

European Center for Evidence-Based Mentoring

April 2016

An active network of practitioners and researchers

During the European Mentoring Summit of 17 and 18 March 2016, practitioners and researchers talked about mentoring as a powerful way of guidance, apprenticeship and development. Mentoring is effective under certain conditions and if applied according proven methods and practices.

Over the last couple of years the network of practitioners and researchers in Europe has been strengthened. This has led to a declaration on mentoring at the Summit. The participants present at the research colloquium on March 18th 2016, expressed the importance of and the intention to collaborate in an European Center for Evidence-Based Mentoring.

In this document we summarize the discussion that took place. The purpose of this document is to inform participants and other interested parties.

What is the Center about?

Practitioners and researchers have the following goals in mind with respect to the improvement and dissemination of mentoring. These goals establish a first development agenda of the European Center for Evidence-Based Mentoring:

- Optimize high quality mentoring;
- Create a place for practitioners, innovators and researchers to collaborate, a hub to connect;
- Put research into action, leveraging the research;
- Function as a gravitation point for improving quality and positioning mentoring and networking;
- Form a bridge between scientific research and practice;
- Create a source where one finds validated knowledge and an overview of mentoring (programmes) in Europe;
- Foster caring relationships through research based quality;
- Promote research and make stories of mentoring more powerful in Europe;
- Facilitate knowledge sharing to improve mentoring practices across the lifespan;
- Connect the effects and impact of mentoring to the EU 2020 goals.

What is the Identity of the Center?

The European Center for Evidence-Based Mentoring is a network that bring into line and supports practitioners, coordinators of mentor programmes and researchers to share knowledge, practices and powerful stories with the aim of improving mentoring practices across the lifespan.

With whom does the Center relate?

The European Center for Evidence-Based Mentoring feels strongly connected with all those people in our mentor programmes; our mentees and mentors, young, old, from different cultures and backgrounds. We value the relation they have with each other and with us. We recognize that it is the quality of this relation that makes the difference.

We appreciate the cooperation between practitioners and researchers. We share the same goal of improving mentoring and accordingly increase our impact. We want to exchange knowledge and good practices, and learn from the experiences with mentoring in different fields and target groups: youth, illiterates, unemployed, entrepreneurs, migrants, refugees, etc.

We want to connect to efforts on the European level (governmental and non-governmental) that strive for equal opportunities, positive health, social inclusion and employment. To align local, national and European initiatives, we will contribute to a learning society.

We will develop a strong relationship with the MENTOR / UMB Center for Evidence Based Mentoring based at the University of Massachusetts. Student exchange is already initiated. Staff of the Center in Boston is visiting Europe frequently.

Organizational picture and activities

The European Center of Evidence Based Mentoring will have a small coordinating staff. A business / membership model needs to be worked out. The initiative for the formation of the staff and business model is taken by the partners of MentorProgramma Friesland.

The main task of the staff is to establish means for communication (website, directories, social media) and to facilitate project groups and committees with accomplishing their tasks.

All activities will be carried out by project groups that are formed around activities and product development, such as training. All project groups are responsible for the funding of their activities and training.

The Center serves the network

The bi-annual summit is the core activity to build the community of practitioners and researchers and to establish a sense of joint forces. This network can only flourish through the support and active contribution of people from different countries.

- The Center is the coordination point of the network; it will facilitate the participation of people in diverse ways.
- The Center is a communication platform, it provides a website, newsletter, forum, etc.
- The Center is a point for knowledge transfer; it organizes seminars, summits, webinars, etc.
- The Center is a point for matchmaking between practitioners, coordinators of mentor programmes and researchers.
- The Center develops and delivers training, lectures and workshops.
- The Center provides a quality label, brings together best practices.
- The Center spots opportunities for collaboration and European funding.

Start-up

In order to get things running, the first steps are:

- Formation of a small (temporary) staff for the Center;
- The Center staff will form a working group for the next summit (2018);
- The Center staff will communicate the declaration with policy makers;
- The Center staff will provide a website and means for communication;
- The Center staff will develop a business model and funding strategy for the years to come.

Declaration on Mentoring in Europe

Having met at the European Mentoring Summit in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands on 16th-18th of March 2016, we, as a group of practitioners, funders, researchers and scholars, working at different institutions from over ten countries, declare that we will participate in and contribute to the

European Center for Evidence-Based Mentoring.

Aim of the Center

The Center is dedicated to appraising and using the evidence we have, and to conducting rigorous and practice-oriented research on mentoring programmes and practices. In doing so, we seek to advance the production, dissemination, and uptake of evidence-based practices in ways that improve the effectiveness of practice and, ultimately, create stronger, more enduring mentoring relationships.

Mentoring helps deliver positive outcomes

Mentoring is applicable in diverse cultural settings. It is a practical approach:

- Voluntary and responsible contribution to the development of a person;
- Mentee-Mentor relationships with reciprocal value;
- A new form of apprenticeship.

Mentoring is scalable and has social impact

Effectiveness increases with implementing proven methods and tools. Quality improves through scaffolding, specific training, and good programme management. There are best practices and methods available that can be turned into training and implementation approaches for regions and cities that want to become more vital and productive.

Mentoring creates direct and potential value

Mentoring can play an important role in tackling diverse urgent societal and economic challenges, such as:

- Social inclusion and cohesion
- Active and responsible citizenship
- Decrease of school drop-outs
- Talent development
- Utilizing experience expertise
- Sustainable employability
- Strengthening entrepreneurship
- Intercultural and intergenerational cooperation
- lifelong learning

Goals in five years

We strive to accomplish the following goals:

- Develop a strong network of mentoring programmes and research institutions;
- Conduct rigorous research on mentoring programmes and practices, in order to improve our understanding of when, why, and for whom mentoring does (not) work;
- Improve the translation of evidence into programme, practice, and policy;
- Use multidisciplinary and multilevel research approach.