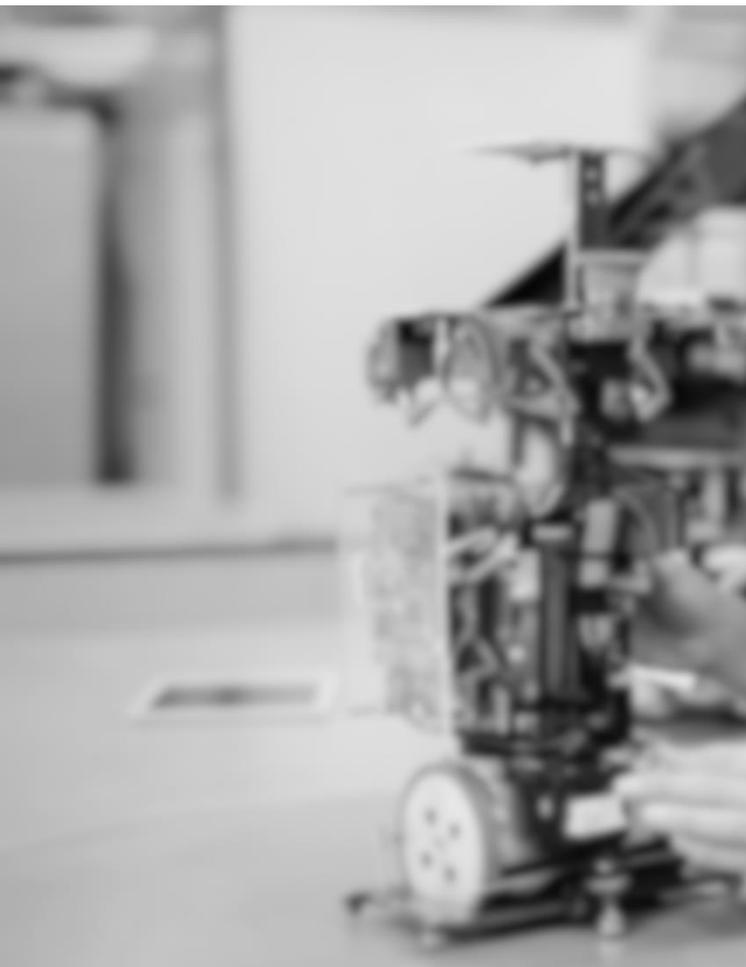


WOMEN4IT 2022



**Recommendations
for targeted
national
mentorship
community**

Iceland 
Liechtenstein  Norway
Norway grants  grants

WOMEN4IT 2022

Recommendations For Targeted National Mentorship Community

BETI

The project Nr.2017-1-094 "YOUNG-ICT WOMEN: Innovative Solutions to increase the numbers of EU vulnerable girls and young women into the digital agenda" benefits from a 2.714.304 € grant from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Youth Employment. The aim of the project is to increase the numbers of EU vulnerable girls and young women into the digital agenda.

Project implemented by:



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INTRODUCTION

In a day-to-day life it is important always try to grow personally and professionally, to develop our skills, learn new skills, and do not be afraid to challenge ourselves on a regular basis. One of the most productive methods to improve daily is to have a mentor. Mentoring has the ability to increase our personal development, professional advancement, and overall confidence. At a time when new professions and specialties appear so rapidly in the world, mentors and mentoring have a special role to play in knowledge transfer. When we talk about a career change and future skills often, we cannot offer a formal education path and mentoring is the way how we can help to change career or get to know future professions and needed competencies.

Mentoring has far-reaching benefits that extend beyond the personal growth of the mentee, benefiting mentors as well as the organizations for which they work. The advantages are numerous, ranging from boosting inclusiveness through exposure to new perspectives to enhanced chances of promotion for both sides.

According to study¹, mentorship can have a wide range of advantages for girls (and boys), ranging from increased school attendance and reduced dropout rates to greater rates of graduation, college enrolment, and overall higher expectations. It was analysed that young adults with a mentor are: 55% of people are less likely than their peers to skip a day of school, 78% more likely to volunteer regularly, 90% are interested in becoming a mentor, 130% more likely to hold leadership positions. The biggest benefit of mentoring, though, comes from demonstrating to pupils what is possible in their life.

When you ask any little girl what she wants to be when she grows up, you'll get a range of responses: teacher, nurse, dancer, veterinarian, and so on. However, how frequently do you hear responses such as research scientist, engineer, computer programmer, or firm CEO? This might be because females form their future expectations depending on the role models they witness. They are more inclined to believe they can be it if they can see it.

This leads us back to the topic of mentors. They are critical to levelling the playing field for girls of all backgrounds and reducing the gender gap that prevents so many brilliant young women from succeeding in their careers.

According to the journal PNAS, a study of female engineering students found that those who were assigned female mentors felt greater belonging, drive, and confidence—and were more likely to stay in the field (Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United

¹ <https://www.mentoring.org/mentoring-impact/>

States of America). Other studies suggest that those who have mentors do better at work, receive greater pay, and advance quicker than those who do not.

Mentorship must begin well before women join the workforce. It should begin in middle school, when girls are beginning to form ideas about the world around them and consider what they want to accomplish with their lives. This is especially crucial for girls from less affluent families, who frequently do not have the same opportunity as others to network with successful persons who may help them launch their careers.

Whatever their background or education, one thing is certain: the sooner girls are exposed to and have the opportunity to learn from positive female role models in a variety of roles and fields, the better prepared they will be to think imaginatively and limitlessly about their future and confidently face the obstacles they face.

BENEFITS OF MENTORING FOR MENTORS

Being a mentor entails much more than the satisfying feeling of 'giving back.' Mentors gain a wide range of personal development benefits as a result of their involvement, including:

- Increased self-confidence;
- Increased self-awareness;
- Leadership skill development;
- Strong communication skills;
- Art of delivering feedback;
- Art of asking questions;
- Becoming a good listener;
- Exposure to new and different perspectives;
- Growing a personal network;
- Increased chance of promotion;
- Increased job satisfaction;
- Supporting another person;
- Paying it forward;
- Learning from someone else.

BENEFITS OF MENTORING FOR MENTEES

Mentoring benefits mentees in a variety of ways, not just in terms of career advancement. The following are some additional advantages for mentees:

- Increased self-confidence;
- Increased self-awareness;
- Develop strong communication skills;
- Growing a personal network within the business;
- Exposure to new and different perspectives;
- Learn to self-reflect;
- Improve goal setting;
- Learn from other's experiences;
- Learn to ask good questions;
- Being supported by someone;
- Being advocated for;
- Increased chance of promotion;
- Increased job satisfaction.

NATIONAL SITUATION

Mentoring has played an important role in the development of European civic society for more than two decades. Mentoring programs have proliferated during the last decade. Why? Mentoring, as practice and data demonstrate, is a unique tool that can be applied to a wide range of European, national, and regional concerns and goals. It is effective — under the correct conditions – for a variety of themes, target groups, goals, and organizations. Mentoring empowers people and focuses on the participants' specific objectives. We link individuals, generations, diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, and ethnic groups via mentorship, therefore contributing to the integration of migrants, a higher educational level for youngsters, and a more inclusive, enterprising, and inventive society. A review was written about each of the WOMEN4IT countries' national situation. These reviews highlighted the main focuses on mentoring in countries, as well as advantages and disadvantages of mentoring. Ideas for the improvement were discussed in the national situation review. It was analysed what are the requirements to be a mentor and what is the profile of people who usually look for mentors.

NATIONAL SITUATION IN LATVIA

In the recent years mentoring has been acknowledge in Latvia as a useful tool for different target audiences. It is actively used in the entrepreneurship sector, start-ups, education sector and working with different vulnerable groups. Mentoring approaches are widely used in by the NGOs, educational sector, and tech and start-up environment.

The advantages of mentoring is the possibility to have individual and informal approach to address ones needs and help to achieve goals in a more direct way. Mentoring also provides guidance and knowledge sharing. In most occupation, younger less experienced individuals learn from older more experienced mentors. Mentorship relationships are often the primary means through which employees become socialized into an organization and career.² There are differences between “career mentoring” (for example start-ups, personal and professional growth) and “social mentoring” (guidance for vulnerable groups) and different approaches may apply. Much research has shown that mentors advance a protégés career by providing emotional support and confidence, suggesting useful strategies for achieving work

²https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270218978_Donaldson_S_I_Ensher_E_A_Grant-Vallone_E_J_2000_Longitudinal_examination_of_mentoring_relationships_on_organizational_commitment_and_citizenship_behavior_Journal_of_Career_Development_264_233-248

objectives, providing opportunities for the protégés to demonstrate competence, bringing the protégés to the attention of top management, protecting the protégés from the repercussions of errors, helping them avoid risky situations for their careers, and advancing the protégés career by nominating him or her for promotions (cf. Kram & Hall, 1996; Ragins, 1995; 1997a; 1997b; Russell & Adams, 1997).

To provide qualitative mentoring sessions – it takes time and dedication from the mentor. The disadvantage of mentoring approach is that in majority of cases the mentors initiative is volunteer – the mentor dedicates his/hers time and capabilities free of charge to support a person in need of the mentoring. Mentor is often not a stand-alone profession, the mentor is usually a high level specialist or an entrepreneur in the industry and it's time as a volunteer is limited. If the mentee is a highly motivated individual working towards his/hers goals, then, for example, well-structured mentoring sessions once a month or bimonthly meetings could be enough to talk through or solve a specific issue, but on the other hand if the mentoring process is applied to low motivated individual then the mentoring process should be much frequents and more intense.

NATIONAL SITUATION IN SPAIN

Social Mentoring is understood as a mutually beneficial One to One relationship in which one person offers support to another to enable them to make changes in their life. In recent years, in Spain, mentoring projects have gained prominence as a well-recognised tool in human development, both in the educational and professional fields.

For companies, the Mentoring programme is a corporate social responsibility (CSR) proposal that allows them to participate in the solution of environmental problems, combating youth unemployment, valuing the talent of their most committed employees, and allowing them to develop and pass on their talent to the local community.

A social intervention tool has proved to be very positive and helps young people to acquire technical knowledge and get closer to the reality of the world of work. But mentoring is not only beneficial for the mentee, but also for the mentors. In most cases, they recognise that the experience has been very positive for them and that it has left a lasting impression on them.

When talking about disadvantages of mentoring, some mentors might have technical expertise but lack some soft skills expertise. As well as other disadvantages that come along with any volunteer activity, lack of commitment, difficulty to schedule the meetings, etc.

The most improvement is needed in training the mentors, focussing mainly on what is expected from them, how they should organize the sessions, focussing also on individual cases and providing soft skills training. If possible, it should include selection of the criteria as not always all the professionals can be good mentors and have a successful experience. There are several key elements to be a mentor: firstly, to be interested in the matter and be willing to learn ways to improve. It is also important to have technical expertise, availability for the mentoring program, and long-term commitment.

Most of the time young people in vulnerable situations are the ones that look for mentors. In general, the mentees, have a lack of work experience, low self-esteem, low communicational skills and average educational background.

NATIONAL SITUATION IN GREECE

In Greece, mentoring refers mainly to the consultation and guidance of an experienced person, successful in a specific field, to someone less experienced who wants to follow the same professional path. Mentoring is offered in a variety of situations: education/employment, corporate, entrepreneurship.

Some universities offer mentoring to support the young scientists during their educational and professional development through the management of their personal learning, so as to maximize their prospects, develop their skills, improve their performance and ultimately achieve to become the person they want by making themselves useful in today's work environment. For example, the mentoring Program of the University of Ioannina is a collaborative relationship between an experienced professional and a young, less experienced person, which allows the exchange of experiences, information, and practical advice for a specific field of employment.

Regarding the corporate world, more and more companies are adopting mentoring programs, which are intended for the further training and development of their executives, with the aim of their advancement within the company. Mentoring programs usually last for a predetermined period, while the role of mentor in the work environment can be taken over by an experienced professional, who can offer guidance to a less experienced or newly hired employee, or by an outside professional specializing in the field in which the employee operates. This professional is called to transfer his knowledge, skills and experience to the employee he has undertaken, in order for the latter to develop personal and technical skills that will help him develop both personally and professionally and consequently improve his performance for the benefit of the company where he works.

Finally, in entrepreneurship, and especially female entrepreneurship, there are organizations which provide mentors for women who want to start their own business. Here acting as mentors are seasoned professionals with more entrepreneurial business experience than mentees, probably in the same industry as them, who serves as a trusted confidante over an extended period that provide their services pro bono to women entrepreneurs that need support and guidance.

Main advantage of the mentoring is that this process can turn into a great learning experience for both mentor and the mentee. Through mentoring mentors benefit also because (a) they can expand their network of acquaintances and develop their knowledge, (b) they encounter new business ideas (c) they develop new skills through their mentoring process (active listening, teamwork, knowledge transfer, (d) they develop leadership and management skills, and e) they gain personal satisfaction through supporting other people.

Disadvantages usually stem from ineffective mentoring pairs, unrealistic expectations and assumptions from the relationship leading to frustration, over-dependence on the Mentor/Mentee, as well as from technical issues of the mentoring process such as time and energy commitment from both sides. In addition, mentors might possess professional expertise but might not possess “people” skills.

Good mentoring programs should include thoughtful design of the mentoring program based on the needs of the mentees, implementation based on a well-structured mentoring process where roles, goals and success indicators are clearly defined, periodic check points to reflect on progress and assessment of the achievements at the end of the program based on individual learning, mentoring connection, and program effectiveness. Thus, training of mentors on the process is necessary as technical expertise on a subject and willingness to offer support is not enough without proper preparation.

There are certain core skills that a mentor should possess such as active listening, building trust, encouraging, identifying goals and current reality, providing corrective feedback as well as manage risks to prevent their mentees from making unnecessary mistakes. A mentor should also open the right doors for their mentees, helping them to grow a professional network, which means that they need to have a good knowledge of the specific field. So, the requirements form a mentor is a mixture of social and technical skills.

Although all, at a point of our life could make good use of a mentor, the people mostly in need of mentors are those who are at a professional crossroad or want to enter a new unknown field and could use guidance form a more experienced person.

NATIONAL SITUATION IN MALTA

In Malta, mentoring is seen as a powerful personal development and empowerment tool. It is considered as a relationship based upon mutual trust and respect between the mentor and mentee.

On a national level, mentoring as a strategy has been used and recognised as a successful and effective methodology to assist the identified mentee in progressing at a fast-track pace. This has in fact been a strategy advocated for by the Maltese Mentoring Society, the University of Malta which offers the opportunity of mentoring through its Mentoring Programme, as well as by Malta Enterprise which aims to assist businesses. The civil service has also followed suit with the launch of a mentorship programme for “public officers who have the ambition and aspiration to develop their career with the Public Administration.”

Mentoring should be made available to all employees at their workplace. This should be considered by the employer as a service and not as a commodity to the employee. Ideally, the mentor is to be an independent person and not an employee within the same company, so as to win the trust of the person requiring the training. If the mentor is from within the company, it should be a person who is trusted by the mentee.

Essential qualities seen and observed to enrich Mentors whilst job-shadowing include the importance of being and maintain calm, especially in challenging situations, as well as being tough but fair in leadership.

NATIONAL SITUATION IN LITHUANIA

Mentoring in Lithuania focuses on professional development, career planning, business and entrepreneurship. The Ministry of Economy and Innovation of the Republic of Lithuania announced that the entrepreneurship and export development agency "Versli Lietuva" launched a new mentoring program for small entrepreneurs all over Lithuania just this February. This organization, among others like LT Big Brother, prepares new mentoring programs every year and this year it's about helping entrepreneurs achieve ambitious goals. It is important to mention the “Business Woman’s Association in Lithuania” that directly corresponds with the projects target group, this association actively participates in mentoring the women in Lithuania to become strong professional business women. Another great organization that creates mentoring programs for women in Lithuania is “Women Go Tech”, they proudly share their goal to encourage female participation in tech and engineering while promoting gender equality in the workplace.

Above all, mentoring promotes the development of a person's personality. Over the course it is possible to learn a wealth of new knowledge, receive great advice, hear success stories from the mentor and decide where to move forward. Another great reason to participate in a mentoring programme is to have someone who can take a rational and impartial view of your decisions or aspirations. The opportunity to get extremely valuable advice is one of the biggest incentives to join a mentoring programme. You should know that in the 21st century, connections have a big impact on your immediate career. Brian Tracy, one of America's best-known business lecturers, has said that one of the best and fastest ways to get ahead in your life and career is by expanding your professional network. In this case, mentoring is a great foundation for new connections and networking. The possible disadvantages are often related to the content of the mentoring programme itself. The content can be too difficult to understand, there can be too much of theoretical information and too little of practical activities and sometimes, during the mentor coaching, it is not taken into account what knowledge and teaching skills the mentors have already acquired. All of these negative sides can be improved and eventually eliminated, especially teaching the mentor the importance of mentorship and what responsibilities mentors have.

To become a mentor in one of the Lithuania's mentoring programs, for example the mentorship offered by "dialogue", you need to have at least three years of professional experience, have the flexibility to spend one hour a month meeting with the mentee, have to be motivated to share relevant experience and contribute to the mentee's objectives.

Usually, the people looking for a mentor are at a crossroad in life and need support and additional help in deciding which way to take. This includes people fresh out of school/college, people trying to chance/improve/start their careers and even people that are trying to start their own businesses.

NATIONAL SITUATION IN ROMANIA

Focus on mentoring in Romania seems to head towards the production of automotive and tech area. The main advantage of the mentoring, that can be highlighted is the development of technical competences for employees and assuring the quality of their tasks. On the other hand, some mentors might have technical expertise but lack soft expertise. However, companies prefer them to the ones that on one hand are more communicative and easier to socialize with, but lack such tech skills, because the companies want to focus on productivity and palpable results.

When talking about improvements, one of the main problems of mentoring is that SME usually do not reach out to mentoring and they might need more awareness in this field.

The person who decides to help others and become a mentor should have a technical expertise in the field, have at least a basic knowledge about pedagogy strategies, respecting procedures. Also, the mentor should be communicative and be empathic to others. While the profile of people who look for mentors is usually big companies with complex well defined technological processes.

CONCLUSIONS

Each of the partner has defied the **main focus on mentoring in their country**. Most of the countries are focusing on entrepreneurship sector, start-ups, education sector and working with different vulnerable groups. By organizing mentoring activities, they are trying to improve mentees personal and professional development, career planning skills. In some of the countries, they pay a lot of attention to projects that are improving human development, both in the educational and professional fields.

The main advantages and disadvantages of mentoring were pointed out in the national reports.

Advantages:

- Mentoring is a social intervention tool that has proved to be very positive and helps young people to acquire technical knowledge and get closer to the reality of the world of work.
- Mentoring is beneficial for both the mentor and the mentee.
- Mentoring helps to assist the identified mentee in progressing at a fast-track pace.
- Mentoring gives possibility to have individual and informal approach to address ones needs and help to achieve goals in a more direct way.
- The development of technical competences for employees and assuring the quality of their tasks.
- Mentoring promotes the development of a person's personality.
- Mentoring programme allows to have someone who can take a rational and impartial view of mentees' decisions or aspirations.
- Mentoring is a great foundation for new connections and networking.
- The mentors advance a mentee career by providing emotional support and confidence, suggesting useful strategies for achieving work objectives, providing opportunities for the mentee to demonstrate competence, bringing the mentee to

the attention of top management, protecting the mentees from the repercussions of errors, helping them avoid risky situations for their careers, and advancing the mentee's career by nominating him or her for promotions.

Disadvantages:

- Some mentors might have technical expertise but lack some soft skills expertise.
- Sometimes there is lack of commitment, difficulty to schedule meetings.
- Mentors might possess professional expertise but might not possess “people” skills.
- Ineffective mentoring pairs, unrealistic expectations and assumptions from the relationship leading to frustration, over-dependence on the Mentor/Mentee.
- During the mentor coaching, it is not considered what knowledge and teaching skills the mentors have already acquired.
- Majority of cases the mentor's initiative is volunteer – the mentor dedicates his/her time and capabilities free of charge to support a person in need of the mentoring.

In order to get the most out of mentoring, partners pointed out weak points of it and **what should be improved** to get the best results of mentoring. Firstly, to have a successful mentoring, it is essential to properly prepare the mentor. It can be done through organizing the trainings and providing them with the guidelines to follow through the mentoring process. Secondly, it is necessary to have a clear and well-prepared mentoring program, that contains a clear plan of mentoring process with defined roles, goals and success indicators. The plan should be created after analysing the profile, knowledge and needs of the mentee. Mentoring program should have planned progress reflections and assessment of the achievements at the end of the program based on individual learning. Lastly, the partnership think that mentoring should be available to all employees at their workplace. It should become a service and not a commodity to the employee.

When organizing mentoring, it is not only important to have the mentoring program and prepare the mentor, but it is crucially important for the mentor to meet some of the requirements. The mentor should have core skills such as active listening, building trust, encouraging, identifying goals and current reality, providing corrective feedback as well as manage risks to prevent their mentees from making unnecessary mistakes. Also, the mentor should be willing to help other and be able to have a free time that could spend with the mentee, because mentorship is usually done on volunteered bases. However, putting aside all of the soft skills, the mentor should be a professional or have enough experience to guide a mentee through the mentoring process in the specific field.

Looking at the mentees' profiles, usually, they are the people looking for a mentor are at a crossroad in life and need support and additional help in deciding which way to take. This includes people fresh out of school/college, people trying to chance/improve/start their careers and even people that are trying to start their own businesses. In sense of Women4IT project we are combining two target groups, the participants that have showed the initiative to study and change their career path, and NEET's who might need some guidance while choosing the most suitable path for them and stepping the first steps in the new career.

PREVIOUS MENTORING EXPERIENCE

During the Women4IT trainings, 100 young girls were participating in the training program to increase their employability in each of the partner's country. Partners have created 646 individual training roadmaps in 8 training activities. 7 countries chose the profiles (Data Analyst, Customer service representative, Graphic designer, Junior web developer, Software tester, Digital media specialist, Project coordinator, Data protection officer) in their countries based on the job market needs and not all profiles have been piloted in all countries. The most training roadmaps have been created in the Digital media specialist profile with 146 roadmaps created. And the least number of roadmaps have been created for the Data protection officer job profile – 17, as it was piloted only in one country. Mentoring was important part of the trainings and later in the employment procedure. The mentoring process was organized as a two-level activity: group mentoring sessions and individual mentoring sessions. Mentoring opportunities were offered to all training program participants, but participation was voluntary. Due to national epidemic restrictions mentoring was many organized online via online calls and e-mails.

Mentoring process had a lot of highlights and hard parts. The main role of the mentors was to couple the Women4IT training, to guide and motivate mentees in their search for employment and to develop a team spirit creating a community of beneficiaries to support each other. When talking about the best practices of this mentoring, partners pointed out a few things. Firstly, the participants who actively communicated with their mentor were more motivated and more focused to achieve their training goals, and also a lower dropout rate was noted. Partners feel like mentoring helped to raise self-awareness for mentees, raise self-evaluation, develop social skills, improve their CV writing skills and acquire experience in job interviews.

The hardest part of mentoring was noted to be the possibility to approach the participants who found no need of a mentor. As the mentorship program was organized on voluntary bases, the more motivated participants used it to reach their full potential, but at the same time the less motivated individuals, who would need the mentoring program the most, showed lack of interest above the minimal requirements to be involved. It could be explained that mentees need time to build up trust towards the mentor as the majority of participants did not have any questions during the first mentoring sessions, but after 2 months of training and communication with the mentor, the interest and questions rise, and the most active communication initiated by the mentees took place after the graduation of the training program. Also, at some cases it was hard to collect the feedback from mentees and to keep

them committed after the end of the training and deal with their frustration for not finding employment.

Overall feedback from mentees was a positive one, focusing on the dedication of mentors in terms of time and availability whenever it was needed. Mentees valued the individual approach and the possibility to have a “go to” person for any of their needs, they also valued the different form of communication which included also chats and social networks for quicker response.

Overall feedback from mentors regarding the mentoring process was also positive, focusing on the determination of trainees/graduates regarding their future careers, as well as on the positive results following the training/mentoring process. Mentors report having enjoyed the experience itself, feeling that they have helped and influenced in some way the mentees’ process and that they have participated in their enthusiasm and progress in the different processes. They also claim to have learned from the mentees and from the experience as a whole. The most rewarding part for them was when the mentees reached out to them after a successful job interview. It is important to mention that when asking mentors what would they change in the process, in general, they request initial training and more focus on what should they teach and how to structure the programme sessions according to the needs of the individual.

BEST PRACTICES

There is a diversity of designs of mentoring programmes for women academics. The four programmes presented below are examples of best practice and as characteristics of successful management, they can also be seen as best practice for future mentoring programmes in Europe³.

1. Muv – mentoring university Vienna. The University of Vienna was the first university in Austria to organize a mentoring programme for women academics. Representing one crucial measure among others for strengthening gender equality in academia, muv (mentoring university Vienna) is characterized by its innovative design and structural approach to career development. Taking a critical stance on the traditionally informal, individual promotion mechanisms and academic relationships, muv builds on cross-disciplinary small-group mentoring based upon same and cross-gender mentoring relationships.
2. RRM – Réseau romand de mentoring pour femmes. RRM is a one-to-one mentoring programme for women in their early career in academia and research. RRM was among the first mentoring programmes to be funded by the Swiss Federal Programme for Gender Equality in Higher Education.
3. MDCH – Mentoring Deutschschweiz. MDCH (the Swiss German Mentoring Programme) is a programme for the promotion of women in academic careers. It offers one-to-one mentoring and accompanying measures for women scientists and researchers who are working towards Habilitation or who are engaged in post-doctoral and advanced doctoral studies at German-speaking Swiss universities. The programme is a personalized springboard for advanced early career researchers and was developed in 2001 in an attempt to fix the “leaky’ pipeline⁴” of women in science.
4. MuT – Mentoring und Training. In 1997, the state of Baden-Württemberg launched a so-called Habilitation programme for women. This programme is still running; its focus was and is granting scholarships for women aspiring to qualify for a full professorship. It became evident, however, that financial support was not enough as an affirmative action measure. As follows from MuT’s understanding of mentoring, MuT has a one-

³ <http://www.eument-net.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Establishing-Mentoring-in-Europe.pdf>

⁴ The “leaky pipeline” describes the gender-specific loss rate in academic and scientific careers. Educational gender differences are on the decline, but gender segregation at the middle and top levels of universities remains. As it is, a rise in the number of female students does not necessarily translate into increasing numbers of women in higher academic positions.

to-one approach to it. If a mentor has more than one mentee, they meet with each mentee separately. Each mentee decides individually whether same- or cross-gender, same- or cross-discipline mentoring suits her situation best.

To gain even more information about successful mentoring, recognize existing knowledge gaps and which methods could be used in Women4IT mentoring, each of the partner presented at least 2 best mentoring network practices in their country. It was initiatives, structures, or individuals.

BEST PRACTICES IN LATVIA

Name	Riga TechGirls mentoring program
Short introduction	Riga TechGirls is a non-governmental initiative of ICT specialists with a focus to encourage girls and women to join and find their passion in ICT. The provided mentoring program brings together industry specialists with women just starting their first steps in ICT. Initiative is supported by major ICT industry companies, NGO's and policy makers.
Description (main goals, objectives, activities)	<p>Riga TechGirls mentorship program "TechMentor" gathers professionals in the field of IT and tech with the goal of providing support to women developing their talents, taking their first steps in the IT field or advancing their career further in this field.</p> <p>Program provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> support from a local or an international mentor opportunity to network and form working groups with other participants of the program environment where to grow, advance and broaden your skills and knowledge <p>Selection criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program is available to any woman <p>Motivation and goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The assessment will be carried out by a special working group together with mentors
Target group	All women
Website	http://www.rigatechgirls.com/mentorship2022

Name	Project of the Latvian International Youth Program Agency (JSPA) "PROTI and DARI!" , No. 8.3.3.0/15/I/001
Short introduction	The aim of the project is to develop the skills of the target group of young people (aged 15-29 (inclusive) who are not studying, working, gaining a job and not registered with the State Employment Agency (SEA) as unemployed) and to promote their involvement in education, including vocational training. In the employment, in the Youth Guarantee project measures implemented by the State Education Development Agency (VIAA) or in the active employment or preventive unemployment reduction measures implemented by the State Employment Agency (SEA), as well as in the activities of non-governmental organizations or youth centres.
Description (main goals, objectives, activities)	<p>Support for young people in the target group:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Profiling of young people was carried out, identifying the young person's skills, interests and acquired education, as well as determining the directions of development; 2. In cooperation with each young person, based on the results of their profiling, a program of their individual activities has been developed, consisting of four compulsory components (UNESCO-developed learning pillars): personal development, inclusion, "work ethic", lifelong learning competences; 3. An agreement has been concluded with the target group of young people on participation in the implementation of the program of individual measures within the project; 4. a program of individual activities of the young person has been implemented for a period of up to 9 months, providing the measures provided for therein, which may include the following activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – regular individual mentor support (not less than 20 hours per month), during which the mentor provides support to the target group young person in the implementation of the individual program of activities; – non-formal and informal learning;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – specialist consultations (psychologist, career counselor, etc., except for medical staff); – participation in events (camps, seminars, sports activities, cultural events); – volunteering activities; – involvement in the activities, events and projects of non-governmental organizations and youth centers; – acquaintance with the specifics of the profession, including visits to companies in order to choose to obtain a professional qualification or acquire a trade with a master craftsman; – involvement in local community activities; – specific measures for the target group of young people with disabilities (with the help of a sign language interpreter, an assistant, specialized transport); – other activities. <p>A methodology for mentoring and support activities have been created (In Latvian) - https://jaunatne.gov.lv/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/metodologiskas_vadlinijas_darbam_ar_merka_grupas_jauniesiem_projekta_pr_2.var_.pdf</p>
Target group	Project "PROTI un DARI!" The target group is young people aged 15 to 29 (inclusive) who are not studying, working, gaining a profession and are not registered as unemployed with the State Employment Agency (SEA).
Website	https://jaunatne.gov.lv/par-agenturu/programmas-projekti/proti-un-dari/

BEST PRACTICES IN SPAIN

Name	One-to-One mentoring programme for Women4IT participants
Short introduction	Women working in the IT sector participated in the social mentoring program, accompanying young graduates in their job search process in the IT sector.

Description (main goals, objectives, activities)	<p>Main goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop motivation and self-confidence To improve social and working skills To improve personal development. To increase independent and action-oriented thinking
Target group	Young women participating in the Women4IT project and graduated from the courses offered.

Name	Group mentoring - inspirational talks by IT professionals for Women4IT participants.
Short introduction	Group mentoring are spaces in which women IT professionals give talks to motivate and inspire young people, in which they talk about their academic and professional path to the position they currently hold, describing what their day-to-day work consists of and thus bringing young women closer to the working environment in general and to the specific tasks of certain jobs in particular.
Description (main goals, objectives, activities)	<p>Main goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motivate and inspire young people Give clear and detailed information about the day-today work in specific work positions.
Target group	Young unemployed women

BEST PRACTICES IN GREECE

Name	Mentoring for STEM scientists
Short introduction	<p>A mentoring program offering free, 1-on-1 online tutoring with STEM mentors from all over the world. The mentoring duration is 1 month, and the aim is to answer specific questions over this period. It can be extended according to the purpose and availability of both parties. To facilitate the mentor-mentee communication there is a proposed list of subjects to start from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Networking: expanding the circle of academic and professional contacts Developing interview skills and preparing for the job market

	<p>Drafting the right CV and cover letter</p> <p>Receiving professional guidance inside/ outside academia</p> <p>Applying for postgraduate, doctoral, academic funding</p> <p>Balancing personal and professional life</p> <p>Transferring from academia to industry</p> <p>Developing soft skills such as negotiating, being assertive etc.</p>
Description (main goals, objectives, activities)	<p>Main goals:</p> <p>To support men and women with STEM background in finding employment.</p> <p>To support STEM graduates in pursuing further education (MSc, PhD).</p> <p>To prepare STEM graduates transfer from academia to industry.</p>
Target group	STEM scientists
Website	https://greekwomeninstem.com/gr/mentoring/

Name	University of Ioannina Mentoring
Short introduction	Creation of a collaborative one-to-one relationship between an experienced professional and a young, less experienced person, which allows the exchange of experiences, information, and practical advice for a specific field of employment. Mentoring includes also an initial experiential seminar at the University of Ioannina and specially designed educational material.
Description (main goals, objectives, activities)	<p>Main goals:</p> <p>Explore career development prospects</p> <p>Learning and practicing labor market integration techniques</p> <p>Improving self-confidence</p> <p>Expansion of the personal network of contacts</p> <p>Career planning.</p>
Target group	University students and graduates
Website	http://mentoring.dasta.uoi.gr/

BEST PRACTICES IN MALTA

Name	Women4IT Training
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Short introduction	Contacting the girls who enrolled on the platform to follow the W4IT courses
Description (main goals, objectives, activities)	The aim of this mentoring was done to help the girls appreciate the investment being done on their behalf, that of giving them the opportunity to upskill their training in ICT. Although the girls are receiving the W4IT training for free, the entity is paying for 'their investment', hence, they need to commit themselves and proceed with their training towards the end of the course.
Target group	Girls receiving the W4IT training – one to one mentoring

Name	Group mentoring - inspirational talks by IT professionals for Women4IT participants.
Short introduction	Group mentoring are brief training sessions, whereby women IT professionals give talks to motivate and inspire young people, by relating them about their academic and professional path they took, until they reached their current position. They will describe them their daily tasks and bring young women closer to the working environment in general and to the specific daily tasks.
Description (main goals, objectives, activities)	Main goals: Motivate and inspire young people Provide clear and detailed information about the day-today work in specific work positions, encourage them to get organised and better in time management.
Target group	- unemployed women, - women in their probation period - women changing their career paths

BEST PRACTICES IN LITHUANIA

Name	Business Women's Association in Lithuania
Short introduction	The Business Women's Association was established in Lithuania on 21 December 2015. The need to establish an official organization emerged after engagement in a club activity of several years, when ties with similar organizations in foreign countries were established;

	<p>also the need to participate in projects fostering women’s entrepreneurship and self-education, share experience with starting business women emerged.</p> <p>Business owners and top-level executives are invited to become members of the Association. They may participate in activities as natural persons or represent a legal entity. The Association is not limited solely to the membership of women and is open to everybody who shares recognized values and aspirations.</p>
<p>Description (main goals, objectives, activities)</p>	<p>The field of the Association’s activity – development of professional knowledge and personality of Lithuanian women entrepreneurs, active involvement in public and social activity and representation of these women in seeking the realization of their ambitions and interests.</p> <p>The aims of the Association in representing interests of members of the Association are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to foster and bolster women’s entrepreneurship, as well as their involvement in the economic sphere; to seek assurance of the principle of equal opportunities in business by enhancing the impact of women entrepreneurs in business self-governance; to strengthen mutual cooperation, partnership and assistance among women – in sharing experience, exchanging useful information; to provide women with a possibility to advance knowledge in different discussions, conferences, seminars and trainings; to foster women to make business decisions more actively; to take care of the quality of women’s life in society as well as the expression of their personality in the private space; to foster women’s self-confidence, creativity, non-traditional thinking; to look for new market possibilities, i.e. to focus on the development of women’s business in searching for new business ties; to represent interests of the Association’s members in different institutions;

	<p>to disseminate information about members of the Association on different meetings, conferences, seminars arranged by European business women;</p> <p>to seek close cooperation with similar type international associations, and to participate in different international projects;</p> <p>to participate in implementing and/or to implement projects promoting women's entrepreneurship, women's involvement in decision-making.</p> <p>Types of activity pursued by the Association:</p> <p>preparation and coordination of projects, coordination of financial assistance for these projects;</p> <p>preparation of applications and participation in projects organized by EU structural funds and other organizations;</p> <p>organization of business events;</p> <p>consulting business and other management activity;</p> <p>activities of customized information services;</p> <p>education and training.</p>
Target group	Women, entrepreneurs, people who share recognized values and aspirations.
Website	https://www.bwa.lt/en/

Name	Women Go Tech
Short introduction	<p>Women Go Tech is the first and only mentoring program in Lithuania created for women, aimed at encouraging females to discover and build careers in tech-related jobs.</p> <p>The program was launched by the INFOBALT association and the World Economic Forum initiative Global Shapers Vilnius in 2016. We're supported by key TECH enterprises located in Lithuania as well as Lithuanian TECH startups and have also gained international recognition across various global events.</p> <p>The program is supported by the former Lithuania's President Dalia Grybauskaitė.</p>

<p>Description (main goals, objectives, activities)</p>	<p>The program offers:</p> <p>Mentoring In-person meetings with your dedicated mentor.</p> <p>Community Community gatherings and growing together with others.</p> <p>Events Tech events hosted by many different tech companies.</p> <p>Workshops Workshops and content sessions with the experts.</p> <p>Currently there are 10 different tech tracks in Women Go Tech. Mentees can choose a career that they want to pursue with the help from their mentors and community.</p> <p>Front-End Development Front end development focuses on client-side development – it manages what the user sees in their browser or application. Front-end development consists of design, content, and functionality – all the things that users interact with (colors, fonts, menus, buttons, tables, etc.).</p> <p>Back-end Development It refers to the server-side of service and everything that communicates between the database and the browser. It contains the code needed to build out these components: the database, server, and application.</p> <p>UX Design UX refers to the user experience, focusing on how a certain works and how people interact with it. UX designer aims to create an intuitive and easy-to-use product that is useful and delightful for customers.</p> <p>Product Ownership It's owning a product in its entirety and maximising the value it creates. Product owners supervise the product backlog and ensure it is up-to-date in terms of priorities and matches the product's vision.</p> <p>Project Management</p>
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	<p>IT project management consists of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling IT projects. There are various types of IT projects, including software development and implementation, hardware installations (e.g., servers, desktop computers, or telephony systems,) network system upgrades, and data management.</p> <p>Data analytics</p> <p>It's the process of extracting, transforming, and centralizing data to discover and analyze hidden patterns, relationships, trends, correlations, and anomalies or validate a theory or hypothesis.</p> <p>Data analysis involves multiple stages, including establishing a data set, preparing the data for processing, applying models, identifying key findings, and creating reports.</p> <p>Production Engineering</p> <p>Production Engineering (also known as Manufacture Engineering) consists of planning, designing, developing, and managing various processes to produce high-quality products.</p> <p>Quality Assurance</p> <p>It's a procedure for ensuring the quality of a software product or service before making it available for customers.</p> <p>Quality assurance focuses on improving the software development process. By following software product quality standards, testers make the development more efficient and effective.</p> <p>Business Analysis</p> <p>It's a set of tasks, knowledge, and techniques required to identify business needs and provide solutions to issues in enterprises. In the technology industry, solutions often include a systems development component but also can consist of process improvement or organizational change.</p> <p>Cyber Security</p> <p>A cyber security analyst is primarily responsible for protecting a company's network and systems from cyber-attacks. This involves researching upcoming IT trends, creating contingency plans, reviewing suspicious activities, reporting security breaches, and educating the rest of the company on security measures.</p>
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Target group	Women
Website	https://womengotech.com/about-the-program/

Name	Versli Lietuva
Short introduction	Versli Lietuva is an agency established by the Ministry of Economy and Innovation to promote entrepreneurship, sustainable and modern business development, the start-up ecosystem and exports in Lithuania.
Description (main goals, objectives, activities)	<p>"Business Mentor Network" is a mentoring project initiated by Versli Lietuva, where experienced entrepreneurs and specialists in various fields share their knowledge and experience free of charge with business representatives seeking to grow and improve.</p> <p>E-mentoring is one part of this project. It takes place on the online platform www.mentoriai.verslilietuva.lt, where registered users can ask any of the project's e-mentors a question and seek advice on relevant business issues. There is no limit to the time, frequency or number of e-mentors who can be consulted, but it depends on the individual situation - a user can ask a single question, consult the same e-mentor on a regular basis, or ask different questions of different experts. The recommended duration of e-mentoring is 3-6 months.</p> <p>The team of e-mentors consists of professionals specialising in business development, finance, law, marketing, communications, human resources, international relations, commerce, innovation and other areas.</p>
Target group	People starting new businesses, entrepreneurs.
Website	https://mentoriai.verslilietuva.lt/e-mentoryste/

Name	idialogue
Short introduction	Idialogue's solution is an open, free and uninterrupted career mentoring platform. They bring together people with different backgrounds but similar interests for a three-month interaction. The end results are inspiring - the Mentee receives answers that

	stimulate action and purpose, while the Mentor makes sense of his/her experience and develops leadership skills.
Description (main goals, objectives, activities)	<p>The main goals of idialogue are to:</p> <p>Support the mentees. They prepare people for mentoring with theoretical information, practical advice and online Q&A.</p> <p>Create new opportunities. Open up new opportunities, as Mentors will recommend motivated participants to others, introduce them to professional growth opportunities, etc.</p> <p>Support networking. Expand your circle of acquaintances.</p> <p>Let mentees achieve their goals. Achieve personal career goals faster and more productively.</p> <p>Give motivation support. The mentor will support you when it is difficult, encourage you when you lack motivation, direct you when you get lost at a crossroads.</p> <p>Create professionalism. Having a mentor is an attribute of an advanced professional.</p> <p>Achieve personal growth. It will develop knowledge and skills competencies and thus increase competitiveness in the labor market.</p> <p>Build confidence. The opportunity to learn from a more experienced professional increases self-esteem and self-confidence.</p> <p>Achieve recognition. Distinctiveness in the social space and among friends.</p>
Target group	A future or existing professionals that are: motivated, interested in professional growth and continuous improvement, seek the resources of knowledge and experience for stronger and more purposeful steps forward.
Website	https://www.idialogue.lt/

BEST PRACTICES IN ROMANIA

Name	Bogdan Grigore
Short introduction	<p>Chair Lead at International Association of Facilitator- IAF - https://www.facebook.com/IAFacilitators/</p> <p>Former Inspirational Speaker at TEDxEroilor - https://www.facebook.com/TEDxEroilor/</p>

	Former Sales Trainer at Apple - https://www.facebook.com/apple
Description (main goals, objectives, activities)	<p>Asociatia lui Bill Gates</p> <p>IAF – He coordinates the local chapter in Romania of the International Association of Facilitators.</p> <p>Aim: - promote facilitation in Romania - develop members' facilitation skills - create a community of practice and sharing - experiment and practice different facilitation techniques and methods.</p>
Target group	Public
Website	https://www.facebook.com/bogdan.grigore

Name	PWN ROMANIA – Professional Women’s Network
Short introduction	PWN Romania’s mentoring program brings members closer together and enables experienced professionals to be part of the growth and development of those who are at the beginner level of a successful career. Each member interested in becoming a mentor or a mentee (advice recipient) must fill in a standard form stating her goals, expectations, and areas of expertise.
Description (main goals, objectives, activities)	<p>Vision: Business opportunity. Remote support. Exposure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Strategy aspects – Legal aspects of the business – Operational management – Tax and accounting aspects – Personal Branding – Online & Social Media strategy – Marketing aspects – Sales strategy – The negotiation processes – Financing solutions – The Business Plan

	– Business plans presentations & input
Target group	Women entrepreneurs
Website	https://pwnbucharest.net/programs/mentoring.html

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The presented national best practices share many similarities. The main one would be the target group, which usually is young women, who need some guidance in their careers. While all best practices strive to promote and grow women's careers, they differ in their specified goals, focus fields, mentoring strategies.

The analysis of the current situation suggests that further training and mentoring is required for women to have equal opportunities in the work force, especially in the tech sector. The building of a strong community of women in the tech sector is crucial for networking and encouragement of other young females to pursue a career in this usually men dominated sector. The Women 4IT Training has strengthen our observation that the rules for involvement need to be rethought so that participants are interested in completing mentoring programs and evaluating their contribution. Whether it's a membership fee or a guaranteed job for the best graduates.

BUILD YOUR NATIONAL MENTORING NETWORK

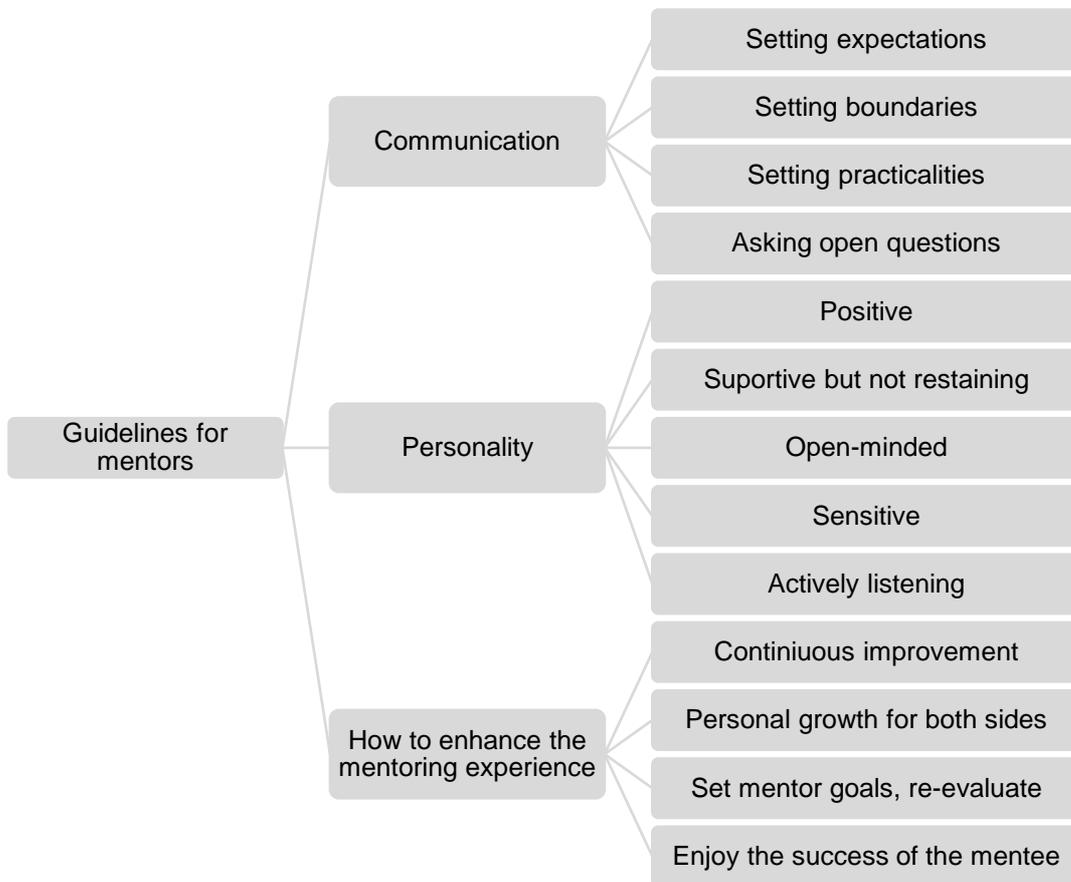
The national mentoring network connects three groups (business organizations, employees, stakeholders; NEETS after finishing training, ones who did not get in, those into training; schoolgirls) in order to create a mentoring network for promoting technology careers for women and encouraging them to take this leap. It is based on the knowledge transfer from more qualified field to less qualified one.

The business organizations, employees and stakeholders become mentors to the young girls that finished Women4IT trainings, the ones that did not get in or those that are participating in the trainings now. These mentors guide their mentees, help to grow personally and professionally, help to set goals and to reach them, introduce new ways of thinking to the mentee and challenge them to become better.

After experiencing the mentoring from the professionals in the ICT field, young women can become the mentors to schoolgirls. This mentoring focuses on encouraging girls to choose career in ICT, presenting positive female examples in the tech field. It is extremely important to embrace girls and their unique skills for who they are, rather than what society expects them to be. Girls must be taught that there are no restrictions on the subjects they can study or the careers they can pursue.

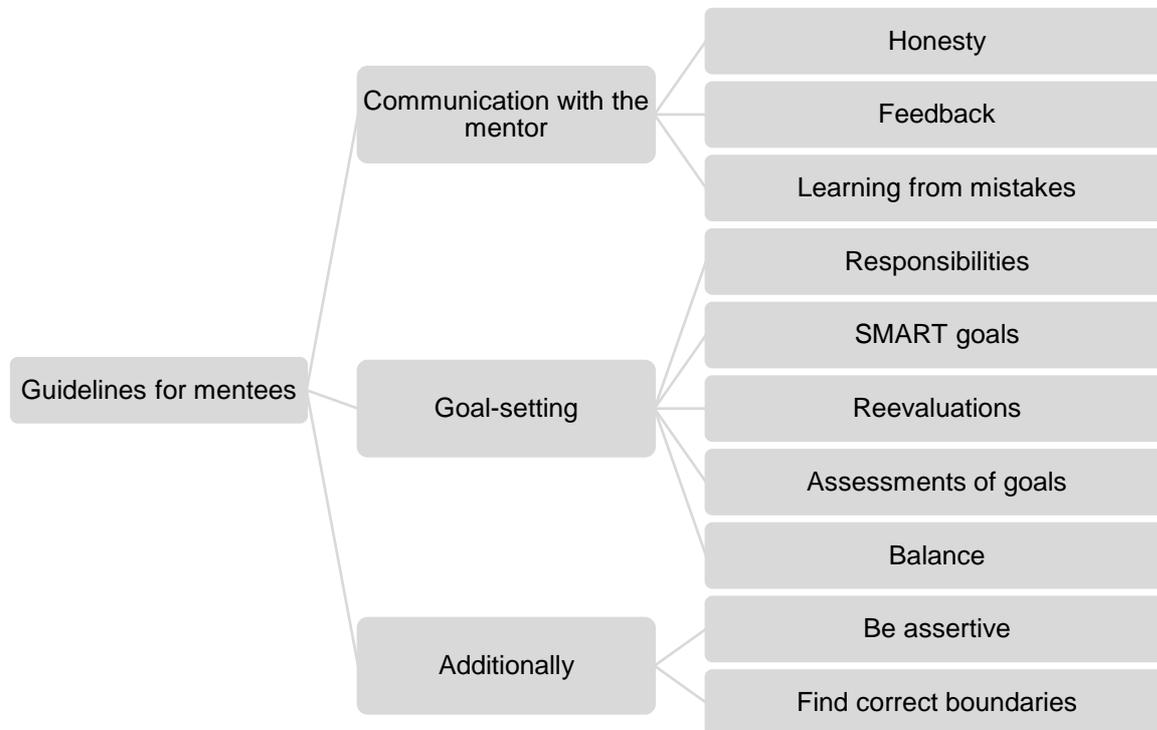
To build a successful national mentoring network, it is extremely important to choose the mentors that wants to help others and are eager to take this challenge to guide another person in his/her career⁵. Expectations for mentors include:

⁵https://www.interreg-danube.eu/uploads/media/approved_project_public/0001/19/7e7d1a68cf2779ff87b45c9363aea5705a40fd10.pdf



Picture 1. Guidelines for mentors

During the mentoring, expectations should be set not only for the mentors. Mentees have to feel that their honest involvement in mentoring process is equally important as mentors. Expectations for mentees include:



Picture 2. Guidelines for mentees

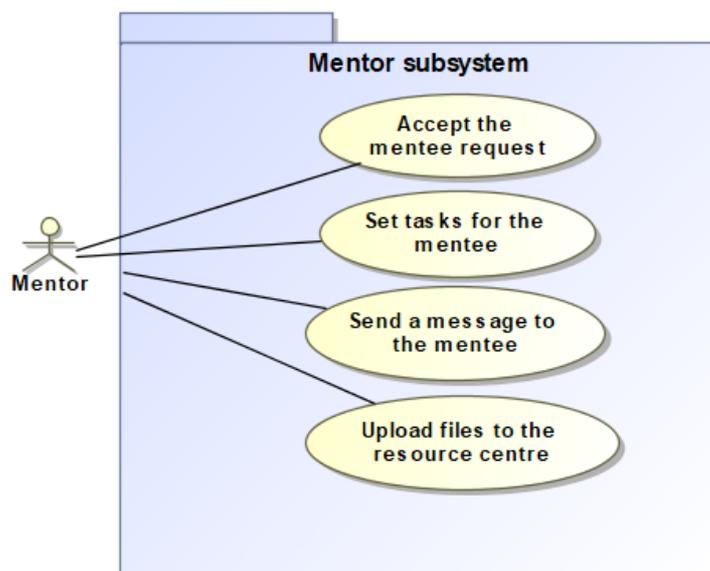
Tips on how to recruit mentors and mentees to mentoring programme:

1. Before trying to recruit mentors and mentees, run a promotional campaign aimed at the senior leaders and those with influence in the ICT fields. Make sure they are bought into the vision of mentoring.
2. An important part of promoting Women4IT mentoring network is articulating the value. Mentoring is a voluntary activity which takes place on the side of person's day to day role, and it is important to explain what's in it for them.
3. Use multi-channel promotion to successfully raise awareness and remind people about the programme.
4. Present the career and leadership development benefits to the mentor.
5. Articulate the benefits available to mentees that join mentoring programs.
6. Ask around and find mentoring success stories. Mentoring is about people, the more individuals you can include in communicating the value, the simpler it will be to attract stakeholders, mentors, and mentees.

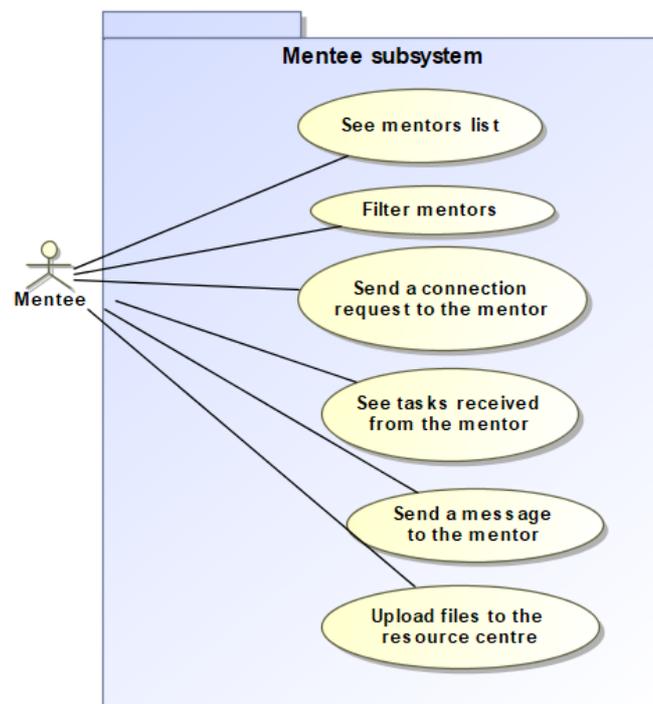
7. Organize a lunch event to the mentors and potential mentees. Also, after some time organize the events to take a look at the progress the mentoring network has made.

MENTORING IMPLEMENTATION ON THE PLATFORM

Mentoring platform will be integrated into the existing platform, as a separate section. There student will be able to filter possible mentors by their occupation, country etc. As a student will choose a mentor, the chosen mentor will have to accept the mentoring request. As they both will match, individual chat room with additional IT solutions (ex. forwarding files) will be opened. In the mentoring section, mentor will be able to see “My mentees” section and mentees will be able to see an individual chat room with mentor and repository of files shared.



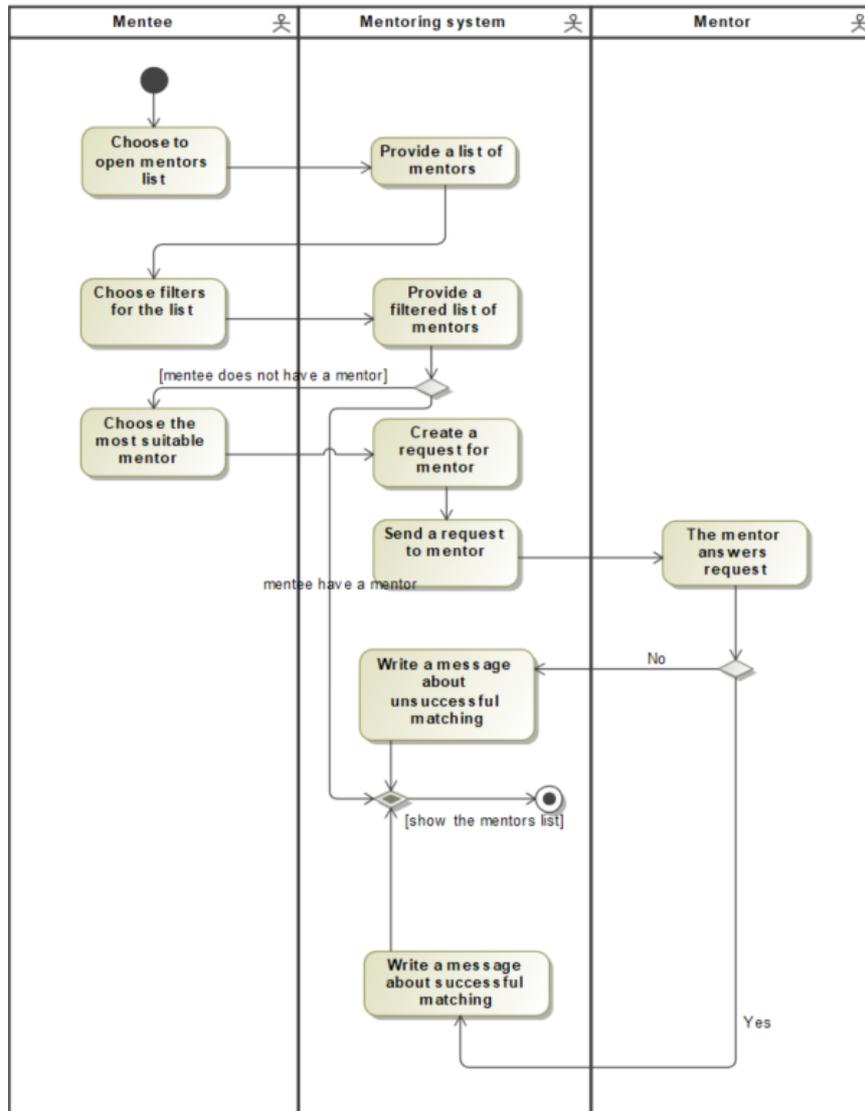
Picture 3. Mentor's functions



Picture 4. Mentee's functions

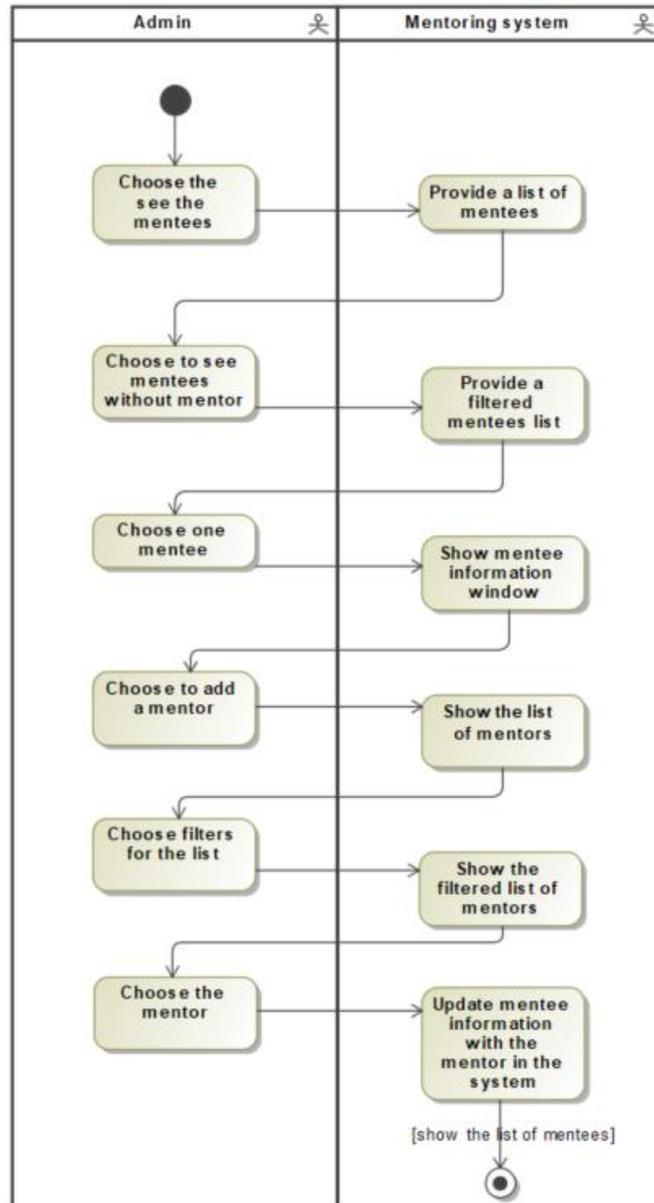
General functions that will be implemented on the platform:

- Matching. Available options:
 - ▣ Self-matching (large scale, long-term). Mentees can discover their own mentors through this form of matching. It allows mentees to have a role in the process by allowing them to choose a specific mentor or submit their top picks. This sort of matching is beneficial for broader mentorship, can lead to higher participant satisfaction since they have a more say in who they are paired with, and reduces overall admin burden. However, mentees do not always initiate searching process and sometimes the match may not align with program or organizational objectives.



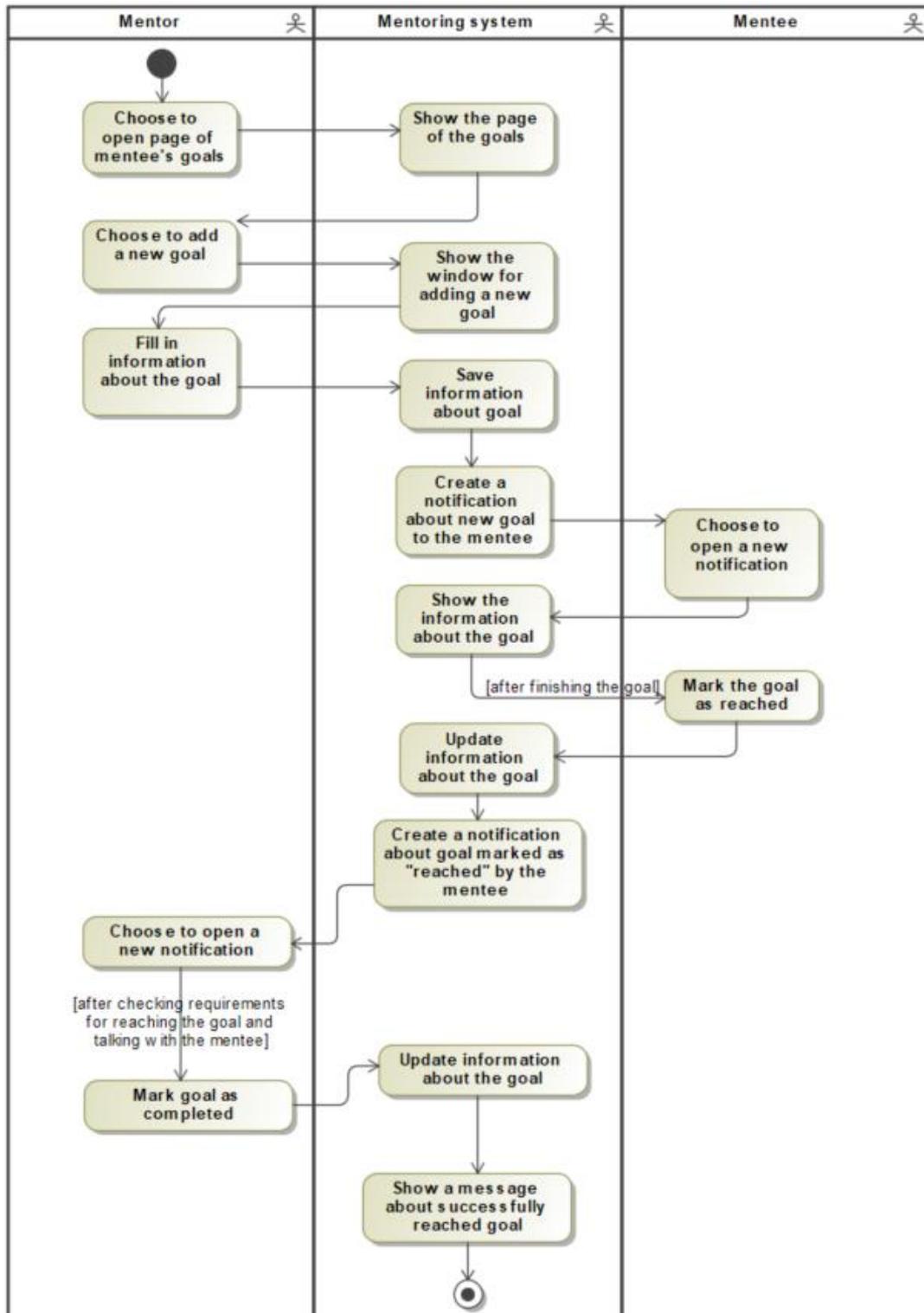
Picture 5. Activity diagram of self-matching

- Admin matching (small scale, short-term). It gives the administrator the full control over matching process and mentees are not required to request or respond to matches. However, if timing is critical, this may not be the best approach, because it takes hours to match every mentee and chosen mentoring relationships may not be the best match.



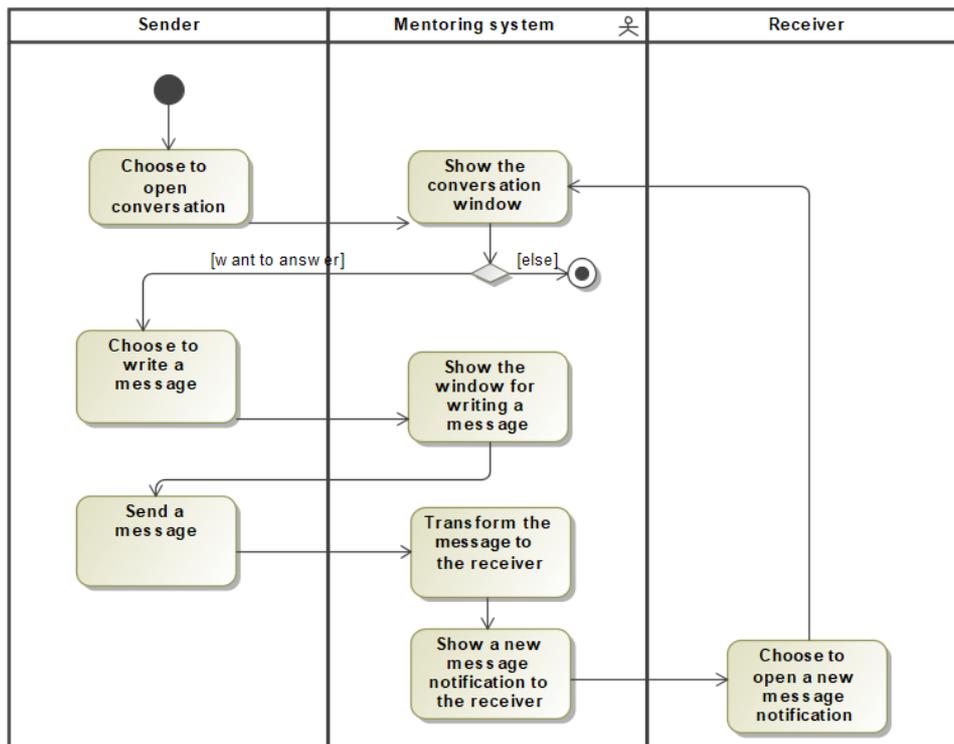
Picture 6. Activity diagram for admin matching

- Achieve Goals (mentors can set tasks for the mentee to see the evidence of their progression).



Picture 7. Activity diagram for setting and achieving goals

- Message Features (internal messaging options allow mentors and mentees to communicate with each other on the platform in a safe and secure environment which doesn't expose your email address or telephone number).



Picture 8. Activity diagram for messaging

- Resource centre (upload and explore your own shared presentations, blogs, podcasts, audio files, written documents, and other content, as well as the ones shared by mentor).