

Title: Enhancing Mentoring through an Online Self-Assessment Tool

Facilitator and room number: Joana Portugal; 1.307

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Number of participants: 9

Who are we and to which institution do we belong?

Aproximar (www.aproximar.pt) is a non-profit organisation aiming to enhance organisations' social and human capital as a strategy to build their capacity to take advantage of challenges and opportunities raised by the external conditions and be sustainable. Aproximar develops, organizes and manages different consultancy and certified training programmes involving areas like mentoring, coaching, fundraising, quality management, social support, volunteering, and social innovation processes. Aproximar has a learning management system connecting training with technology in which self-assessments of performance are a key tool to support skills training. The programmes always combine social science (knowledge), active methods (people) and suitable tools (technology). It counts with 10 members providing voluntary work in fields of employment, evaluation, or education. Services benefit more than 120 practitioners, children, youngsters & more than 30 organisations.

Aproximar develops projects related to mentoring models for the inclusion of vulnerable groups (roma, migrants, young people and NEET, women, long-term unemployed and (ex)offenders) since 2009. Aproximar has run three mentoring programmes reaching more than 150 mentors and mentees, targeting the development of personal and social competences and the access and retention of a job place. Nowadays, Aproximar is developing a mentoring programme specifically targeting Roma people and is delivering mentoring training to four different European countries within a mobility project (MDiv –Mentors' Skills for Diversity).

Starting question:

How can ICT tools be integrated in the mentoring process – both coordination and relationship – supporting its efficiency, consistency and reliability?

Sequence of content/methods:

The session was a presentation with powerpoint including some discussion parts in between. Joana presented herself and her organisation APROXIMAR: A non-profit organisation that develops, organises and manages different consultancy and certified training programmes involving areas like mentoring, coaching, fundraising, quality management, social support, volunteering, and social innovation processes.

In the presentation she focused on the online tool MPATH, which is used for recruitment, support and progress assessment. The online tool is a self-assessment questionnaire based on a framework of competences and it provides global results for a group of participants about their perception on the competences before, during and after the mentoring process.

Main results presented by the facilitator:

The facilitator gave the example that mentee MPATH can help to point out the progress of the mentee, if the mentor doesn't see the improvement. In the programme there are more than 100 questions for coordinators and mentors, but by choosing indicators the tool automatically selects the corresponding questions. The questionnaire can then be directly send to the mentor as a link via mail. The coordinator can give a deadline and also check online, if it was already filled in. The results of the questionnaires appear as a radar, which is able to show progress over time.

Main points of discussion:

Joana asked the following questions to the audience:

- What is efficiency, consistency and reliability?

There were several answers, such as: Reaching goals, but in relation to money and time; documentation of hours and content of meetings; set goals for mentees and mentors to facilitate the matching process.

- Who is using an online documentation tool?

Nobody answered with yes. One participant pointed out that as a non-profit organisation they cannot afford a programme like this so far.

Results of the session:

The sessions showed how an ICT tool can support mentoring processes. MPATH provides an online method to check the competences of mentors and mentees in the mentoring process (pre, ongoing and post). The audience was interested in the programme, because so far they were not using a comparable tool.

Main statement highlighting the results of the discussion:

One participant was surprised that such a valuable instrument is only used by APROXIMAR. Joana said that MPATH is a ERASMUS+ programme and it's not for sale. She explained that in Portugal the concept of Mentoring was questioned before and because of this it was important for APROXIMAR to have a tool that shows outcomes of mentoring.

One thing that was laughed about:

There was some confusion and laughter, when Joana announced 5 minutes before the end of the session that we will now do a group work, therefore it ended as a short group interaction due to the lack of time.

References:

- Webpage of the organisation: aproximar.pt
- Link to the tool: <http://mpath.aproximar.pt/>