Bonding

Facilitating intergenerational solidarity and learning through building friendships between youngsters and elderly

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Contents

The first results of the project are available!

The first result of the project "**Mapping the Befriending Landscape**" has been finalized and it's now available on the project website.

You can find it **here**!

It is an in-depth mapping of good practices in youth befriending services in Europe and lessons learnt. These results were instrumental in the development of the **BONDING e-learning course "Youth Befriending Elderly"** that is another result of the project. Its pilot version is about to be finalised and then it will be tested before publishing its final version.

The enjoyable learning experience of the project staff in Italy

Last November, representatives of the project partnership participated in a short-term staff **training event** that took place in Carpi, Italy.

The training addressed the project team that will be involved in providing mentoring support to young people interested in setting up a befriending service for the elderly after having successfully completed the e-learning course.

The main objective of the training was to equip the project staff with the knowledge, attitudes, skills and tools needed to successfully **mentor young people in the implementation of befriending services for the elderly**. At the end of the training, participants gained a solid understanding of the mentoring objectives and process; strengthened skills to build and maintain an effective mentoring relationship with young people; improved core mentoring skills, including active listening, providing support and feedback, and conflict resolution.

All project partners participated in the delivery of this training, each leading one session.

The Macedonian participants introduced the training with a session aimed at defining the **key concepts and benefits of mentoring** for mentors and mentees. The main objective of the session was to train participants to successfully build an effective mentoring relationship. Many topics were discussed during the session, such as what an effective mentoring relationship is, how it can be built and what are the most important characteristics a mentor should possess. The session ended with the group activity "Wrap-up the mentoring monument", in which each group represented the foundations of the relationship and all the important things that make up a mentorship by building a statue out of the provided materials. Afterwards, each group presented their creation and how it represents all the concepts previously discussed.

The module presented by the Italian participants, focused on **communication**, the aim was to focus more attention on what is meant by communication and what components are involved in communication. Participants were invited to reflect on the importance of soft skills to communicate efficiently and effectively in the mentorship relationship. It was also interesting to practise non-verbal communication and to understand how body language (facial expressions, gestures, posture) and tone of voice are powerful communication tools that we often use unconsciously but which generally speak louder than words.

The session conducted by Cypriot participants, on the other hand, focused on understanding the importance of learning and adopting good practices in **support and feedback provision**.

Three prevalent models for providing feedback were presented: the Pendleton Model or Pendleton Rule, the IDEA Model and the Sandwich Model, and participants were given time to put them into practice. Other aspects of feedback were also presented and discussed, such as effective tips for giving feedback, why one might hold back from giving feedback, how one might react to feedback, etc. The learning activities fostered reflective thinking and participants were encouraged to bring their positive and negative experiences into the discussions.

The Polish participant virtually lead a session about **setting goals and working towards goals**. They are considered as a key aspect to deepen the engagement of youngsters collaborating as befriendees. Goal setting is a powerful process to invite them to think about what they want to achieve through their collaboration in the befriending programme and for motivating them to turn their vision into reality.

The session held by the Greek participants introduced the phases of the mentoring relationship in order to make future mentors aware of **when and how a mentoring relationship should end**. It is important to empower befrienders so that they can gradually become more and more autonomous in the implementation of befriending activities, so that at some point, with the support of their mentors, they can make plans and set goals for the future, and eventually move on more independently.

The training was concluded by the Spanish participants, who conducted a session on **conflict resolution**, focusing on understanding what a conflict is, exploring frequent causes of conflict in general and in the practice of befriending (conflicts between mentors and mentees, conflicts between befrienders and befriendees), and learning adaptive methods to manage conflicts. Participants were invited to take part in 2 practical activities to practice dialogue skills and discover which are the steps to take for an effective conflict resolution.

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The project team

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