ABC of YOUTHWORK

www.abc-of-youthwork.eu

MENTORING SCHEME

Contents

Participating organisations:

Supported by:

1. Introduction

Mentoring scheme was written for mentors who will be implementing the mentoring process for managers in youth organisations (from now on referred as mentee). The purpose of mentoring is to increase the quality of youth work done in organisations that work with young people in the area of processes of engagement and sustainability in groups.

The key reference point of this mentoring process is the Quality System of Youth Work named The Youth Work Growth Circle that provides the theoretical model for the development of the organisations. At the same time, it is worth to notice that through the mentoring process the capacities of managers are also developed.

This mentoring scheme was developed within the strategic partnership "ABC of youth work" (http://abc-of-youthwork.eu) which is led by Socialna akademija (Slovenia) and co-created by Uniwersytet Jagiellonski (Poland), Starkmacher (Germany) and Media, Educazione, Comunità (Italy). It is a strategic partnership with an aim to raise the quality of youth work in European Union and inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities.

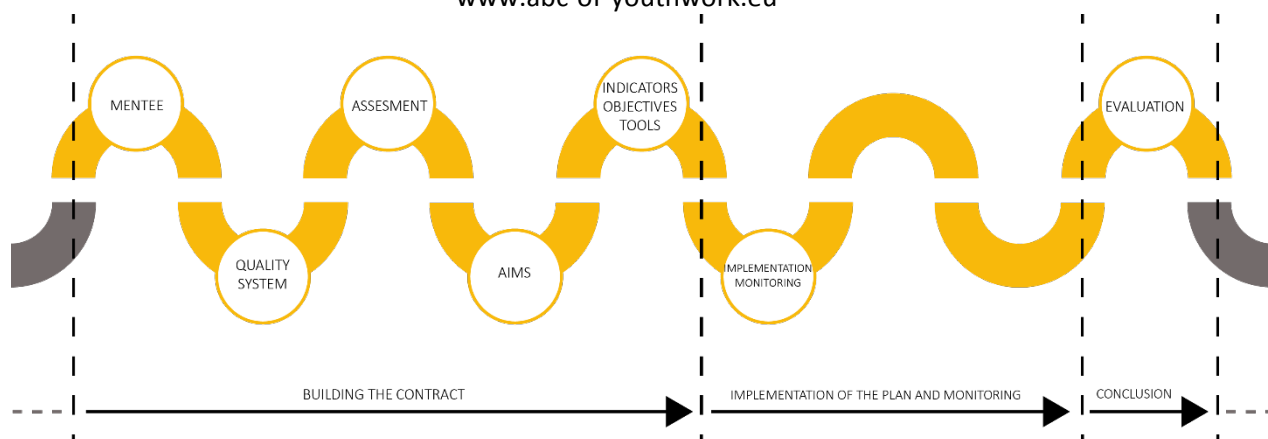# 2. Implementing the mentoring scheme

2.1 The process of outer boundaries

The mentoring process is consisted of three distinct phases.

- The first phase is building the contract between mentee and mentor. After getting to know each other, exploring the process steps and agreement on the process, the two partners define the envisaged results of the process and define the indicators of changes.
- The second phase is the implementation of the plan and monitoring of the results.
- The third phase is the conclusion of the mentoring process in which the evaluation of the whole process should take place and concrete steps for maintaining the developed qualities should be defined.

The first phase usually takes between 3 and 5 meetings while the second phase happens through longer period of time decided upon by both partners of the process in the initial stage. The third phase again takes 2 to 4 meetings for reflection and preparation of future steps.

The length and the interval of the meetings should also be agreed in advance. The usual length of the meetings is between 45 minutes and 1 and a half hours while the interval depends on the needs of mentee and is usually set between 1 and 6 weeks. Having in mind the work rhythm of the youth organisations the interval is often set to 3 or 4 weeks.
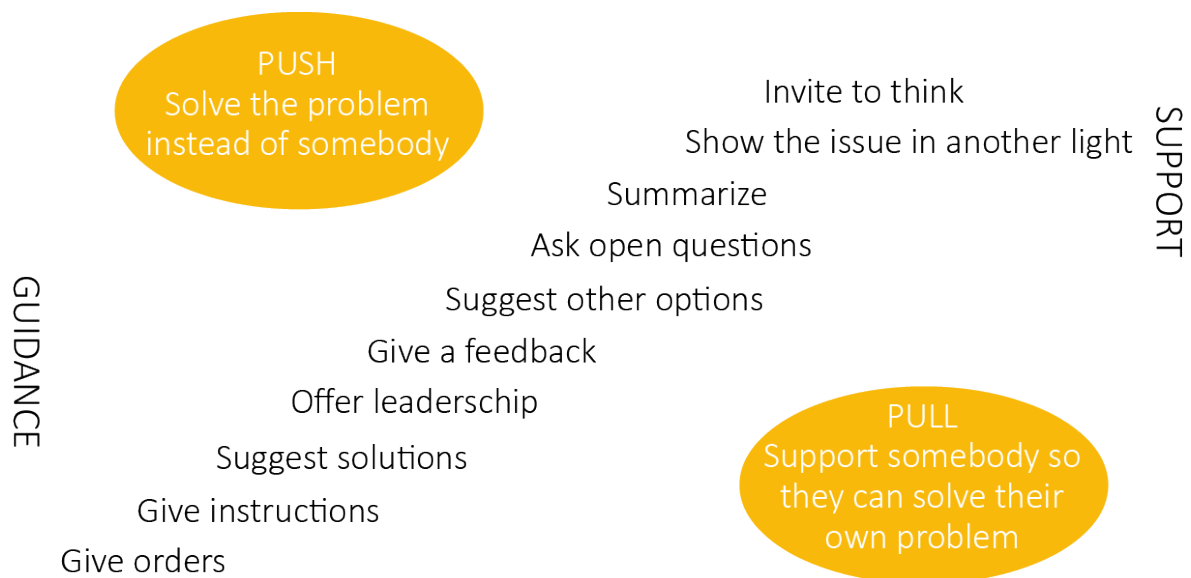
As you can see the initial and the concluding phase take a rather large amount of time. The logic of economy would therefore suggest that the mentoring processes are quite a substantial investment of time and energy from both sides which leads us in the direction of longer cooperation. At the same time, it is worth to notice that the transfer of values and attitudes from mentor to mentee take some time (in comparison to the transfer of knowledge and skills) and can only happen in long-term relationships.

2.2 The environment

Mentoring process requires intense concentration and often lead to exploring of vulnerabilities. Therefore, the environment needs to support both mentee and mentor. Pick a relaxed environment where you and your mentee will feel comfortable and will not be disturbed during your mentoring sessions. This doesn't mean just in the sense of physical presence of people, but also the elimination of the disturbances caused by digital communication devices.

It is very important that your mentee feels that he or she can trust you. Only with trust you will really get to know all the information about the organisation, the challenges faced and the mentee's weaker spots and vulnerabilities.

2.3 The fine line between guidance and support

PUSH
Solve the problem instead of somebody

Invite to think

Show the issue in another light

Summarize

Ask open questions

Suggest other options

Give a feedback

Offer leaderschip

Suggest solutions

Give instructions

Give orders

SUPPORT

GUIDANCE

PULL
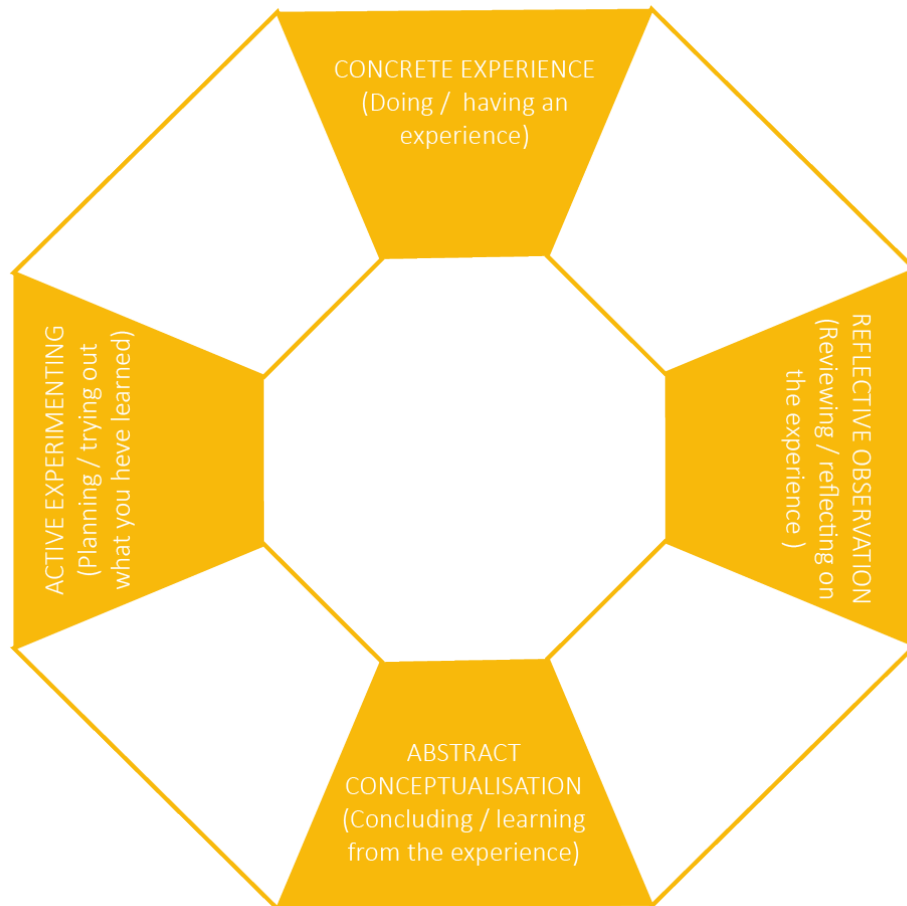Support somebody so they can solve their own problem

The mentoring approach always reflects the needs of mentees. Some mentees might wish for more guidance in a more directive approach filled with tips and tricks while others might need more non-directive support in order to grow from their own reflected experience. Finding the right balance depends not only on the learning style of the mentee and the capacities of the mentor but also on the topic we are dealing with. While mentees might need just space to reflect on some issues, more guidance might be needed on other topics.

3. Theoretical background

Before you start with your mentoring process, we would like you to get familiar with two theories that can help you understand the process of our preferred learning style model. This will help you understand basics of experimental learning and the simple method for setting goals and solving problems that will help you with facilitate the learning process of your mentee.

3.1. The Experiential Learning Cycle by Kolb

"Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience"
(Kolb, 1984, p. 38).

Kolb's experiential learning style theory is represented by four stages of learning:

1. Concrete Experience

At this stage you encourage your mentee to encounter a new experience, or reinterpret an existing one.

2. Reflective Observation

Mentee has to observe the experience and reflect on it. Pay attention to differences between any inconsistencies in his or her experiences and understanding.

3. Abstract Conceptualization

Reflection should lead your mentee to new ideas or modification of their existing abstract concept.

In this phase mentee forms new abstract concepts (analysis) and generalizations (conclusions).

4. Active Experimentation

in the fourth stage it is time for mentee's conclusions to be implemented in the organisation and observe the result. Mentee has a chance to test his or her hypothesis in future situations which lead to new experiences.

Kolb learning is an integrated process and each stage leads and supports the next. So it's possible to enter the cycle at any stage and follow its logical sequence. Usually entering a phase depends on your learning style.

However, keep in mind, that effective learning occurs only when you are able to implement all four stages of the cycle. And not one stage is effective on its own.

Therefore, your role as a mentor is to help your mentee to go through the whole cycle. You can find more about Kolb's cycle and whole learning theory at:
http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/styles/kolb.html.

3.2. GROW model

Another interesting theory we would like you to implement is GROW model that originates in corporate coaching. Since many claim authorship, there are many different suitable versions of this model.

G GOAL

Help your mentee think about the future and define "The Goal" – the end point he or she wants to reach in youth organisation. Introduce him or her to the S.M.A.R.T goal setting model and defining the goal, so it will be very clear if they achieved it at the end.

R REALITY

Talk to the mentee so you both have a good picture of what is "Current Reality": what are the issues, the challenges and how far from achieving their goal are they.

O OPTIONS

In this part the mentee has to figure out what are the possible ways from "Current Reality" to reaching "The Goal". Some versions of the approach also propose to identify all the Obstacles and then find ways of dealing with them in order to make progress.

W **WAYFORWARD**

After identifying all the Options the mentee
has to convert them into action steps,
which lead to their goal. That's why this
step is called the "Way Forward".

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R	Reality	Talk with mentee so you both have a good picture of what is "Current Reality": what are the issues, the challenges and how far are they from the goal are they.
O	Options	In this part mentee has to figure out what are the possible ways from "Current Reality" to reaching "The Goal". Some versions of the approach also propose to identify all the Obstacles and then find ways of dealing with them in order to make progress.
W	Way Forward	After identifying all the Options mentee has to convert them into action steps, which lead to their goal. That's why this step is called "Way Forward".

The following table contains some sample questions that could support you in development of each
of the four steps.

Goal	What do you want? What will that get you? What is exciting about this goal? What's even more important than this goal? How will you measure the results? What does success look like? What's the big picture?
Reality	How are things going right now? How do you feel? What values and needs are most important? What is the biggest concern? What resources are available? What barriers do you face? What does the resistance really mean?
Options	What are some of the ways you could approach this issue? Would you like to brainstorm some options? In your wildest dreams, what strategies would you choose? If you had more money, time or authority, what would you do? What if you could start all over? What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of each option?
Way Forward	Which option is your best choice? When will you get started? What's the first step? What else do you need to do? On a scale of 1-10, how committed are you to this plan? What would take you to a ten? What accountability structures would support you? How will you celebrate success?

You can find more about GROW model at:
https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_89.htm

4. Process steps

In this part we will get to know the phases we see as steps in the mentoring process. Each step consists of a short description that will tell you more about the process objectives, to help you keep in mind what is important, set of recommended methods and suggested duration.

 Please keep in mind that each individual person and each mentoring process is unique and that all the "recipes" are just recommendations. Listen to your mentee. ***Active listening*** is one of the most important mentoring skills. Every mentee has his or her own learning style, set of experiences and unique knowledge. So the pace of moving from one step to another can vary.

Your task is to be open, flexible and able to adjust the process to the needs of the mentee, while following the envisaged steps of the process.

4.1. Mentee - getting to know the manager and his/her youth organization

In order to be able to create a working contract, both sides need to get to know each other. As a mentor you need to understand clearly the person you will support. Therefore, you need to take your time to get to know the manager:

- what is this person like,
- what is important to this person,
- person's leadership style,
- goals and aspirations ...

You also need to get to know the organisation:

- what is the structure of the organisation,
- who is involved in it (how many employed, volunteers…; statistical data)
- what kind of events do they do,
- who is their target group,
- what are their vision, goals, passions,
- how do they see success,
- what is important to them,
- what are they good at,
- what are their dreams ...

You also need to think about the mentoring process. Will the manager (mentee) be the only one to be mentored or does he or she need to involve other members of organisation as well? Keep in mind that answers you obtain at this stage will help prepare your assessment.

Objective:

- getting to know the manager (your mentee) and the organisation
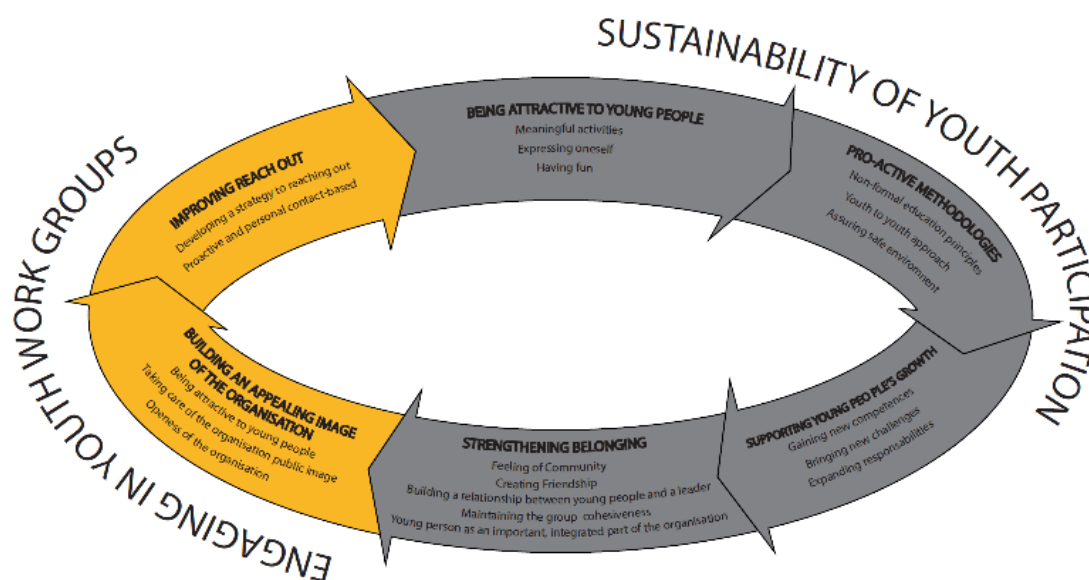- create safe confidential environment

Methods:

- personality or leadership style tests,
- conversation,
- use non-structured materials to support the conversations,
- interview,
- research the organisation via other means (annual reports, web communication channels) ...

Duration: 30 min – 1 h

4.2. Introduction of the Youth Work Growth Cycle

Introduce the basic assumptions of Youth Work Growth Cycle: Group processes are one of the most important elements in youth work. To understand what is going on in the group, a quality research was made. It served as an input to the Quality system named Youth Work Growth Cycle which is divided into two major parts: engagement and sustainability. Both parts outline a total of 20 processes that seem to be the most important when talking about raising quality of youth work in groups.

Quality system

Objective:

- mentee should understand groups as a foundation for youth work in his/her organisation and get to know the processes in youth groups, which influence the functioning of any youth organisation.

Methods:

- -presentation,
- conversation ...

Duration: 30 min

4.3. Assessment of processes in organisation

After presenting the processes defined in Quality system framework (first column of the spreadsheet) it is time for an assessment of organisation in line with the proposed structure. Through dialogue you combine mentee's self-assessment and mentor's assessment. The method of dialogue is very important for this step; it provides additional insights to both sides.

Draw from the understanding of your mentee and help him or her to assess the organisation's performance in each of the defined processes. Listen actively and keep asking additional questions until you get to the core of the matter.

After careful assessment of the current reality **pick three processes** which, if improved, will benefit the organisation the most.

Objective:

- assess the organisation's strengths and weaknesses through dialogue between manager and mentor
- select three processes that are most crucial for improvement

Methods:

- dialogue approach,
- active listening (* https://www.mindtools.com/CommSkll/ActiveListening.htm)
- recording the important information (in text, images, quotes …),
- graphic facilitation ...

Duration: 1 h 30 min

4.4. Defining aims

In this phase you will focus on 3 processes that you selected. The first part of this phase is dedicated to in-depth understanding of the situation. Go over each one of the identified processes with a fine-tooth comb to truly grasp the current state. We suggest you use analysis tools (like SWOT) to support you.

When the situation is clearly presented, it is time to dream of a better organisation. Be bold but realistic. Ask yourself what needs to change within the organisation in order to fulfil its mission better. Start from the strong points and think about things you already do very well. What are the factors that contribute to success in these areas? Also think about the weak points, the things that really bother you in the organisation and map them out. Trying to find "who's guilty" is counterproductive in this phase. We need to focus on the state of organisation, not the personal responsibilities.

When the picture of the future organisation is clear to everyone involved, envision the aims that will guide the organisation on the path of improvement of quality for each process. The aims should be understood the same way by both, mentee and mentor and have inner consistency - clear relation of each aim to other aims.

Objective:

- Thoroughly analyse the three selected processes in context of vision and define at least one aim for improvement for each process.

Methods:

- mapping the state of affairs (in text, graphic, …),
- SWOT analysis,
- Envisioning methods ...

Duration: 1 h 30 min

4.5. Indicators, actions and tools

The operationalisation of the aims happens through the definition of indicators, objectives and tools for action.

Indicators are the points of reference in relation to which reality can be compared, analysed and assessed. In this way indicators define what are the crucial work processes and outcomes to develop quality. Indicators can be quantitative (number of young people, time spent in the activity, …) or qualitative (the competences young person develops, the principles of non-formal education are met, …). For each of the aims define a couple of indicators, both qualitative and quantitative, that will provide the information about the changes within the organisation towards the aim. The indicator needs to present the current state of affairs but also present the changes that will happen.

If the aim of improvement of quality is defined like: "Improve the organisation's public image" the indicators could be: "Young people hear about the organisation from their friends." or "Organisation is perceived as open for new members." Both of these indicators could be measured through tools and the changes in information could send signals about the organisation's image. For more ideas and inspiration search through the spreadsheet of the document The Youth Work Growth Circle.

Actions are the measures we are going to take in order to improve the data about indicators and move towards the defined objectives. Actions are always defined directly from the aim and in line with the objectives we want to achieve.

The concrete action to reach more young people through their peers ("Young people hear about the organisation from their friends.") could be putting the conversations about the organisation on the agenda of the communication of our members

Tools are the concrete actions, objects, short elements of process that help us record and/or change the data about indicators.

Concrete tools to put discussion about the organisation on the agenda of youth could be t-shirts or badges young members of our organisations wear. Another concrete tool could be a competition for best photo of the local community with motivating prizes in which youth is invited to participate.
Concrete tool to record and collect data is the question "Where did you get the information about our organisation?" in the first discussion with a young person that appears in our organisations for the first time. Some other examples could be; a poll on the website of the organisation or weekly supervision meeting of youth workers where information about the involvement of youth is collected.

The process in this phase will most likely start with the explanation of the concepts of indicators, actions and tools. Take some time for that and use practical examples!

After explaining the concepts, the definition of **indicators** will follow. There should be more indicators defined for each of the aims but not too many, and they should be both qualitative and quantitative whenever possible. All in all, they should provide a sense of security to the mentee and the feeling that the change can be achieved.

The current state of indicators should be defined and the **goals** we want to achieve identified. Quantitative goals should be defined by the SMART method, so not only the change but also the time span for the change is determined.

When the goals are defined the **actions** and **tools** are developed. Actions need to clearly lead towards the defined goals while the tools need to support the actions. The other element of tool development are the tools to monitor the data about indicators. Each indicator should have at least one tool to measure the data about it, this will be the results presenting the change over time. The

tools are very specific so it is hard to expect they are ready-made waiting in a publication. But some of the tool examples are presented in the [Quality Youth Work handbook](1) in the pages 53 - 72.

When the indicators, actions and tools are developed, we proceed with implementation.

Objective:

- Define indicators for every process, define desired state of indicators and select tools you will use to measure it.

Methods:

- logical framework and other action planning tools

Duration: 2 h - 4 h

4.6. Implementation and monitoring

In this phase the manager (mentee) is trying to implement the planned activities to improve the quality of youth work. This means cooperation with other stakeholders of the youth organisation, management, redefining policies of organisation …

This is the most delicate state, since you have to find a way to keep in contact and monitor the progress without pressing the person too much. So it is best to agree on the method of communication and it is wise to set the dates of meetings in advance (example: each first Thursday in a month at 15h).

Have in mind that the mentoring process takes some time and that not all the factors that influence it are under your control. Mentee is a person with his or hers changing motivation, personal life (and challenges that arise from diverse situations they face). At the same time, we must not forget that organisations are living systems in which the leading figures and leadership systems change, organisations change the direction of their work and that everyday life situations bring challenges that need to be addressed as a priority. When these things happen they need to be addressed as a priority in the mentoring process too and resolved immediately. The main prevention measure is a good relationship and open communication in all the phases, this strengthens the commitment of the leadership to the mentoring process and development of quality.

Objectives:

- The mentee is actively implementing the plan designed in the mentoring process and trying to improve the quality and reporting his progress to the mentor at least once a month.

Methods:

- keep in contact (phone, emails…),
- prepare a way to monitor progress (a spreadsheet, a chart, …),
- try to make it interesting for the mentee to keep you updated (suggestion: monitoring apps).

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[1] http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/youth/library/reports/quality-youth-work_en.pdf

Duration: at least 30 min each month

4.7.   Evaluation

The last phase of the process is dedicated to the evaluation of the progress and the process itself. For the mentee the crucial information in this phase is the evaluation of the changes that happened in the organisation and on the personal level with him or her. For the mentor the crucial information is the feedback on the process and the methods used. Ask the manager to reflect on the whole mentoring process and give you a feedback about the process itself, methods used and quality system implemented. How can we improve the process to make it more useful and easier for the mentee? What were the hardest parts of the process? How could we support the process better? Is there any information that would make the process easier, if presented earlier?

Objectives:

- mentee shares his experience and gives you concrete ideas to improve the mentoring process and quality scheme and 1 example of good practice with you.

Methods:

- different evaluation methods,
- conversation,
- online questionnaire after a week or two.

Duration: 30 – 45 min

5. Future steps

We hope that the presented tool serves you well in supporting managers in youth organisations to achieve even better results in their work and with the whole organisation. The outlined process is the structure that can guide you, but still, have in mind that one of the most important elements of successful mentorship is the relationship between mentee and mentor.

 Mentor is the person accompanying the mentee on a long road. The road is not always easy but it brings changes. Often a lot of patience is needed to see the first results but this should not discourage us.

We wish you take courageous steps in mentorship and a lot of strength to support people you meet on your way.

Participating organisations: