

Title: *Youth Mentoring in Ireland: An overview of 13 years of Collaborative research with the Foróige BBBS programme in Ireland*

Presenter: *Bernadine Brady, PhD, UNESCO Child & Family Research Centre, NUI, Galway, Ireland, Bernadine.brady@nuiagalway.ie*

Documented by: Beatrice Kollinger, Anja Schmidt, Gloria Amoruso

Abstract:

Formal mentoring programmes facilitate the development of a friendship or 'match' between an older volunteer and a young person, with the aim of supporting the personal and social development of the young person. In Ireland, the UNESCO Child & Family Research Centre at NUI, Galway have been collaborating with the Foróige youth mentoring programme *Big Brothers Big Sisters* on a range of research and evaluation studies since 2005. Studies have included a Randomised Controlled Trial, which was completed in 2011 and qualitative explorations of youth mentoring in the contexts of youth justice and children in care. This presentation provides an overview of this research programme, including key findings, and reflects on the future direction of research in this area.

The Theoretical Framework:

The researcher presented different empirical studies on mentoring that are carried out in the UNESCO Child & Family Research Centre (NUI, Galway). She then presented a major mixed methods study – including RCT from 2011 for which they applied Jean Rhodes' Model on Youth Mentoring.

The Methodological Approach:

The researchers addressed three major research questions:

- 1) Do young people with a mentor have better outcomes in the areas of emotional well-being, perceived support, education and risk behaviour than young people without a mentor?
- 2) How does mentoring work? How does it achieve its outcomes?
- 3) Is BBBS a good programme, is it implemented as planned?

The researcher used a theory-driven mixed methods approach including a randomised controlled trial, a qualitative strand and a implementation study.

Main results/findings from the study:

- 1) The strongest evidence of impact of youth mentoring programmes in Ireland was found in regards to the Children's Hope Scale (sense of hope for the future), the support from other adults and the total social support (parents, friends, siblings and other adults combined).
- 2) The effects were the strongest for the children's hope scale.
- 3) Effects got less the longer the research lasted, but that was related to the tandems meeting less regularly the longer the match lasted (decline after 12 or 16 months).

Further questions:

Especially the need of proper definitions of mentoring was highlighted, and the demand for new approaches in the Big Brothers Big Sisters programme.

During the discussion one participant asked the presenter to put the findings in the context of Youth Initiated Mentoring (YIM) and Natural Mentoring: would it be a good idea to train the mentees at the end of the mentoring on how to find natural mentors?

Janis Kupersmidt said that Big Brother Big Sisters in Eastern Missouri have a special approach to accompany the mentees until they are 26.

References of literature:

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Title: *Initial Motivation and its Impact on Quality and Dynamics in Formal Youth Mentoring Relationships: A Longitudinal Qualitative study.*

Presenter: Tereza Brumovská, PhD, UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, School of Political Science and Sociology, National University of Ireland, Galway, t.brumovska1@nuigalway.ie.

Documented by: Beatrice Kollinger, Anja Schmidt, Gloria Amoruso

Abstract:

This longitudinal qualitative study explores experiences and understandings of the mentoring role in the Big Brothers Big Sisters Czech Republic mentoring programme, using a phenomenological approach. In particular, the study explores mentors' initial motivation for volunteering and its impact on mentoring experiences, and the quality and dynamics of developed formal youth mentoring relationships. As such, it explores in detail the characteristics and dynamics of helping processes that do or do not mediate mentoring benefits such as provided social supports to children. In addition, it explores the risks and ethical dilemmas associated with formal youth mentoring involvement. It highlights both the risks of the mentoring role and the characteristics of quality that mediate mentoring benefits. Thus, it illuminates the pathways through which formal mentors do or do not become significant adults for children and young people in formal youth mentoring relationships and interventions. It contributes to theory, research and practice with: 1) a longitudinal qualitative methodology that has not been used before, 2) the use of the theoretical framework of Self-Determination theory that has not been applied in a similar context to date, 3) findings in relation to detailed pathways of helping processes in formal youth mentoring relationships and interventions. The characteristics and dynamics of 1) controlling, and 2) autonomy supportive formal youth mentoring relationships are identified and subsequent recommendations for future research and practice in formal mentoring relationships and interventions are made.

The Theoretical Framework:

The researcher presented the gap in the literature on processes in youth mentoring relationships (e.g. Thomson, Zand, 2009) and referred to Rhodes model (2002) on Mediators of Quality in Formal Youth Mentoring Relationships (FYMR).

Rhodes (2002) doesn't address the quality features, such as trust. Therefore she applied Weinstein (2010) and the "Self-Determination Theory (SDT)" as theoretical framework.

The Methodological Approach:

The researcher addresses two main research questions in her study:

- How do quality features of Mutuality, Closeness and Trust that mediate mentoring benefits develop in FYMRs?
- How can formal mentors become informal supporters and significant adults in FYMRs?

The researcher uses a phenomenological approach to experiences of mentoring phenomena by concentrating on 11 matches in the Big Brother Big Sister Czech Republic programme. She tracked the matches with interviews during the 1st month and after 5 and 10 months of their mentoring involvement. She pursued interviews with children, mentors and parents and case workers (103 interviews in total).

Main findings from the study:

She identified different characteristics and pathways of an informal mentoring bond:

- 1) Autonomous motivation mediated perceived competence and accepted responsibility to cope with perceived mentoring challenges authentically.
- 2) positive helping attitudes towards children,
- 3) authenticity and empathy in play,
- 4) mutuality, closeness and trust and high mutual satisfaction,
- 5) natural informal mentors in long-term relations.

Main statements highlighting the relevance of the results:

- Brumovská pointed out that with her longitudinal design and her in-depth analysis she could provide some useful recommendations for the mentoring practice. Additionally, the SDT has never been used as a theoretical framework in a qualitative study on mentoring before.
- During the group discussion the risks and ethical dilemmas associated with formal youth mentoring involvement were discussed and experiences of other researchers were taken into consideration.

Title: A Typology of Youth Mentoring Programmes

Presenter: Heide Busse, PhD Candidate. Population Health Sciences, Bristol Medical School, University of Bristol, Heide.Busse@bristol.ac.uk

Documented by: Beatrice Kollinger, Anja Schmidt, Gloria Amoruso

Abstract:

Firstly, I would provide a short overview of our research centre and the reason to look at the impact of youth mentoring programmes from a public health perspective. We have conducted a study looking at the feasibility and acceptability of randomising vulnerable young people to a mentoring programmes that is being run in the United Kingdom. The trial involved 21 young people of which 11 were randomly chosen to receive a paid mentor for the duration of a year and 10 young people were assigned to the 'care as usual' group. This study has been completed so I would be happy to share some of our findings and lessons learnt with other researchers.

In my PhD research, I have developed a typology of youth mentoring programmes in the United Kingdom. We know that mentoring programmes are delivered in a range of different ways and this typology provides one way of classifying existing programmes for young people into different mentoring models. This typology was developed by speaking to programme managers and experts in the field of mentoring in the United Kingdom and established that there are twelve "mentoring models" for young people in secondary schools in the UK. This work also alluded to some challenges that are experienced by programme providers, such as insecure funding, which would be good to discuss with other researchers.

The Theoretical Framework:

The researcher made clear, that young people experience psychological, social and behavioural difficulties in adolescence which are associated with adverse long-term outcomes for individuals and society. In the United Kingdom Mentoring programmes are commonplace in various settings and contexts. They are used as a way of working with vulnerable and marginalised groups. Whereas the effectiveness of such programmes has not been thoroughly investigated in the UK, evaluations of formal mentoring programmes in the United States of America have demonstrated some, if small, effects for those taking part compared to control groups.

The Methodological Approach:

The study evaluating the "Breakthrough Mentoring Programme" in the UK addressed the question, whether mentoring programmes in the UK can positively impact the health, wellbeing and educational outcomes of young people.

The researcher started with a feasibility study to find out, whether they could recruit young people for their research study.

They undertook...

- a Randomised Controlled Trial with 21 young people (half of them with a mentor),
- the SDQ – Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire with the young people at baseline, 6, 12 and 18 months,
- in-depth interviews with young people, their parents, school staff members (teachers), commissioners and stakeholders,
- a process and cost-effectiveness evaluation.

Main findings from the study:

On the one hand, young people liked having an adult mentor, not connected with the school, that they could talk to and help them deal with difficult feelings. Also they learned strategies to help cope with negative emotions. On the other hand, there is a feeling of being unprepared for the end of mentoring. Therefore, they supported the programme with improving their practice in regards to the closure of the mentoring relationship.

Main statements highlighting the added value of the results:

The researcher highlighted that there is a need for effectiveness studies of programmes within the UK. Additionally, there is also a need to establish programmes' adherence to research-based practices (e.g. Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring).

Further studies:

Heide Busse is currently developing a typology of mentoring programmes for young people in secondary schools in the UK as part of her PhD. She already did 23 telephone interviews with mentoring programme managers. Despite their heterogeneity, she identified 12 mentoring models (distinguishing between setting, the type of mentor and the overall aim of the mentoring programme).

Title: Guiding children through the jungle of everyday life. Research and best practice from the mentoring program Baloo and You

Presenter: *Esther N. Moszeik, M.Sc. Psychology, Research associate, UniBw Munich, esther.moszeik@unibw.de*

Documented by: Tereza Brumovská, Gloria Amoruso

Abstract:

The Germany-wide mentoring program Baloo and You supports primary school children in out-of school contexts. The focus lies on children, for whom class teachers are worried for a variety of reasons. Most children who take part in the program have some sort of migrant background. We want to draw attention to the scientifically based, strong resource of the mentoring program in the primary school context. Research results on Baloo and You from different contexts (quantitative and qualitative analyzes, social return on investment analysis, external research of the program) will be integrated to highlight the effects and potential of the mentoring program. For example, a broad-based behavioral economic study has shown that the prosocial behavior of children with weak socioeconomic status is significantly increased by Baloo and You, as well as the chance of transitioning to high school. Further research showed increased well-being and better relationships with friends of children who participated in the program. The positive results of the Social Return on Investment Survey reveal the overall societal potential of Baloo and You. To improve the quality for stronger mentoring relationships we would like to use the main part of this session for a discussion on other participants' experiences, with a focus on the operationalization of surveys and further scientific data collection and analyses methods. We will also offer to share our own instruments used with children and mentors.

The Theoretical Framework:

- Goals of the study: evaluating the *Baloo and You* programme in Munich (Germany)
- Focus on resilience and the improvement of life skills

The Methodological Approach:

They collected data three years in a row (2015, 2016 and 2017) and used the following instruments:

- KIDSCREEN-27 (Health & Exercise; Feelings & Mood; Family & Leisure; Friends; School & Learning)
- Resilience Scale (9 items; Self-esteem, skills)
- Personality Scale
- Digit Symbol Test (children love it)

The dataset included 27 mentees in 2015 and 20 mentees in 2016 and 2017.

Main results from the study:

In 2015 they could observe:

- positive effects in friendship for the moglis.
- higher results concerning wellbeing: the moglis overtake the other control group.
- positive gender effects for the girls: girls improved their well-being, whereas the boys stayed the same. A possible explanation could be that girls with migrant background have less contacts, possibilities to go out, which changed with the mentoring.

But they couldn't replicate the positive findings from 2015 in the following years. The limitation of the study are their small samples.

Title: Trauma-Sensitive Learning

Presenter: *Beatrice Kollinger, PhD Candidate, Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, beatrice.kollinger@hu-berlin.de.*

Documented by: Tereza Brumovská, Gloria Amoruso

Abstract:

The project *Trauma-Sensitive Learning* has been carried out by the Humboldt-University Berlin in cooperation with the Berlin based youth service *Hilfe für Jungs e.V. (help for boys)*. The project is funded by the *Aktion Mensch* foundation until the end of 2019. It is structured into different project phases. During the first phase of the project six students of the M.A. program *Lehramt an Grundschulen* spend one-on-one time with traumatized boys for a semester. The university students also assisted the boys with structural needs at school. Since September 2017, in the subsequent phase of cooperation with three Berlin schools, institutional resources for the needs of traumatized students are being identified. The project aims at developing trauma-sensitive frameworks for schools and for professionals working at schools. Furthermore it aims at supporting traumatized/highly psychologically stressed school children to be able to access their achievement potential.

In biweekly team meetings the participating university students share their experiences of their own pedagogical practice and reflect upon it in quarterly supervision sessions. The cooperation with Prof. Dr. Pech (professor for general studies in primary education (“Sachunterricht”)) and Prof. Dr. Zimmermann (professor for pedagogy of psychosocial disability) as well as the dissertation project “traumatized children in school.” allows for the transfer of the practical experience into an academic context and furthers theory development in the area.

The Theoretical Framework:

- Keller (2010): “Youth mentoring is many things to many people.”
- Lindsey Weiler (2013): Therapeutic Mentoring
- Rhodes (2018)
- The aim is to generate well-founded statements about the subjective views of teachers on how they deal with traumatised pupils (Sebe-Opfermann 2016)

The Methodological Approach:

Main Research Question: What ideas for interaction with traumatised pupils do prospective primary school teachers have and to what extent do they change as a result of individual pedagogical interaction?

Applied methodologies and methods:

- Grounded Theory Methodology (Strauss & Corbin 2010),
- Qualitative study on the topic of education,
- Problem-centred individual interviews with the teachers at different points in time.

Three main results/findings from the study:

- Highly stressed children need good relationships.
- Educators need special professionalisation in the interaction. (Zimmermann 2016)
- This could be the beginning of a new era of mentoring.
- The disciplines of trauma pedagogy and inclusive education provide insights that can be useful for the professionalization. (Prengel 2014)
- Psychoanalytical theory can also be the theoretical and methodological foundation for self-reflection concepts in teacher training and further education. (Würker 2007)

Title: Local network as the highway to success? Studying the added value of mentoring to work for highly skilled immigrants.

Presenter: Hanne Vandermeerschen & Peter De Cuyper, HIVA-University of Leuven, hanne.vandermeerschen@kuleuven.be, peter.decuyper@kuleuven.be.

Documented by: Tereza Brumovská, Gloria Amoruso

Abstract:

Across Europe, immigrants struggle to find a good position on the labour market. They face large difficulties finding employment, and particularly getting a job corresponding to their level of qualifications. In Flanders (Belgium), as well as in various other European countries, mentoring is increasingly put forward as a strategy to overcome immigrants' difficulties on the labour market. The underlying rationale is that, while 'traditional' (public) interventions (such as counselling by the Public Employment Service), focus primarily on increasing economic capital, mentoring allows a multidimensional approach, as mentoring can tackle an immigrant's lack of country-specific social, psychological and/or cultural capital as well. Another important (assumed) benefit of mentoring, is that it not only supports the mentees in overcoming their 'shortcomings', but can also have an impact on the mentors in terms of intercultural awareness, and indirectly, on how society deals with diversity. Conducting an evaluation study of mentoring projects targeting highly skilled immigrants in Flanders (Belgium), we test these assumptions empirically. More specifically, we investigate what issues are addressed by mentoring, and what is the added value of mentoring, from the perspective of the three 'parties' involved, i.e. mentees, mentors and coordinating organisations. Data stem from focus group discussions as well as semi-structured interviews in five mentoring-to-work projects. Findings indicate, amongst other things, that sector- or occupation-specific matching is a crucial determinant in terms of providing added value for highly skilled immigrants, and the tailor-made approach in mentoring is a welcome complement for immigrants to counselling by the PES. Recommendations are formulated based on the results.

The Theoretical Framework:

- They tried to define "mentoring to work", because they could only find one study about mentoring to work.
- De Cuyper 2015, "Why mentoring for highly skilled immigrants?"
- Gonzalez Garibay & De Cuyper, 2013, "An evaluation framework for integration policies".
- They focus on: Developing work and employability skills, Increasing cultural and social capital of mentees for employability, Advocacy in employers in prejudice and obstacles in employers.

The Methodological Approach:

Research questions:

- What would mentors and mentees focus on in practice?
- What is added value of mentoring? (*if any?*)
- Effectiveness of projects in terms of LM outcome?

Methodologies/methods applied:

- Quantitative analysis of administrative data
- Qualitative data collection: semi-structured interviews and focus groups

Three main results/findings from the study:

- Mentors can go beyond "traditional" service provision.
- Mentors can provide one-to-one attention with personal contact and tailor-made.
- The Public Employment Service (PES) does not have sufficient "offers" for highly skilled immigrants.
- But the PES increases the networks and can provide positive contact with employers.

- But mentees are anyways not satisfied, because mentoring is not enough: Belgian people will be always advantaged getting the job.

Further remarks:

They focused on the perception of the different stakeholders, but they didn't focus on the outcomes yet.

Title: *Evaluation of the Mentor-UP Program: Can mentoring promote self-esteem and connectedness?*

Presenter: Marisa Bergamin (Department of Developmental and Social Psychology, University of Padua, Italy), marisa.bergamin2012@gmail.com

Co-Authors: Massimo Santinello, Michela Lenzi, Paolo Santoro, Antonio Calcagni, Gianmarco Altoè (University of Padova); Douglas D. Perkins (Human & Organizational Development, Peabody College, Vanderbilt University).

Documented by: Gloria Amoruso

Abstract:

Research has shown youth mentoring as a promising strategy for increasing self-esteem and school connectedness in at-risk youth. The current study aimed at evaluating the impact of the Mentor-UP programme. Participants (209 students aged between 11 and 13, 56% male; 27% immigrants) reported their levels of self-esteem and school connectedness at the beginning and at the end of the program. A significant increase in self-esteem was found in the experimental group, while the difference in school-connectedness was nonsignificant. The findings support the effectiveness of this model of school/community-based mentoring in nurturing youths' self-esteem.

Keywords: mentoring, self-esteem, school connectedness

The Theoretical Framework:

They applied the Self-Esteem Questionnaire (Dubois et al. 1996, translated by Melotti & Passini 2002).

The Methodological Approach:

They had a sample of 209 mentees (34 mentees, 175 comparison group composed by mentee's classmates). The mentees are 11-13 years old.

Main results/findings from the study:

The mentees showed effects both in regards to more self-esteem and more school connectedness:

- **The self-esteem changed over time**, but males showed lower levels of self-esteem than females: The kids with no mentoring had lower self-esteem compared to the beginning, whereas the kids with the mentor had a higher level of self-esteem.
- **The school connectedness changed**: It lowered for the group without mentors and it slightly increased for the group with mentors (but not significantly). A possible explanation could be that the duration of the mentoring programme (7 months) is not enough to show results that are more significant.

Title: One-to-one mentoring for disadvantage children in Putin's Russia

Presenter: *Telitsyna Alexandra, Ph.D., Big Brothers Big Sisters of Russia, Moscow, Russia, Alexandra.telitsyna@nastavniki.org.*

Documented by: Tereza Brumovská, Gloria Amoruso

Abstract:

Objectives: to determine the role of one-to-one mentoring for orphans in Russia.
Methods: the orphans or children (age 11-17) left without parental care filled up the surveys. For 1-8 years long-term one-to-one mentoring (mentor's personal obliged to visit the mentee at the orphanage at least once a week and for a period of time longer than a year) was supported and supervised by professional psychologists.

Results and conclusions: The National Russian Campaign to prevent abuse, neglect and abandonment of children had increased the number of orphans and social orphans placed in substitute families. However, a lot of the at-risk teenagers are left at the orphanages. Identified social role of mentoring in motivating children who are in difficult life situations and traumatized by early childhood deprivation: increasing self-esteem, self-confidence, the emergence of motivation to learning and education. 46% of mentees improved self-confidence; 45% of mentees became more independent; 36% of mentees improved communication skills; 44% of mentees expanded social connections; 52% of mentees now have a clearer vision of their future; 42% of mentees became more responsible; 33% of mentees gained interest to social life; 51% of mentees became better organized. The social role of one-to-one mentoring as a volunteer practice in motivating traumatized at-risk children was established: self-confidence, motivation to study and get to college.

The Theoretical Framework:

They analysed the impact of Big Brothers Big Sisters Russia working with 64.000 orphans and children left without parental care in Russia.

Research Question: What changes can be achieved through Mentoring in Russia's Child Care?

The Methodological Approach:

The sample size consisted of 380 and the following methods have been used:

- Semantic analysis,
- Questionnaires filled in on the iPad with smiley faces (98,5% of the children answered),
- Guenter Horn card game (1997): Information on mentoring and how they vie themselves in the bigger world.

Three main results/findings from the study:

Based on the data the following outcomes of the mentoring programme could be identified:

- 52% got a clearer idea of their future,
- 51% became more organised,
- 46% increased their self-confidence,
- 44% broadened their social circle of contacts,
- 42 % increased their sense of responsibility,
- 33% developed new interests and became socially engaged,
- 36% became more social and outgoing.

Main statement highlighting the relevance of the results:

- Long-term relationship with a mentor helps the child to feel that he/she is not alone.
- Mentors play important roles while the mentee is underage. It diminishes drastically once the child reaches the age of majority, gets access to his/her bank account.

Title: *Natural mentoring and the Youth Initiated Mentoring (YIM) approach*

Presenter: *Levi van Dam & Geer Jan Stams (University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands),*

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Documented by: Tereza Brumovská

Abstract:

Natural mentoring relationships have been linked to a range of youth outcomes, a recent meta-analytic study on natural mentoring relationships showed that the *presence* of a natural mentor was associated with positive youth outcomes, with a small overall average effect size of Cohen's $d = .21$ (Van Dam, Smit et al., 2018). The association between the *quality* of the natural mentoring relationship (relatedness, social support and autonomy support) and positive youth outcomes yielded a medium overall average effect size ($d = .43$), with the largest effect sizes for social-emotional development ($d = .55$), and academic and vocational functioning ($d = .40$), and a small effect size ($d = .20$) for psychosocial problems. Notably, at-risk groups (for instance teenage mothers, homeless youth, youth in foster care and youth of alcoholic parents) did not moderate the relation between presence and quality of natural mentoring relationships on one hand and youth outcomes on the other hand, which is a positive finding for adolescents with complex needs. The Youth Initiated Mentoring (YIM) approach is a novel approach in which youth nominate a natural mentor from their existing social network, positioning this person as a YIM who can function as an ally to the youth and a partner for parents and professionals working with the youth. Our first results suggest that the involvement of important non-parental adults may help to prevent out-of-home placement of adolescents with complex needs (Van Dam et al, 2017). During our presentation we'd like to discuss the concept of 'natural mentoring' and exchange ideas how youth can benefit from this organically formed relationship.

The Theoretical Framework:

The rationale for natural Youth-Initiated Mentoring is: Natural mentoring is a natural phenomenon, but how can we grasp it? 75% of natural mentors can be found within the natural social networks of the mentees.

The Methodological Approach:

They did a comparative meta-analysis on the effects of natural mentoring versus formal mentoring.

Their analysis was based on a quantitative literature review on natural mentoring in social networks followed by an intervention based on Youth Initiated mentoring: mentors are nominated by youth and involved into the mentee's life as supporters, advocates and significant adults.

Main findings from the study:

- Natural mentors have a slightly better effect on the overall well-being of the mentee ($d = .21$) compared to formal mentoring ($d = .19$).
- If the relationship is good, the effect doubles (to $d = .43$).
- The availability of natural mentors is a given fact, but relationship quality WITH access, is the key. Therefore, we should increase the relationship in formal mentoring relationships and increase "mindful mentoring".

Further remarks and questions:

It is all correlational evidence, but we need now experimental design to test it.

Which programmes in Europe also focus on (improving) natural mentoring in the context of an intervention?

Should we focus more on mentoring mentalisation capability of mentors and mentees?

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- Van Dam et al. (2017), "Youth Initiated Mentors: Do They Offer an Alternative for Out-of-Home Placement in Youth Care?", in: *The British Journal of Social Work*.
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