

Title: Lessons From a Cross-Cultural Comparison of Mentoring Programmes in The United States and Continental Europe

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Number of participants: 27

Starting hypothesis/questions:

As mentoring is significantly shaped by the sociocultural histories and contexts in which they are implemented, how do programmes in each context differ and what are the implications of these differences in the presentation and implementation of mentoring programmes in the United States and Continental Europe.

Sequence of content/methods:

Following a brief presentation of the research and background of mentoring in the United States and Continental Europe, the session transitioned into a working group that sought to digest the findings and translate them into actionable steps that can improve mentoring programmes in Europe and the United States.

Main results presented by the facilitator:

In the United States, most mentoring programmes were started in the 1990's. They mainly target income inequality and more specifically children and youth at risk. Most mentors are adults and not college students as had been previously assumed. The focus of the mentoring is prevention, partly also since it attracts funding. Lastly in the US the mentor-mentee relationship is rather unidirectional, meaning the mentee is the sole benefiter. In Continental Europe most of the programmes in the sample were founded in the recent years and focus on migration and languages. They are not only targeted at young people under 18 and oftentimes the relationship is bidirectional, meaning the mentor and the mentee benefit.

Result of Session:

Learn lessons from the others but do not take over the complete approach. What works in one context might be useful for another context, but it might not be all the information which is ultimately needed.

Have a look at the common factors in human relationship in both the US and Continental Europe and see what works on a human level.

One thing that was laughed about:

"Now we have exactly two minutes left for the group work exercise."

Further questions/issues:

The findings of the study will be published.

Which countries were included in the sample? – Mainly Western and Southern European as well as two Central European, but no Eastern European countries have been included.