

# Title: Youth Initiated Mentoring with Art-based Participatory Action Research Approach (PAR) – Benefits and Challenges

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Number of participants: 10

## Who are you and to which institution do you belong?

Tereza Brumovská, PhD. has background in social work and youth work with socially-disadvantaged children and young people. She recently finished a PhD. study in the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre at National University of Ireland, Galway with thesis entitled: Initial Motivation and its Impact on Quality and Dynamics in Formal Youth Mentoring Relationships: A Longitudinal Qualitative Study. She has published, taught and presented her work on youth mentoring since 2008.

## Starting questions:

Who are natural mentors in the lives of (socially-disadvantaged) children and young people?

Can we strengthen their natural mentoring relationships in a youth-initiated mentoring programme?

## Sequence of content/methods:

The session started with a presentation about the research of the facilitator and was followed by a discussion round.

## Main findings presented by the facilitator:

The often extrinsic or introjected motivations of mentors can lead to high risks for the children/mentees.

Therefore, the facilitator recommends youth-initiated mentoring to strengthen the already existing network and to facilitate the skills of the “natural” mentoring relationship.

**The facilitator is currently running a pilot programme for youth-initiated mentoring** to, first, increase the awareness on natural mentoring, and second, facilitate the use of the relationship.

**There are eight workshops on natural mentoring** while each step is defined with an outcome. At the beginning the young people are sent out with cameras to capture a specific situation with regards to the natural mentor, his/her support and other themes (methodology of PAR/Photovoice).

**It maintains a challenge to involve the youth and to interpret their data/pictures.**

## Results of the Session:

**Identifying your natural mentor can be difficult**, since some can directly identify a mentor, while others might have several or are not able to identify any. This could lead to tensions in the classroom. Moreover, the pictures might be problematic due to laws, regulations and ethical issues which makes precise guidelines necessary.

Additionally, **the reflection might be difficult**, and it was suggested to use an ethnographic approach to let the children chose their way on how to talk about their experiences, for example let them perform a role play, paint a picture etc.

At any stage the young people should be involved in the research and development of the programme.

## Main statements highlighting the results of the discussion:

The workshops for the mentees must be flexible and less specific to include those with no direct (unknown) or several mentors. In this context, the outcome could be defined as raising awareness about natural mentoring, so that the flexibility for the rest of the process can be maintained. Moreover, the mentors should also somehow be involved in the programme. The young people could bring them to a specific workshop.

**One thing that was laughed about:**

The process of reflection might be difficult for some children and young people. Even some adults do not reflect and never ask themselves “why do I do that?”.