainings offered by social mentoring programs are voluntary, the frequency is largely determined by participants. Programs usually offer several training options throughout the mentoring period. They will email a list of options to the mentors for which they can register if they are interested.

Coordinator

'We are still trying to figure out what you can actually ask your mentors to do, because that is a volunteer and we don't want to bombard them with training and peer coaching and another meeting and another fun activity, because they already have their weekly or fortnightly meetings with their newcomer, so I find that a difficult balancing act. [...] We don't want to make it too heavy but of course, you want them to do their mentoring work properly.'

Programs either organize the training sessions themselves, promote the training sessions offered by partners or other organizations, or use a combination of their own and external trainings. While one program organizes its own training session developed by the program coordinator, discussing topics such as intercultural communication and life in the reception center, several other programs promote training sessions offered by the national Agency for Integration and Civic Integration or their municipality.

Promoting external training sessions has its benefits. Developing training sessions requires a lot of time, which coordinators are usually lacking. Not having to devote time to develop trainings also leaves more time for follow-up, which some coordinators consider more important to a successful mentoring program than formal trainings. Trainings offered by external organizations also benefit from years of expertise and experience, something which can not be rivalled by program coordinators who, if they organize trainings, do so in addition to all their other responsibilities. Since the trainings are offered by external organizations, participants may also interact with volunteers from other mentoring or volunteer programs, which could broaden their horizon and lead to new insights that can benefit them in their own mentoring relationship.

One of the main benefits of developing your own training sessions is that the training is more program-specific. Coordinators can directly address the concerns and questions of their volunteers and focus on the topics most relevant for their mentoring program. Some trainings, such as the social map training, are so context- and program-specific that no other organization can develop it. When trainings are organized by the program and only accessible to its own volunteers, it can also function as an informal follow-up moment. This provides another opportunity for the coordinator to hear from their volunteers and get a sense of how they are getting along. Since most mentors will usually hang around after the training and have a drink together, this also provides another opportunity for the mentors to interact and contributes to the community feeling that some programs strive for.

Coordinator

'The advantage, in my opinion, is that if you keep it within your own program, it can also be a meeting point where the mentors can see us again, where they can also meet mentors from other refugees and so on. So if you keep it purely as training, I think you can open it up to other volunteer profiles as well, but we always like to make it a bit of a meeting, intervention, conversation moment as well, so that it doesn't have to be so demarcated. I see that now, too, when we do the social map training, you always have mentors who hang around after the training, also on the screen. And that's actually quite nice, you are of course chatting digitally, but I think that is also what the mentors need most, perhaps even more than a training professional at the front giving his methods and information. Sometimes they just want to have a chat with another mentor or hear how it's been going. So we mainly focus on meetings and exchanges because there is a lot of expertise and experience within your group itself, I think it is interesting that you can also use that somewhere or other.'

An interesting alternative is to work together with other mentoring or volunteering programs to organize a shared training offer. According to one coordinator, volunteers in different programs often have very similar questions and concerns. Instead of each program developing its own trainings, they can gather their experience and know-how and develop training sessions available to volunteers of all participating programs. For some topics it might be more relevant to cooperate with other mentoring programs whereas other topics might benefit from cooperation with programs that target the same group, in this case newcomers. In addition to offering program-specific trainings, programs could then benefit from shared trainings on topics such as setting boundaries or the relationship with professionals.

In developing a mentor training program, coordinators suggest asking input from mentors. What would they like to know more about? What do they struggle with? Mentor training sessions are to help the mentors in their mentoring relationship with the mentee. Instead of assuming what mentors need or should know, it is more efficient to ask them and adjust the training program accordingly. This also helps to keep the mentors engaged since the topics are not only more interesting as they directly address their own concerns, mentors also feel heard and included in the decision-making process, giving them a sense of agency.

Coordinator

"We want to work on a personal basis because during the last discussion evening with the mentors, we asked them: 'we are developing a training program, which themes would you like to see addressed?' and while we were actually thinking of themes such as intercultural communication, they were thinking more of the workings of a reception center, so just very concretely: what does a day here look like? So we will add that as well. We do want to work on a personal basis and at the request of the volunteers."

While most programs offer training sessions to their mentors, they do not provide similar learning opportunities for their mentees. Some are considering doing so in the future. Especially the training session on setting boundaries is considered equally relevant for both mentors and mentees. However, organizing training sessions for mentees is considerably more challenging since the group speaks a multitude of languages and has various levels of proficiency in the local language or common languages such as English. To avoid such difficulties, most programs choose to share the most relevant information for the mentee during the intake as opposed to organizing a separate training session.

Case Armen Tekort

Armen Tekort is a non-profit organization in Antwerp, Belgium that connects disadvantaged residents (mentees) with advantaged residents (mentors) for a period of two years. The goal of the mentoring project is to lift mentees out of their disadvantaged position.

While multiple social mentoring programs for newcomers express interest in Armen Tekort's approach to training and support, none have implemented similar approaches. Programs do not want to overburden mentors with too many requirements and responsibilities and generally prefer to maintain the informal character of their programs. Nevertheless, almost every coordinator referenced the organization and looked to it for inspiration. It is thus an approach worth exploring.

Armen Tekort offers the following training and support to their mentors:

- 1) **E-learning:** the organization offers ten online courses via a digital E-learning platform. Mentors can finish the courses at their own pace.
- 2) **Workshops:** every learning module is matched to an interactive workshop with a focus on the acquisition of skills. Mentors have to complete the workshops before they can start their mentoring. Workshops are organized into four phases:
 - Insight: mentors learn about disadvantaged people, explore the network of aid organizations in Antwerp, and get to know the Armen Tekort coaches.
 - Connection: this phase focuses on the relationship between mentor and mentee. Mentors learn about their worldview and biases and how they affect behavior and thinking.
 - Empowerment and networking: mentors learn about empowerment and three of its aspects: strengths, self-reliance, and connection to a network.
 - Mentoring: together with an actor (who takes on the role of a mentee), a coach (a mentor who has finished a successful mentoring relationship), and an expert trainer, mentors practice the skills they learned in the workshops.
- 3) **Intervisions:** once the mentoring relationship starts, mentors participate in regular intervisions. Under the guidance of a professional coach, mentors reflect on issues they encounter in their mentoring relationship. According to the organization, such sessions can create new insights and change attitudes among mentors.
- 4) **Knowledge database:** the E-learning platform used for the online courses also includes a knowledge database that mentors can use. The database includes a social map of Antwerp that lists all the aid organizations that the mentor can turn to with specific requests.

6.2.1.2 Topics

Table 7 Mentor training topics

General	Program-specific
Communication and clear language	Social map of the city
Setting boundaries	Life in the reception centre
One-offs	
Psychological well-being and needs of refugees	Public employment service
Volunteering during the corona pandemic	Public Centre for Social Welfare

One of the most common trainings offered by mentoring programs focuses on communication and plain language i.e. how to speak to someone who is not proficient in the local language. During the training, mentors are usually informed about the language learning process of a newcomer, including both practical information such as the classes available to newcomers as well as information on the speed and development of learning. Mentors are usually also informed about low literacy and illiteracy. This helps to set realistic expectations.

During the training, mentors are given concrete tools to communicate effectively with their mentee. They learn about the importance of repetition, reformulation, explanation, articulation, keeping the conversation concrete, talking in a slow and calm manner, moving from closed to open questions, supporting their explanations with photos, gestures, pictograms and other visual tools, and correcting mistakes in a positive manner, among many other tips and tools.

Another common training focuses on setting boundaries. Even though programs discuss this topic during their info session and/or intake, they continue to be faced with situations in which participants' boundaries are not protected or respected. Offering a training session on this topic is supposed to provide additional tools for mentors and help them set their limits and practice self-care. Similarly, one of the programs is considering a training on the relationship with professionals to help mentors figure out how where their responsibilities lie and when and how they should communicate effectively with the mentee's professional assistance.

Some programs offer program-specific training sessions. One of the mentoring programs is targeted at newcomers in reception centres. In order to inform mentors about the living situation and prospects of the mentees, they include information on daily life in the reception centre and the asylum system in the training. Another program organizes a training on the social map of the city. In this mandatory training, mentors are informed about the professional and voluntary assistance available in the city such as legal support, mental health clinics, housing support services, employment services, food banks, thrift stores, education, childcare, and leisure activities. Participants are also given a useful overview that they can consult everytime their mentee has a question or need that they cannot directly answer.

Coordinator

Everyone has questions about the social map [...] but that's always such a monster, I think, a social map, that often changes, you may have websites but that's not up to date, that's not workable. So we actually built our own social map from our own experience. We say very clearly 'this is really just an illustration' and we used themes, a bit forced. And we have given it twice or three times now to our mentors. We also make it

compulsory for them to receive the training so that they have something to hold on to, so that they have some orientation about the landscape in [city], which partners are most inquired about and/or have enough expertise according to us to assist this target group. [...] They don't have to know it by heart but we do think it's important that they've heard of them, that they know where to find their resources, that they can refer back to that overview document and that they do put some effort into that as a mentor."

In addition to these more common training sessions, programs sometimes offer one-off sessions organized by external partners or to address a specific need that is communicated by mentors. Examples include a session with the public employment service, an information session about the Public Centre for Social Welfare, a session on the psychological well-being and needs of refugees, and a session on volunteering with newcomers during the corona pandemic. Other common topics addressed in trainings are empowerment and diversity.

Training sessions are most effective when they are interactive. Rather than simply sharing information, programs try to engage mentors and give them opportunities to share their input and experience throughout the session. Alternating between providing information and moments of exchange tends to be most effective. Trainings usually include case examples to get a discussion going about how to approach a situation or problem. The interaction between mentors that stems from this is an important part of the training and may also help to create a group feeling.

In order to keep mentors engaged, training sessions usually include many different visuals such as video clips, photos, and other images. Rather than explaining a topic, the coordinator or organizer of the training might show a video clip that illustrates the topic and ask the group to discuss it among themselves.

6.2.2 Peer learning

Most mentoring programs organize peer learning sessions for mentors. While training is more formal and structured, peer learning takes place in a more informal setting and tends to be more focused on the immediate concerns and experiences of the mentors. However, in practice, trainings and peer learning sessions may overlap with some programs organizing their own training sessions that allow for considerable interaction and peer learning while others include training elements in their peer learning sessions.

To organize a peer learning session, coordinators will usually send invitations to all active mentors. The frequency of peer learning sessions ranges from one session during the mentoring period (e.g. 6 months) to every month. Some programs have a fixed schedule while others organize a session when they recognize a need for it among mentors. Participation is usually voluntary. Ideally, the peer learning session takes place in-person but during corona, some programs organized Zoom sessions. While usually less frequented by mentors, the online sessions were appreciated as it was usually one of the few opportunities to share their experiences as a mentor and talk with other mentors since group activities (and some trainings) were cancelled.

Peer learning sessions can be approached in roughly two ways. First, some programs approach peer learning sessions as very informal meetings or get-togethers where all attendees will be asked to share their recent experiences and possible problems, questions and advice. The conversation is supposed to flow naturally without too much interference from the coordinator or other staff present. The second option is more common and requires a bit more organization on the part of the coordinator. The session might have a theme such as 'setting boundaries' that the exchange will focus on. The

theme is usually one that many mentors struggle with and/or that the coordinator has received a lot of questions about recently. They might also directly ask for input from mentors to decide on the topic more collaboratively.

Several coordinators stressed the importance of involving mentors in the agenda-setting process. If peer learning sessions are planned without inquiring 1) whether there is a need for it among mentors and 2) what their needs and questions are, there is a considerable risk that mentors will not engage or not attend the session. If only a small group of mentors is interested in an exchange or the coordinator notices that a few mentors struggle with a similar problem, they could opt to organize an exchange between those few mentors rather than with the whole group. One of the programs refers mentors who struggle with a specific issue to another mentor who has previously dealt with the same issue and can offer some concrete guidance. This not only allows for more direct assistance, it also alleviates the coordinator and contributes to a community feeling among volunteers.

Coordinator

"Now [because of corona] we have a new system so with a group of 4-5 we do a Zoom session and we call that 'buddy swap'. If we hear that there's someone with a particular problem for example 'I have trouble setting boundaries' and we have heard that that's going super well for someone else or doesn't, then we invite those 3 or those 4 people and then we actually have an intervision around that. [...] Before, that happened spontaneously during the group gatherings or activities but now we thought it would be a good idea if we just put two people with the same problem together."

During group peer learning sessions, some programs use cases to illustrate specific situations and conflicts that may occur. These are real life examples that mentors will be presented with. A case example used during one of the sessions is: 'your mentee is joined by a friend. They brought a stack of invoices. You refer to the social worker but they keep insisting. Some of the invoices are already late. What do you do?' Mentors will be asked what they would do in such a situation and to discuss it together. Usually, there is no one right answer but the conversation and exchange is what matters.

According to most social mentoring programs, offering exchange opportunities between mentors can help to create a group feeling among participants of the program and keep mentors motivated and committed to the program. Mentors who are struggling in their mentoring relationship can vent and share their experience with like-minded people and receive advice. Even just hearing that others are struggling with the same issues can be comforting. Peer learning sessions also provide another informal follow-up opportunity for the coordinator.

Mentor

"You hear what other people are doing and you feel like 'I have the same problem' or 'I have wondered about that too'. You get the motivation and the drive also from the fact that 'yes we are all doing a bit of the same', it is different for everyone but there was also someone there who said, 'I have done this and this with my mentee' and I thought 'that is a cool idea'! So, it can actually give you a lot of cool ideas."

Coordinator

"We see that a lot of mentors benefit from seeing each other, even if it is digitally during a training, that a more experienced mentor says, 'I always do it this way', that's a bit the idea of peer learning but also informal, just some chats, getting to know each other. We want to invest in that family feeling, that people can also ask each other questions in a Facebook group for example or that someone says: next week there's a theatre performance for non-native speakers, I'm going with my newcomer, do any other mentors feel like joining? And we can also promote these things a bit more because we really believe that they learn the most from each other, they just need to be able to vent, to ask each other for advice."

6.2.3 Group activities

In addition to training and peer learning sessions, most programs organize at least one group activity per mentoring period or, if programs do not have a set duration, at least once or twice a year. Group activities are different from training and peer learning in that they are usually available to all participants of the program and are entirely casual in nature. Common examples include dinners, walks, creative activities, sports activities such as a football game, cultural activities such as going to the opera, museum, festival or performance, going to the zoo, game nights, or participation in larger events such as World Refugee Day. Some programs also promote activities organized by the municipality or other local organizations.

Table 8 Common group activities

Leisure activities e.g., dinners, game nights
Family activities e.g., going to the (petting) zoo
Active activities e.g., going for a walk
Cultural activities e.g., going to the opera, museum
Creative activities e.g., windpainting
Special events e.g., World Refugee Day

While most group activities organized by mentoring programs are informal leisure activities, some programs also organize or invite participants to other activities such as discussion tables for informal language learning. These are often organized by the organization or municipality and accessible to the general public. During such sessions, participants will talk with each other, sometimes aided by specific themes or questions. In general, such sessions are not frequented as much as other activities.

Mentor

"I think they could ask more from the group: does anyone feel like organizing something? And maybe that's an evening of bowling, someone who wants to give a cooking workshop, someone who plays Djembé and wants to do something with that, or someone who is a member of a theater group or dance company; that it can come more from the group and it's more diverse and less forced. Because ultimately, the nicest conversations at those group activities are the follow-up talks. [...] I think that's more important than sitting around a table with a whole group and each of you taking turns to say something. I understand the principle of it but it doesn't provide much dynamism and highlights so I think it would be more interesting if they left it open: what do you want to do? Does anyone have an idea? And then the program finds a location and time and sends out the mail but you or a few people take care of the content."

Involving participants in the organization of activities is not only suggested by some participants but also encouraged by some coordinators. For example, one program organized a Syrian night with food, drinks and music with the help of some of its mentees. Coordinators stress the importance of group activities as a means of stimulating a feeling of community among mentors and mentees and keeping people engaged in and committed to the program. Involving participants in the organization of activities could contribute to this even more.

Participation in group activities is encouraged but voluntary. Mentors and mentees are usually informed about activities at the beginning of their mentoring relationship, for example during their first meeting or info session, or they receive the information via email or an activity calendar. Most programs allow participants to bring their family members to group activities.

While most programs organize the group activities themselves, coordinators often struggle to maintain a reliable offering of activities due to time constraints. One of the mentoring programs has tried to solve this by partnering with organizations who have more experience with organizing activities. They have teamed up with three organizations, a non-profit that organizes activities focused on the local sea and coast, a museum which already organizes many different group activities, and the local petting zoo. An added benefit in working with such organizations is that they all organize activities that both parents and children can participate in, an important criteria when trying to engage a large and diverse group of mentors and mentees.

Most programs tend to focus on activities for all participants (group activities) and activities specifically for mentors (trainings, peer learning) with activities for newcomers being limited or non-existent. One program does organize a recurring activity which is quite unique. Intended as a way to engage newcomers who have not been paired with a mentor yet, FC [program name] is a football team entirely composed of newcomers. They train every week with a trainer who is also a newcomer. They compete in matches and have even played against a team from a prison in the region. According to the coordinator, FC [program name] is a great way for newcomers of different background to interact with one another, to develop relationships and to help each other if needed.

6.3 Recommendations

- *Programs should provide training for mentors. They can organize trainings themselves and/or seek partnerships with organizations that offer relevant mentor or volunteer training sessions*
- *Programs should require mentors to attend pre-match training sessions on topics that the mentor should know about before starting their mentoring relationship (e.g., program-specific trainings such as the social map of the city)*
- *Programs should provide an additional selection of voluntary post-match training sessions for topics that could benefit mentors but are not pivotal to the success of the mentoring relationship*
- *Programs should communicate the selection of training sessions to mentors at the start of the mentoring period*
- *Programs should make sure that their own trainings are interactive, use visual tools and case studies, and offer concrete advice that the mentors can use in their mentoring relationship*
- *Programs should organize regular peer learning sessions for mentors to exchange tips and experiences. Participation should be voluntary*
- *Programs should ask input from participants when organizing program-specific training and peer learning sessions so that their needs guide the agenda and discussion*
- *Programs should organize at least one voluntary group activity per mentoring period*
- *Programs should involve participants in the organization of the group activities*
- *Programs should allow participants to bring their families to the group activities*
- *Programs may explore opportunities for cooperation with other organizations who are better equipped to organize fun group activities*

7 | Governance

7.1 According to the literature

A successful mentoring program requires coordination and cooperation between partner organizations. According to Vandermeerschen and De Cuyper (2018), there is no ‘one fix’ solution or explanation as to why coordination between partner organizations works in some cases, while it remains a challenge in others. They do offer some suggestions that can improve cooperation and the continuity of the program.

When multiple organizations bear responsibility for the mentoring program, there should be a clear framework in place that outlines the responsibilities of each organization e.g., who will be responsible for recruitment, who will do the follow-up, who is the point of contact for which issues etc. However, it is equally important that sufficient priority is given to the mentoring program. As such, the responsibility should not be spread out too much. To foster continuity, Vandermeerschen and De Cuyper (2018) also stress the importance of building a network. This could, for example, help in the mentor recruitment phase of the mentoring process. Developing a clear framework for cooperation is even more important when the organizations involved have separate interests e.g., one may be involved more on the mentor side while the other thinks from the perspective of the mentees. In such situations, a ‘common denominator’ needs to be sought and made explicit to avoid frustration between partners.

In their report on labor market assistance schemes for refugees, Kyle et al. (2004) note that establishing partnerships with other relevant service providers, such as those involved in housing or language acquisition, is an important step to effectively assist refugees in their personal and career development.

While extant literature notes the importance of cooperation, it does not provide any evidence for the effectiveness of certain types of organizational models and cooperation approaches. There is also no scientific literature on the effectiveness of various sources of funding. Van ’t Hoog et al. (2012) does point out that evaluation and monitoring of results and goals can not only improve the quality of a program, but also help to convince funders of the necessity of (further) funding.

7.2 In practice

7.2.1 Organization

Table 9 Program organizational models

Centralized model
Dual or plural model

The most common organizational model among social mentoring programs is the centralized model in which one organization is responsible for all aspects of the program: recruitment, screening, matching, follow-up, etc. This does not mean that the organization does not cooperate with other organizations, but they do not share formal responsibility for the program.

Another, less common, model is the dual or plural model in which two or more organizations are responsible for the mentoring program. Organizations that adopt a dual or plural model might divide their tasks so that one is responsible for the recruitment and selection and another for other aspects of the program. Alternatively, organizations could work together and simply divide the work, with each organization still being involved in every aspect of the mentoring program. For example, one of the mentoring programs is organized by a non-profit organization and a municipality. Both recruit, screen, match, and support mentors and mentees. The coordination of the program is done collaboratively. They might divide certain tasks because one of the coordinators is better equipped for it but there is no formal task division. One coordinator is younger and more adept at digital matters, so they take care of the promotion and social media of the program. The other, who works at the municipality, has more direct connections to social workers and thus primarily arranges referrals.

Table 9 Cooperation with partners/stakeholders

Structural, formal cooperation with partners
Ad-hoc, informal cooperation with stakeholders

Mentoring programs can cooperate with external organizations for different aspects of the program. For example, programs can formalize their cooperation with referrers or, as one program has done, they can enter into an agreement with external organizations to organize group activities for the program participants. Some mentoring programs enter into structural and formalized partnerships while others enter into partnerships on an ad-hoc basis. An example is a program's cooperation with a training institute that gives a one-time training for mentors about a specific topic.

To improve cooperation with partners and stakeholders, several coordinators stress the importance of adequate coordination between the organizations. One of the programs, whose recruitment of mentees strongly relies on referrals, maintains regular communication with referrers and organizes an annual meeting specifically for their referrers. This allows them to re-emphasize the objectives and specificities of the program and improve their cooperation. In addition, most coordinators remain in regular contact with other mentoring programs in their city or region. By coordinating amongst mentoring programs, they can cooperate where useful, for example to organize mentor training

sessions together, and refer candidates to each other when they appear to be a better fit for another mentoring program. One program is even in the process of creating a network of local mentoring programs to improve their cooperation and coordination.

7.2.2 Cost structure

Table 10 Sources of income

Public resources (European, national, regional, or local governments and institutions)
Structural funding
Project-based funding
Private resources
Own resources
Voluntary support

Social mentoring programs can be organized with limited resources. In the beginning, programs usually make some initial investments in the development of materials (e.g., flyers, website) and the publicity of the program. After some time, such costs will be significantly reduced. Personnel costs are the most significant costs to consider and are often the only costs covered by public funding resources. Nevertheless, some coordinators do stress the importance of additional funding to upscale the program over time and/or to expand the program with extra activities and support measures.

One of the main sources of funding are public resources such as structural government support. Since many social mentoring programs are organized by municipalities, they usually receive their funding directly from the local government. Other programs benefit from project-based funding such as one program that applied for and received grant money from an emergency corona fund of the local Public Centre for Social Welfare. While such funding can help new projects get off the ground, it comes with its own disadvantages. Project-based funds are finite in length. The grant money that one of the programs relies on is only available for one year. While the program is hoping for an extension at the end of the year, they have no guarantee and are thus forced to explore other options such as securing other grants or subsidies. This insecurity, while very common among social mentoring programs, is not conducive to innovation and expansion. Coordinators are unlikely to develop and/or expand their program if they are unsure about the program's continuity.

Coordinator

"I think the pitfall is sustainability or continuity. We would like to set up a theme [for activities] some time but our problem is that we cannot keep up that pace and I don't think that is correct towards the mentors or the newcomers when you say 'yes, we are going to start theme months or theme evenings' and you do two. You really have to look for sustainability and a bit of recognition because for the mentors it has to be something familiar, and they have to know they can count on it. So, we have a lot of ideas, but we don't start them because we know at the moment that we can't realize them in the long term. So that's a pitfall I think, also your staffing and your follow-up and the sustainability of your entire operation."

To ensure or at least improve a program's sustainability or continuity, coordinators do emphasize the need for structural funding. One of the programs started out as a partnership between four organizations. They received funding from the regional government. When that funding dried up, every organization except for one pulled out. However, the remaining organization was able to gather support from the local government, which has been funding the program ever since. Nowadays, the

program is well-known and respected and there is no indication that the local government will stop funding it any time soon. According to several coordinators, finding such structural solutions is not only necessary for the continuity of the program, it also releases coordinators from the burden of finding grants and subsidies or other financial support and allows them to devote their time to the development and support of the actual mentoring process.

Programs can also use private funds, either in addition to or instead of public funds. Some programs are organized by organizations, who can use their own – though often limited – resources to (partially) fund the program. For example, one of the programs used to be organized by a municipality and a non-profit organization. During the first three years, they received funding from the national government. Once the funding was no longer available, the non-profit organization considered the value and cost of the program and decided to continue it on its own. However, even now, they can still ask for funding from the municipality if they, for example, want to organize a group activity for the participants of the program.

Programs sometimes also benefit from voluntary support from interns or volunteers of the program. The coordinator of one of the larger mentoring programs in Flanders devotes all of their time to day-to-day follow-up and support of the mentors. While they have many ideas for expansion, they lack the time, funding, and personnel to set anything in motion. In general, mentoring programs are often understaffed due to limited funds. To further expand the program and develop new trainings, activities, and other ideas, the program is now looking for an intern. Another program's website was created and maintained by a volunteer of the program. Even though both programs receive structural funding, such funding typically only covers personnel costs. To organize anything that goes beyond the day-to-day work of the coordinator thus requires voluntary forms of assistance.

7.3 Recommendations

- *Programs should determine whether they want to adopt a centralized or a dual/plural model*
- *If programs adopt a dual/plural model, they should develop a clear framework that outlines the responsibilities of each partner organization*
- *Programs should build a network and establish partnerships with other relevant service providers who can help with different phases of the mentoring process e.g., social workers who can refer mentees to the program or socio-cultural organizations that can organize group activities for the mentoring program*
- *Programs should build a network with other mentoring programs to facilitate referrals and cooperate, for example by offering joint training sessions for mentors*
- *Program should try to obtain structural funding to improve the continuity of the program*
- *Programs should try to find additional funding options or other forms of support and use it to further develop aspects of the program that are not typically covered by structural funding e.g., group activities*
- *Programs should involve their participants in the organization of certain aspects of the program such as group activities and allow participants with useful skills (e.g., digital skills) to assist the program coordinator where necessary*
- *Programs should hire interns to assist the program coordinator in the day-to-day running of the program (if necessary) and to develop new ideas that can contribute to participant satisfaction and continuity of the program*
- *Programs should use their evaluation and monitoring results to convince funders of the necessity of (additional) funding*

8 | Evaluation

8.1 According to the literature

According to González Garibay and De Cuyper (2013), many projects do not evaluate their project goals and/or provide little insight into how their project helps to achieve those goals. Evaluation is not only necessary for improving the program, it is also useful information to share with (potential) funders. While it is difficult to determine the role of mentoring in the mentee's development and outcomes, insight can be gained by measuring 'soft' results in addition to 'hard' results. 'Soft' results can then show the intermediate steps taken on the way to 'hard' results, such as employment (Van Dooren & De Cuyper, 2015).

There is no scientific literature on the effectiveness of various evaluation options for social mentoring programs.

8.2 In practice

None of the programs we studied have a substantial evaluation procedure. Those that do offer some evaluation usually work with self-evaluation tools that measure 'soft' results. For example, before corona restrictions, one of the programs asked their mentors and mentees to answer several questions via a quiz app on their phone during the closing event. Currently, they use a Google Forms evaluation form. Other programs that evaluate their program might schedule a final 'evaluation' meeting between the coordinator and the mentor and/or mentee or include an evaluation moment in their closing event.

Most programs have a basic overview of their active and inactive mentors and mentees that includes relevant information, for example the information they shared during their intake, and may also include an 'evaluation' tab. According to one of the programs, this is both useful for their final reports to their funder and for themselves, so they know which concerns to address. However, none of the programs use a formal monitoring and evaluation framework or consistently measure the impact of the program.

The size of most social mentoring programs most likely plays a role in the lack of evaluation measures. Most programs are small and only have one employee, the coordinator. Since they work by themselves, most coordinators hardly if ever evaluate the program beyond brief reflection after the end of a mentoring period. This is a point of improvement that will be addressed in the ORIENT8 project.

HIVA-KU Leuven will develop an evaluation frame for the partner municipalities of the ORIENT8 project.

- APPENDICES -

appendix 1 Information, flyers and brochures

COMPAGNONS 2.0 SPELREGELS



WAT VERWACHTEN WE VAN JOU?

- Jullie ontmoeten elkaar minstens 2 maal per maand, gedurende 6 maanden.
- **VRIJE KEUZE** in wat jullie graag samen doen: Nederlands oefenen, leuke activiteiten (wandelen, sport, cinema, koken,...).
- COMPAGNONS is een vrije-tijdsproject: het is geen hulpverlening, geen datingbureau, geen taxi, geen bank en geen school.
- Terugkoppeling van activiteiten op een intervisiemoment en eindevaluatie op slotreceptie.
- Alle administratieve & financiële problemen worden doorverwezen naar een maatschappelijk werker.
- De samenwerking tussen Compagnons is een vrijwillig engagement op basis van respect en wederkerigheid.
- Kun je niet afspreken breng je compagnon daarvan tijdig op de hoogte .
- Bij onderlinge problemen of vragen, bel of mail naar Ann of Xavier .
- Je mag ons steeds foto's of anekdotes doorsturen van de leuke dingen die jullie doen !!!

WAT KAN JE VAN ONS VERWACHTEN?

- Bij de start krijgen alle Compagnons een **WELKOM-pakket** met informatie en gratis toegangstickets voor 3 attracties/activiteiten (Mu.Zee, KV Oostende, Fort Napoleon,...).
- **Maandelijke activiteitenkalender** met inspiratie voor gratis of goedkope activiteiten die je samen kan doen.
- Informatie over de **UITPAS** (indien je dit nog niet hebt)
- Wij zorgen voor **twee plezierige groepsactiviteiten** (gratis)
- Een gezellige **slotreceptie** met de groep.

BIJ VRAGEN OF PROBLEMEN KAN JE ONS BEREIKEN VIA

Xavier Holvoet (FMDO vzw) – xavier@fmdo.be – 0487 61 53 43
Ann Deschacht (Stad Oostende) – ann.deschacht@sho.be – 0493 31 99 99



Om het project Compagnons bekend te maken, geef je al dan niet de toelating om jouw foto's/beeldmateriaal te publiceren op de Facebookpagina, stadswaerbsite of gedrukte pers van de werking.

Ik geef Compagnons **de toelating** mijn foto's/beeldmateriaal gemaakt tijdens activiteiten te publiceren om het project positief in beeld te brengen.

Ik geef Compagnons **geén toelating** mijn foto's/beeldmateriaal gemaakt tijdens activiteiten te publiceren om het project positief in beeld te brengen.

Gelezen en goedgekeurd,

Naam en handtekening:

“Mijn buddy is zoals familie, die ik hier in België niet heb”
 Filmon uit Eritrea

Interesse?
www.fedasil.be/nl/buddy

Word buddy!

Wat doet een buddy?

Je trekt er af en toe op uit voor een leuke **uitstap**

Je laat de persoon kennismaken met het leven in België en ondersteunt zo zijn **integratie**

Jullie ontmoetingen zijn ideale momenten om het **Nederlands** te oefenen

Buddy's spreken vlot Nederlands en zijn +18 jaar

**“Mijn buddy-gezin
vormt mijn familie
in België”**

Warda en dochter Sara uit Somalië



Interesse?
[www.fedasil.be/
nl/buddy](http://www.fedasil.be/nl/buddy)

Word buddy!

Wat doet een buddy?



Je trekt er af en toe op uit
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Jullie ontmoetingen
zijn ideale momenten
om het **Nederlands** te
oefenen



Buddy's spreken vlot Nederlands en zijn +18 jaar

fedasil
FEDERAAL AGENTSCHAP VOOR
DE OPVANG VAN ABELZOEKERS

**“Dankzij mijn buddy
voel ik me hier
echt thuis”**

Mibrak uit Eritrea

Interesse?
[www.fedasil.be/
nl/buddy](http://www.fedasil.be/nl/buddy)

Word buddy!

Wat doet een buddy?



Je trekt er af en toe op uit
voor een leuke
uitstap



Je laat de persoon
kennismaken met het leven
in België en ondersteunt zo
zijn **integratie**



Jullie ontmoetingen
zijn ideale momenten
om het **Nederlands** te
oefenen

fedasil
FEDERAAL AGENTSCHAP VOOR
DE OPVANG VAN ASIELZOEKERS

Buddy's spreken vlot Nederlands en zijn +18 jaar



Samen Nederlands praten
Samen Gent leren kennen
Samen activiteiten doen



meer info? 09 265 78 40 • www.in-gent.be

Wat is het?

Bij Samen Gentenaar ontmoeten Gentenaren en nieuwe Gentenaren elkaar in duo. Hierdoor leren ze elkaar en de stad beter kennen en kunnen anderstaligen Nederlands oefenen.



Hoe werkt het?

Stel je kandidaat en kom naar het infomoment. Je ontmoet elkaar de eerste keer op het startmoment bij IN-Gent.

Daarna kiezen jullie zelf waar en wanneer jullie samenkomen. Gedurende 6 maand ontmoet je elkaar om de 2 weken. Samen kiezen jullie activiteiten. Je kan Nederlands oefenen, de stad leren kennen, praten over wat je interesseert, wandelen,...



Wil je meedoen of heb je vragen?
samengentenaar@in-gent.be
of 09/265.78.40



Samen Gentenaar is een initiatief van IN-Gent vzw.

V.U.: Astrid De Bruycker, voorzitter IN-Gent vzw, Kongostraat 42, 9000 Gent

tandem



meer info? 09 265 78 40 • www.in-gent.be

- Kwam je met je gezin naar België en vind je het moeilijk om zelf de weg te vinden?
- Wil je Gent leren kennen met iemand die dezelfde taal spreekt als jij?
- Wil je plaatsen leren kennen die interessant zijn voor jou en je kinderen?

Dan is ons project **TANDEM** iets voor jou!

Je krijgt een buddy die jouw taal spreekt en ook goed Nederlands spreekt.

Jullie gaan samen op bezoek naar organisaties die interessant zijn voor jou en je gezin.

Er zijn ook groepsactiviteiten. Daar leer je ook andere mensen kennen.

Waar en wanneer?

Je spreekt zelf af met je buddy om activiteiten te doen.

Je kiest zelf wat jullie doen en wanneer.

Jullie doen 2 keer per maand een activiteit samen.

Wil je meedoen?

Schrijf in via je trajectbegeleider of maatschappelijk assistent of via Drieske (**tandem@in-gent.be** of 0488 85 67 43).

website: **www.in-gent.be/tandem**



V.U.: Astrid De Bruycker, voorzitter IN-Gent vzw, Kongostraat 42, 9000 Gent



Vlaanderen
verbeelding werkt



In-Gent
integratie en insburgering

appendix 2 Intake forms for mentees



REGISTRATIEFORMULIER NIEUW KOMER

Datum aanvraag:

Naam en contactinformatie doorverwijzer:

Algemene informatie:

Voornaam:

Naam:

Geslacht:

Geboortedatum:

Herkomstland:

Adres:

Telefoon:

Mailadres:

Aankomstdatum België + Leuven:

Gezinssituatie / burgerlijke stand?

Gezin in Leuven?

Naam partner?

Kinderen + naam + leeftijd?

School en leerjaar van de kinderen in Leuven?

Kennis & Ervaring

Moedertaal?

Nederlands (spreken - lezen - schrijven)?

NT2-school + behaald niveau?

Kennis andere talen?

Gevolgd opleiding en scholingsgraad in herkomstland?

Beroepservaring in herkomstland?

Opleiding en/of tewerkstelling in België?

Buddywerking anderstalige nieuwkomer Leuven (20/01/20)





Maatschappelijk welzijn = leefsituatie + wie in het netwerk (professionelen en niet-professionelen)?



- Woonsituatie?
- Inkomen?
- Psychisch welzijn + fysieke gezondheid?
- Sociaal isolement?
- Zelfredzaamheid?
- Interesses/hobby's?
- Andere?

Verwachtingen tav buddy

- Nederlands oefenen (specificeer)
- Wonen
- School/ opleiding/ werk
- Administratieve ondersteuning
- Vrije tijd en sociale activiteiten (specificeer)
- Welzijn en gezondheid
- Andere

Geslacht buddy: Man Vrouw Maakt niet uit
 Beschikbaarheid buddy: Overdag Avond Weekend Maakt niet uit

Extra opmerkingen?

Voor Akkoord (datum & handtekening):

Naam nieuwkomer:

Naam doorverwijzer:

Afspraken toeladers:

- Deze volledig ingevulde aanvraag kan bezorgd worden op diversiteit@leuven.be met in titel: Aanvraag buddy + Naam nieuwkomer. Voorafgaand een gesprek met de nieuwkomer om de buddywerking te duiden en het akkoord van de nieuwkomer hiervoor te verzekeren.
- Als u problemen ervaart graag deze tijdig melden aan yusuf.farah@leuven.be. Ook feedback en suggesties voor onze buddywerking blijven welkom!

Privacyverklaring:

Uw persoonsgegevens worden verwerkt door vzw Divers Leuven, Professor Van Overstraetenplein 1 3000 Leuven, voor het beheer van het vrijwilligersbestand en de organisatie van activiteiten in relatie tot uw inschrijving als nieuwkomer of als buddy. Dit om de concrete uitvoering van het buddytraject te verzekeren, om u op de hoogte te houden van onze activiteiten of informatie te verschaffen. Wij geven geen persoonsgegevens door aan andere partijen, tenzij dit nodig is voor de uitvoering van het vrijwilligerswerk of buddytraject waarvoor deze gegevens zijn verstrekt. Indien u niet wil dat wij uw gegevens verwerken met het oog op vrijwilligerswerk of in relatie tot het buddytraject, volstaat het ons dat mee te delen op diversiteit@leuven.be. Via dit adres kan u ook altijd vragen welke gegevens wij over u verwerken en ze verbeteren of laten wissen, of ze vragen over te dragen. Een meer uitgebreid overzicht van ons beleid op het vlak van verwerking van persoonsgegevens vindt u op <https://www.leuven.be/privacyverklaring-stad-leuven>
 Te bezorgen aan Afdeling Diversiteit en Gelijke kansen stad Leuven: diversiteit@leuven.be



INTAKEFORMULIER NIEUWKOMER

Stel jezelf voor en zeg dat je eerst algemene informatie gaat opvragen.



ALGEMENE INFORMATIE

naam

voornaam

geslacht

man

vrouw

geboortedatum

Ben je alleen of heb je een gezin, partner?

Heb je kinderen?

ja

neen

Hoeveel en wat is hun leeftijd?

Waar woon je? (adres)

Wat is jouw telefoonnummer?

E-mail:

Facebook (actief gebruiker?)

Wat is je land van herkomst?

Hoe lang ben je al in België?

Hoe lang ben je al in Oostende?

Welk niveau Nederlands volg je? (Richtgraad)

Spreek je Nederlands buiten de school? Zijn er personen of vrienden met wie je Nederlands kan oefenen?

Werkte je in je land van herkomst en welk werk deed je? Heb je gestudeerd, welke studies?

Wat weet je van Compagnons? Weet je hoe het werkt en wat je kan verwachten? Ken je personen die al hebben deelgenomen?

Heb je een hobby zoals bijvoorbeeld sport, koken, muziek, ...

TIP: VRAAG DOOR BIJ INPUT INBURGERAARS. Bv:

- muziek: speel je zelf een instrument? Wat luister je graag?
- voetbal: kijk je graag naar voetbalmatches? Speel je zelf in een ploeg?

IN GEVAL VAN KINDEREN: VRAAG OOK NAAR HUN HOBBIES EN INTERESSES. Bv: deden ze een hobby in hun thuisland? Doen ze een hobby in België? Willen ze iets specifiek doen in België? (muziek, sport, jeugdbeweging, huiswerkbegeleiding...)

Zijn er nieuwe dingen die je graag wil leren (kennen) in België of Oostende? (eten, cultuur,...)

Waarom wil je deelnemen aan COMPAGNONS? (Duid aan.)

- Ik wil nieuwe mensen leren kennen
- Ik wil vaker Nederlands praten.
- Ik wil graag de stad beter leren kennen.
- Ik wil meer in mijn vrije tijd doen.
- Andere:

Wanneer ben je vooral beschikbaar?

- vooral overdag
- vooral 's avonds
- vooral in het weekend
- maakt niet uit

Ik ben nooit beschikbaar op volgende momenten:

Heb je nog extra informatie die voor ons/dit project belangrijk kan zijn?

WAT HEB JE LIEFST?

Geslacht

man

vrouw

maakt niet uit

Leeftijd

20-30

40-50

30-40

50+

Heb je graag een buddy met kinderen? Wil je graag in familieverband afspreken?

ja

maakt niet uit

TOELICHTING PROJECT ADHV DOCUMENT "Spelregels"

REMINDER: NEEM FOTO INBURGERAAR VOOR INTERN GEBRUIK

NOTITIES

Ruimte voor opmerkingen (wat voor persoon is dit? heb je een idee van wat voor buddy hij/zij wel of niet moet hebben? heb je er een bepaald buikgevoel bij?)



appendix 3 Intake forms for mentors



REGISTRATIEFORMULIER BUDDY

Algemene informatie

Voornaam:

Naam:

Geslacht:

Geboortedatum:

Herkomstland:

Adres:

Telefoon:

Mailadres:

Gezinssituatie / burgerlijke stand:

Kinderen + leeftijd?

Kennis & Ervaring

Moedertaal?

Kennis van andere talen?

Opleiding?

Beroepservaring?

Beroepsactief?

Interesses/Hobby's?

Andere?

Motivatie: Waarom wil je buddy worden?



Engagement

Wat zou je willen/kunnen opnemen met de nieuwkomer (aanduiden wat van toepassing is)?
We proberen optimaal te matchen, maar verwachten een bredere inzet als dit nodig blijkt.

- Nederlands oefenen (specificeer)
- Wonen
- School/ opleiding/ werk
- Administratieve ondersteuning
- Vrije tijd en sociale activiteiten (specificeer)
- Welzijn en gezondheid
- Andere

Profiel Nieuwkomer

We proberen optimaal te matchen met prioriteit aan de meest kwetsbare nieuwkomers.

Geslacht:	Man	Vrouw			Maakt niet uit
Leeftijd:	18-25	25-35	35-50	50+	Maakt niet uit
Gezinssituatie:	Alleenstaand	Koppel	Gezin		Maakt niet uit
Niveau Nederlands:	Beginner	Gevorderde			Maakt niet uit
Beschikbaarheid:	Overdag	Avond	Weekend	Maakt niet uit	

Extra opmerkingen?

Uittreksel Strafregister:

Bezorgd

Niet bezorgd

Voor Akkoord (datum + handtekening):

Privacyverklaring:

Uw persoonsgegevens worden verwerkt door vzw Divers Leuven, Professor Van Overstraetenplein 1 3000 Leuven, voor het beheer van het vrijwilligersbestand en de organisatie van activiteiten in relatie tot uw inschrijving als vrijwilliger of buddy voor nieuwkomers. Dit om de concrete uitvoering van het buddytraject te verzekeren, om u op de hoogte te houden van onze activiteiten of informatie te verschaffen. Wij geven geen persoonsgegevens door aan andere partijen, tenzij dit nodig is voor de uitvoering van het vrijwilligerswerk of buddytraject waarvoor deze gegevens zijn verstrekt. Indien u niet wil dat wij uw gegevens verwerken met het oog op vrijwilligerswerk of in relatie tot het buddytraject, volstaat het ons dat mee te delen op diversiteit@leuven.be. Via dit adres kan u ook altijd vragen welke gegevens wij over u verwerken en ze verbeteren of laten wissen, of ze vragen over te dragen. Een meer uitgebreid overzicht van ons beleid op het vlak van verwerking van persoonsgegevens vindt u op <https://www.leuven.be/privacyverklaring-stad-leuven>.
Te bezorgen aan Afdeling Diversiteit en Gelijke kansen stad Leuven: diversiteit@leuven.be



Inschrijvingsformulier - buddy's

fedasil
FEDERAAL AGENTSCHAP VOOR
DE OPVANG VAN ASIELZOEKERS

U mag het ingevulde formulier versturen naar info. _____@fedasil.be.

Een medewerker van het opvangcentrum neemt daarna contact met u op.

PERSONLIJKE GEGEVENS

Voornaam en naam: _____

Adres: _____

Postcode en woonplaats: _____

Telefoonnummer(s): _____

E-mail: _____

Geboortedatum en plaats: _____

Nationaliteit: _____

Beroep: _____

Hobby's / interesses: _____

Ik neem deel: individueel in gezinsverband

Heel wat bewoners van ons opvangcentrum willen graag een buddy. Onder hen zowel niet-begeleide minderjarigen als volwassenen, zowel alleenstaande mannen als vrouwen, al dan niet met kind, soms ook een gezin. Hebt u zelf enige voorkeur voor bepaalde profielen? (hou er wel rekening mee dat een matching in dit geval soms moeilijker kan verlopen.)

- Geen voorkeur
- Niet-begeleide minderjarige (15-18 jaar)
- Volwassene (18+)
 - Alleenstaande man
 - Alleenstaande vrouw
 - Alleenstaande man met kind
 - Alleenstaande vrouw met kind
 - Gezin

(Niet van toepassing in centra waar enkel buddy's voor minderjarigen worden gezocht)

INDIEN VAN TOEPASSING: GEGEVENS VAN OVERIGE GEZINSLEDEN

Gezinssamenstelling: (aantal volwassenen, aantal kinderen, leeftijden):

ALGEMENE GEGEVENS

Spreekt u nog andere talen dan Nederlands. Zo ja, welke?

Beschikt u over eigen vervoer?

Bent u in het bezit van huisdieren? Zo ja, welke?

Wat is uw motivatie om deel te nemen aan dit project?

Hebt u al een idee over invulling van het contact? Welke activiteiten, de frequentie, ...?

Heeft u ervaring met soortgelijke projecten / omgaan met mensen uit andere culturen (niet vereist)?

Hoe hoorde u over het buddyproject?

Andere wetenswaardigheden: specifieke hobby's of vaste uitstappen die u onderneemt? Zaken die u graag als buddy wil doen?

INTAKEFORMULIER BUDDY

Stel jezelf voor als stagiair/projectmedewerker.
Stel het project COMPAGNONS voor,

Focus op vrije tijd: Nederlands oefenen, Oostende leren kennen,
hobbies en interesses delen. Gedurende 6 maanden ga je op stap
met een nieuwkomer.

Geef **kalender** en het document **spelregels**



ALGEMENE INFORMATIE

naam

voornaam

geslacht

man

vrouw

geboortedatum

adres

telefoonnummer

mail

Facebook (actief gebruiker?)

burgerlijke staat

getrouwd

alleenstaand

samenwonend

gescheiden

kinderen

ja

neen

> hoeveel

> leeftijd(en)

FOTO



JOUW VERWACHTINGEN T.A.V. COMPAGNONS

Hoe heb je dit initiatief leren kennen?

Waarom wil je deelnemen?

- Wat sprak je aan? Waar kijk je naar uit?
- Wat zijn jouw verwachtingen? Naar jullie afspraken per twee, naar ons als ondersteuners? Wat hoop je te leren?
- Heb je ervaring met de doelgroep (= anderstaligen, nieuwkomers,...)?
- Hoe zie jij je rol als buddy?
- Wil je graag afspreken in familieverband (kinderen/partner van jezelf/inburgeraar)?

*Eventuele toelichting:
de deelnemers zijn zeker niet allemaal vluchtelingen, er zijn vaak ook Europeanen, of arbeidsmigranten bij.*

Gevolgde opleiding / werk je? Zo ja, wat doe je van werk?

Bezigheden en ervaringen (hobby's, reizen, kunst en cultuur, ervaring met vrijwilligerswerk of andere projecten)

appendix 4 Other materials

a4.1 Leuven - thank you card for mentors



We waarderen erg je vrijwillige inzet
voor anderstalige Leuvenaars
tijdens dit Corona-gekleurde jaar.

Dank je wel!



HELLO

Hé buddy,

Februari is weer voorbij gevlogen... Dat betekent tijd voor een nieuwe nieuwsbrief!
Wat mag je in deze nieuwsbrief verwachten?

- Ba(b)bel conversatietafels
- Tips om digitaal Nederlands te oefenen
- Uitspraaklessen
- Werking van Kirikou
- Sociaal tarief gas en elektriciteit

... en nog veel meer!

TAAL

Bab(b)el: Nederlandse conversatietafels



Maandelijks worden er in de bib Bab(b)els georganiseerd. Dit zijn conversatietafels om je talenkennis bij te schaven en nieuwe mensen te leren kennen. De Nederlandse tafels zijn zowel voor beginners als gevorderden. Door de huidige maatregelen gaan de sessies digitaal door via Zoom. Inschrijven is verplicht en kan nog tot woensdag 3 maart via [deze link](#).



Digitaal Nederlands oefenen

Vind je het ook niet altijd makkelijk om Nederlands te oefenen in deze Corona tijden? Kan je wel wat extra inspiratie gebruiken? In dit filmpje krijg je concrete tips om digitaal aan de slag te gaan!



Uitspraaklessen

CVO VOLT organiseert uitspraaklessen voor beginners en gevorderden. De cursus bestaat uit 9 lessen gericht op klanken, uitspraakproblemen, intonatie en woordaccent in het Nederlands. Elke groep bestaat uit maximaal 14 deelnemers. De lessen starten op woensdag 24 maart. Inschrijven kan je [hier](#).

BUDDYTIPS

Werking Kirikou

Kirikou is een initiatief van Huis van het Kind Leuven waarbij kwetsbare gezinnen gratis baby- en kindermateriaal kunnen verkrijgen.



Zij werken daarvoor samen met verschillende partnerorganisaties om zoveel mogelijk kwetsbare jonge gezinnen op deze manier te kunnen ondersteunen.

Alle materiaal is tweedehands en onmiddellijk bruikbaar. Kirikou ontvangt materiaal van Leuvense inwoners en het wordt zorgvuldig nagekeken door de vrijwilligers van Kirikou.



Alle materiaal voor baby's en kindjes tot 12 jaar: speelgoed, kleren, eetgerei, alles voor bad en bed, sportkledij, schoolmateriaal,...

Op de website vind je een catalogus met al het materiaal. Het meeste materiaal wordt geschonken, enkele duurzame materialen worden uitgeleend en vragen we om terug te brengen/te laten ophalen als het gezin het zelf niet meer nodig heeft.

Heeft het gezin dat je begeleidt nood aan baby- en kinderspullen? Neem dan contact op met Yusuf voor meer informatie.



Sociaal tarief gas en elektriciteit

Vanaf 1 februari 2021 zullen personen die een verhoogde tegemoetkoming ontvangen gedurende 1 jaar recht hebben op het sociaal tarief voor gas en elektriciteit.

Momenteel komen zo'n 500.000 gezinnen hiervoor in aanmerking. Vanaf 1 februari komen er ongeveer 447.000 gezinnen extra bij.

In principe zal deze toekenning automatisch gebeuren. Wanneer blijkt, bijvoorbeeld na contact met de energieleverancier, dat het sociaal tarief toch niet is toegekend dan moet je een attest bij de mutualiteit aanvragen. De mutualiteiten hebben attesten voorzien voor de energieleveranciers voor manuele toekenning van het sociaal tarief. Het is echter wel belangrijk om weten dat omwille van privacy de mutualiteit zelf geen attest kan opsturen naar de leverancier. Je moet dus zelf een attest aanvragen en dit wordt vervolgens digitaal of op papier bezorgd. Nadien bezorgt men dit persoonlijk aan de leverancier.

Personen of gezinnen die denken in aanmerking te komen voor verhoogde tegemoetkoming omwille van een laag inkomen, kunnen steeds aan hun mutualiteit vragen om dit recht te onderzoeken.



WEETJES

Dekolonisatietraject



De stad wil dat iedereen meetelt en zich thuis voelt in Leuven, en dat onze publieke ruimte de diversiteit in onze stad weerspiegelt. Daarom verzamelt de stad Leuven tot en met 31 maart 2021 ideeën om de publieke ruimte meer divers te maken, zonder ons koloniale verleden uit te wissen. Met een kunstwerk, spelelement, ontmoetingsplek, festival, stadswandeling... We zoeken ideeën om dingen toe te voegen aan de publieke ruimte. Het is niet de bedoeling nog verwijzingen naar het koloniale verleden, zoals standbeelden, te verwijderen.

Dit kan een interessant thema zijn om samen met je nieuwkomer te bespreken. Bundel jullie krachten en houd een kleine brainstorm.

Ideeën indienen kan via www.leuven.be/dekolonisatie en het online platform 'Leuven, Maak Het Mee'.

Bevraging Buren zonder Grenzen

Kwetsbare huurders hebben het niet makkelijk op Vlaamse huurmarkt.. Cruciaal daarbij zijn verhuurders: zij kiezen er vaak bewust voor om hun huurwoning te verhuren aan een kwetsbare huurder, en maken zo een wereld van verschil!

Daarom bevroeg Buren zonder Grenzen afgelopen herfst solidaire verhuurders in haar netwerk, en bracht in kaart hoe zij het ervaren om te verhuren aan erkende vluchtelingen met ondersteuning van vrijwilligers. Zo hoopt Buren zonder Grenzen de negatieve beeldvorming rond deze groep huurders te kunnen tegengaan.

De resultaten van de bevraging kan je [hier](#) lezen.



Week van de vrijwilliger

Van zaterdag 27 februari tot zondag 7 maart vieren we de Week van de Vrijwilliger 2021. Daarom heeft de stad een online event georganiseerd om haar vrijwilligers te bedanken. Jullie zijn namelijk van onschatbare waarde!

Dit online event vindt plaats op donderdag 4 maart, van 20 tot 21.15 uur. We kunnen jullie al verklappen dat het event gevuld zal zijn met een dankwoord van rector Luc Sels en burgemeester Mohamed Ridouani, een streepje a capella muziek door The Flat Nuts en een vleugje uit het leven gegrepen theater door improvisatietheatergezelschap Inspinazie. Online, maar zeker ook interactief!

Je vindt alle informatie [hier](#) terug.



Heb je na het lezen van deze nieuwsbrief nog vragen of suggesties? Laat het ons zeker weten via Yusuf.farah@leuven.be of 016 27 28 71



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