

Title: *Part of the Job: Impact Orientation for Mentoring Programmes*

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Number of participants: 8

Sequence of content/methods/activities:

The facilitators used the “walk the line” activity as a starting point. The participants stepped towards the line if the statement applied to them such as “Have you been or are you a mentor yourself?”

Then, they followed the three steps of impact orientation to structure their workshop: planning, monitoring and analysing.

Lastly, they distributed empty cards and asked the participants to note down previously unanswered questions. Then they clustered them and replied to them in a logical order.

Main tools/advice presented by the facilitator:

Planning is the first step of impact orientation and can be done with a logic model. You start with a vision, deciding what the desired results are. The vision is followed by the definition of the target group, the activities and the necessary input to reach the results.

When measuring the impact, one needs suitable indicators, which are difficult to find for soft skills. The indicator ought to be visible and recordable, understood by the target group, precise and replicable.

One option for the analysis is a Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT), yet options which proof the causal validity to a lesser extend are also a possibility, if an RCT is too difficult or expensive.

The impact analysis should rather be called output analysis as the output of the respective project is analysed in the end. It is important to identify what the programme has contributed, rather than looking only at the overall improvements of the mentees. This also leads to a key message, which is **“don’t overclaim” your achievements.**

Communicate the findings in a simple and straightforward manner to the stakeholders. Apart from communication and fundraising usage, the impact orientation is vital for the own knowledge management. Furthermore, it is due diligence and clearly a vital part of the job.

Main outcomes from the activities/methods applied:

An easy tool for impact evaluation is needed. There are options available, for example from a Spanish company which offers one for a small quarterly fee. A French company developed a chat bot which lets the organisation ask questions to the mentors on a regular basis.

Another concern was the measuring of soft skills. The facilitators admitted, there is no easy way available. They suggest interviews with the target group and, if possible, with people in their surroundings. A suggestion was to contact local universities and propose a cooperation with them, for example by using the student’s know-how and support in creating questionnaires.

The question how to communicate the findings to the mentees and their families was also difficult to answer for the facilitators. The matter is delicate, and they suggested not to call the participants socially disadvantaged and rather call their service a “scholarship” instead of “help” or “support”.

Another outcome was the answer to the question on **how to create a selection process for mentors and how to reject volunteers in case they are not suitable**. Suggestions for organisations were to be clear in the advertisements whom they are looking for and what the responsibility entails. Then signing a code of conduct or a contract gives written justification to end the cooperation, if the volunteer does not fulfil the requirements during the mentoring. Additional options were to meet the person at home for an interview and to require filling in a questionnaire. If possible, it is also an option to point out alternative projects which might be more suitable for the person.

Results of the Workshop:

Impact orientation is certainly needed for mentoring programmes, not only to please donors but also for all other stakeholders, including the own organisation. Communicating the findings needs to be handled with care and without “overclaiming” the results. Excel might work for smaller organisations, but better is an own impact orientation tool.

One thing that was laughed about:

Facilitator: “I started with questionnaires of 75 questions for children in the age of 10-15 years. From page 2 on they started to write down nasty names for me.”

Further questions/issues:

How to ensure that mentors fill in their diaries on a regular basis?

Reduce the questions to a few vital ones. Be strict and clear on the requirements and show them the use of the information to point out why they are doing it. A mobile version might help to make it more attractive and simpler for students.

References of literature:

Kursbuch Wirkung/Social Impact Navigator (PHINEO): <http://www.phineo.org/themen/social-impact-navigator>.

Social reporting standard (SRS): <http://www.social-reporting-standard.de/en/>.