

Title: Monitoring Young Mentors Professionally: Best Practices and Challenges

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Number of participants: 7

Who are you and to which institution do you belong?

Afev (*Association de la Fondation Étudiante pour la Ville*) is a non-profit organization promoting volunteering and supporting volunteers based in France and Spain. Afev is the first student mentoring network in France in urban areas with more than 7.000 mentoring relationships between both countries. For two hours a week, a student provides support to a child or youth at risk who has been identified by education professionals.

Mentoring is provided in priority at home or in public cultural centers and undertaken in close collaboration with the family and the professors, teachers and social workers. This action is aimed at children and young adults, and is sufficiently flexible to adapt to their needs at every key moment in their education.

We also develop a program with youths participating in France's national voluntary service (*Service Civique*). Recruited and trained by Afev, they implement educational projects in primary and high schools.

Finally we implement a program called «KAPS» which combines volunteering and student accommodation. Flat-sharing is linked to a voluntary project in the community where the accommodation is situated. To qualify for the program students must sign up for both the flat-share and the community project. We also develop what we call «*Plateforme de l'engagement*», a space of resources within the universities, animated by professionals and youths in voluntary service, that seeks to promote the students' engagement in collective projects. In some *Plateformes* we are also experimenting with collective and individual actions aimed at school success (specially addressed to 1st year's students who are in a situation of vulnerability).

Starting question:

How could we make the follow-up work effective enough so that it provides orientation and security to the mentoring activity without being too heavy or intrusive?

Sequence of content/methods:

First, all participants filled in a "Facebook" paper profile which was followed by a short presentation round. Afterwards, the facilitators introduced Afev, the "Association de la Fondation Étudiante pour la Ville". Approaching the starting question, a personae game was conducted. Each group had the task to reflect a specific mentor's profile and select suitable monitoring tools for him/her. Afterwards the results were discussed and experiences concerning the process of monitoring were exchanged.

Main arguments presented by the facilitator:

The core of the monitoring system of Afev are 190 employees who are needed to support around 7.000 volunteer mentors. The mentors spend two hours a week with the families which makes it essential for Afev to integrate a suitable monitoring system to follow up with the mentors.

This monitoring must be precise, simple and needs to be personalised.

Three main points of discussion:

The outcome/suggestions of the personae game were different for each character. For the young student they recommended to communicate through WhatsApp, social media, phone calls for urgent cases, and feedback reports approximately once a month. These reports should obtain few and simple questions including a 'red flag system'. For the young active mentor the recommendation was to set one specific day for meetings and to balance the relationship and impact orientation. For the retired person a regular follow-up and assistance, provision of ideas and workshops as well as one-to-one coaching was suggested.

Results of the session:

Personal contact and regular meetings (such as group sessions) are important. For big organisations, there should at least be personal contact, if the mentors feedback falls below a specific score. Software which enables automatic contact are very helpful. This can be an online platform with profiles, a "Messagenes App", or "Chatbot Monitoring" through Facebook. They should all include automatic reminders for the feedback.

Main statement highlighting the results of the discussion:

First of all, every mentoring relationship is different and the organisations have different capacities. Therefore, the monitoring tools must be selected carefully with regards to both aspects. To find out the needs of the target group personae games can be helpful.

Further remarks and references:

A FAQ for mentors was created with many questions/problems at <https://ai.afev.org/>. These experiences as well as the MOOC tools from Afev can be used and translated by other organisations.