

Title: *From Conflict to Collaboration: Between Volunteer and Paid Mentoring*

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Number of participants: 10

Starting question:

Why do systems supporting professional mentoring act as barriers towards initiating volunteer mentoring programmes, and how can we solve this challenge and benefit from the positive effects of volunteer mentoring?

Sequence of content:

Departing in two short case presentations, the first focusing on the positive effects of mentoring, the second on the need for career guidance in secondary school, the session aimed at discussing the conflict between professional and volunteer mentoring, and how to start up volunteer mentoring programmes in a system with no tradition of volunteer mentoring.

Three main arguments presented by the facilitator:

- 1) Professional and volunteer mentoring both have individual positive effects and advantages and should both be integrated in an effective and extensive system of mentoring.
- 2) Volunteer mentoring is mainly used for especially talented students in universities and in general upper secondary school and is loosely embedded in the educational system. This kind of mentoring should be used more and in a better structured way, for example to support the talents of students with mediocre results, who often are neglected, next to the group of youths at risk and high potentials.
- 3) Volunteer mentoring has an enormous potential to involve new mentors. Students in Denmark get paid for their studies, which leads to the fact that they often have free time besides their studies.

Main points of discussion:

The feeling to be supported by a mentor who doesn't make a financial profit from the mentoring can foster the self-esteem of the mentee. Volunteer mentoring can change the mentee's view of the mentoring in a positive way. Mentees were impressed that their mentors weren't paid and invested their time for free.

It is especially important to find mentors, which have identification potential for mentees. For example, to have mentors with a migration background as tutors for migrant mentees revealed to be a useful concept. Recruiting this clientele requires well-directed action.

There are situations, where the problem lies in the field of recruiting mentees: sometimes personal problems are of such vital significance that people spend their days with surviving and refuse mentoring.