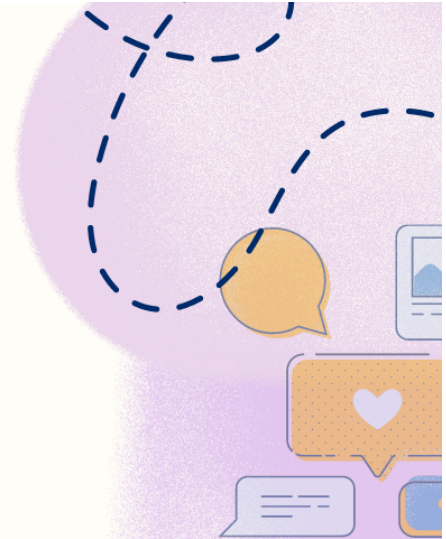




**PEER4INCLUSION**



# Peer Mentoring Handbook for Migrants & Refugees

Peer4Inclusion Handbook for the implementation of Peer Mentoring Programs for migrants and refugees about inclusion



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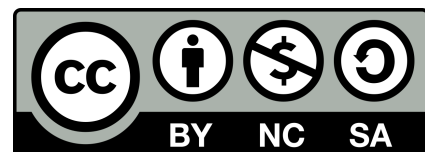
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## 0. Introduction

This handbook is developed within the framework of the Peer4Inclusion project, “Peer4Inclusion. Training Toolkit for boosting humanitarian migrants, migrants and refugees’ inclusion through PeerMentoring”, funded by ERASMUS+ programme.

It is a document that could be useful for any entity interested in designing their own training actions for the training of Peer Mentors that allows organizations and training centers that work on the processes of initial insertion of newly arrived migrants to have completely innovative learning resources that they can use in the programs and insertion itineraries for the individualization of learning paths.

PEER4INCLUSION Training Handbook OBJECTIVE is:

**To present the methodological framework for the application of Peer Mentoring Models in adult training and in sociolabour programs for migrants and refugees.**

It is run outside of a formal education routine but is planned to help Peer mentors and Peer mentees gain competences.

The Peer4Inclusion Handbook target groups are:

Adult Trainers, Public Servants and all related services receiving newcomers, teachers, social workers, and services in charge of connecting them with the job market.

# 1. Description of Peer Mentoring methodology

## 1.1. What is Peer Mentoring?

Peer mentoring involves an intense interpersonal exchange between an experienced person (mentor) and a less experienced person (protégé or mentee) for whom the mentor provides support, direction, and feedback for growth and personal development.

The Peer Mentoring process therefore involves two or more individuals working together to develop the abilities of one individual (Shanklin & Brumage, 2011).

Peer mentoring provides direction, interpersonal exchange between an experienced person (mentor) and a less experienced person (protégé or mentee).

**Peer Mentoring is a journey that both the mentor and mentee take together.**

Some definitions...

- ✓ Peer mentoring builds leadership capabilities in both mentors and mentees. The mentors are likely to be thrust into leadership roles (Garringer & MacRae, 2008)
- ✓ The peer mentoring process therefore involves two or more individuals working together to develop the abilities of one individual (Shanklin & Brumage, 2011)
- ✓ Peer mentoring helps students to build positive relationships with their peers (Carlisle, 2011)

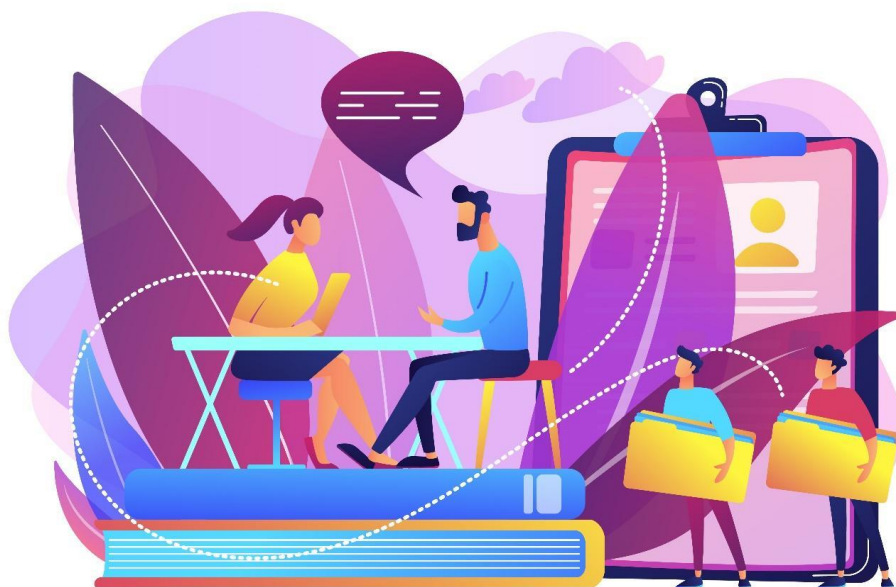
## 1.2. Description of Peer Mentoring model

Peer mentoring is a type of mentorship where a more experienced individual, known as a mentor, provides guidance and support to a less experienced individual, known as a mentee, who is typically at a similar stage in their career or education. In peer mentoring, the mentor and mentee have a similar level of expertise, and the mentor is not necessarily in a higher position of authority (Jones & Smith, 2014).

The peer mentoring model is based on the idea that people can learn effectively from their peers, and that the relationship between the mentor and mentee is mutually beneficial. The mentor provides guidance, support, and feedback to the mentee, while the mentee brings fresh perspectives, ideas, and questions that can challenge and enrich the mentor's own understanding. It can be used in a variety of settings, including education, workplace, and community programs. It is often used to help students transition to a new school or academic program, support early career professionals, or assist individuals with specific skills or interests.

Some benefits of peer mentoring include improved self-esteem, increased motivation, and enhanced learning outcomes. Additionally, peer guidance can create a sense of community and help individuals build networks and relationships with others in their field (Cheng, 2018).

In conclusion, this model can be an effective way to support individuals in their personal and professional development, as well as to foster a culture of learning and growth within organizations and communities.



### 1.3. Needed skills in Peer Mentoring

Effective peer mentoring requires a range of skills that enable mentors to support and guide their mentees. Here are some key skills that are essential for successful peer mentoring (Various Skills for Peer Mentoring. (n.d.):

- **Active listening:** Mentors must be able to listen actively to their mentees to understand their needs, concerns, and goals. This involves giving the mentee their full attention, asking clarifying questions, and summarizing what the mentee has said to ensure understanding.
  
- **Empathy:** Mentors should be able to put themselves in their mentee's shoes and understand their perspectives. This involves being sensitive to the mentee's emotions and feelings and responding with compassion and understanding.
  
- **Communication:** Mentors must be able to communicate effectively with their mentees, using clear and concise language. They should be able to give feedback in a way that is constructive and supportive, and they should be able to ask open-ended questions that encourage reflection and discussion.
  
- **Conflict resolution:** Mentors must be able to handle conflicts that may arise between themselves and their mentees or among mentees. This involves using conflict resolution strategies such as active listening, collaboration, and compromise.
  
- **Cultural awareness:** Mentors must be able to work effectively with individuals from diverse backgrounds and cultures. This involves understanding and respecting cultural differences, being open-minded and flexible, and avoiding assumptions or stereotypes.
  
- **Time management:** Mentors should be able to manage their time effectively, setting aside dedicated time for mentoring sessions and keeping to schedules.

To sum up, effective peer mentoring requires a combination of interpersonal and leadership skills. With these skills, mentors can create a supportive and productive environment that promotes learning, growth, and development for both themselves and their mentees.

#### **1.4. Benefits of Peer Mentoring for Peer Mentors, Peer mentees and institutions.**

Peer mentoring offers numerous benefits for mentors, beyond the opportunity to help others. By taking on the role of a mentor, individuals can experience personal and professional growth in several ways.

One significant benefit of peer mentoring is the **opportunity to enhance leadership skills**. Mentors have the responsibility of guiding and supporting their mentees, which requires them to develop their abilities to coach, motivate, and inspire others. By practicing these skills, mentors can become more effective leaders, both in their professional and personal lives.

Another benefit of peer mentoring is the chance to improve communication skills. Mentoring requires effective communication between the mentor and mentee, and mentors can enhance their abilities to convey ideas, listen actively, and provide feedback. By learning to communicate clearly and effectively, mentors can improve their ability to persuade others and convey complex information.

In addition to enhancing skills, peer mentoring can also provide a sense of personal satisfaction. Mentors can derive a great deal of joy from helping others achieve their goals and overcome challenges. By providing support and guidance, mentors can make a positive impact on their mentees' lives, which can be highly rewarding.

Finally, peer mentoring can also provide opportunities for mentors to learn from their mentees. Mentees often bring unique perspectives and insights to the relationship, which can challenge mentors to think differently and gain new insights. By working with individuals from diverse backgrounds and experiences, mentors can broaden their own perspectives and enhance their understanding of the world (Boyle, M., Boice, R., & Collins, C.,2017).

In summary, peer mentoring offers a range of benefits for mentors, including enhanced leadership and communication skills, personal satisfaction, and opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Regarding **peer mentees**, Peer mentoring provides them with a range of resources and support to help them achieve their goals. Here are some of the key benefits that peer mentoring can offer mentees:



- **Personalized support:** Peer mentoring provides mentees with one-on-one support from a mentor who can offer guidance and feedback tailored to their individual needs. This personalized support can help mentees to identify and address specific challenges and can provide a safe and supportive space for mentees to discuss their concerns.

- **Increased confidence:** Peer mentoring can help mentees to build confidence in their abilities and skills. By receiving encouragement and feedback from a mentor, mentees can develop a greater sense of self-efficacy and belief in their own abilities.

- **Improved communication skills:** Mentees can develop their communication skills through the process of peer mentoring. By working with a mentor who listens actively, communicates clearly, and provides constructive feedback, mentees can improve their ability to convey their ideas and perspectives.

- **Access to new perspectives:** Peer mentoring can provide mentees with access to new perspectives and ideas. By working with a mentor who comes from a different background or has different experiences, mentees can broaden their own understanding of the world and gain new insights.

- **Increased motivation:** Peer mentoring can help to motivate mentees to achieve their goals. By receiving regular feedback and support from a mentor, mentees can feel more accountable and motivated to work towards their objectives.

- **Development of new skills:** Peer mentoring can also help mentees to develop new skills and knowledge. By working with a mentor who has expertise in a particular area, mentees can learn new techniques or approaches that they can apply in their own lives.

Consequently, peer mentoring can provide mentees with a range of benefits, including personalized support, increased confidence, improved communication skills, access to new perspectives, increased motivation, and the development of new skills and knowledge. By working with a mentor, mentees can feel empowered to take control of their own lives and achieve their goals (Boyle, M., Boice, R., & Collins, C., 2017).



Image:Freepik

Peer mentoring can be particularly beneficial for institutions that serve migrant populations. Here are some of the key benefits that migrant institutions can derive from peer mentoring programs:

Enhanced cultural understanding: Migrant institutions can use peer mentoring programs to help build bridges between different cultural groups. By connecting students from different backgrounds and experiences, institutions can help promote greater understanding and empathy among their student populations.

- **Improved language skills:** For migrant institutions that serve non-native speakers of the local language, peer mentoring can be a valuable tool for improving language skills. Mentors who are fluent in the local language can provide additional language support to mentees, helping them to better understand course material and communicate more effectively with their peers and instructors.
- **Increased retention rates:** Peer mentoring can help migrant institutions to improve retention rates by providing additional support to students. When students have access to mentors who can offer guidance and support, they may be more likely to persist and complete their programs.
- **Better integration into the local community:** Peer mentoring programs can help migrant students to better integrate into the local community. By connecting with local mentors, students can learn more about the local culture and customs, as well as gain valuable insights into job opportunities and other resources in the community.

- **Development of career skills:** Peer mentoring programs can provide opportunities for migrant students to develop career skills. Mentors can help students identify career goals and offer guidance on how to achieve them. Additionally, mentors can provide valuable networking opportunities and help mentees connect with potential employers (Cavazos, K., & Martinez, G., 2018).

That is, peer mentoring can offer many benefits for migrant institutions, including enhanced cultural understanding, improved language skills, increased retention rates, better integration into the local community, and development of career skills. By implementing peer mentoring programs, migrant institutions can provide additional support to their students and help them succeed both academically and professionally.

## 2. Concept of Peer Mentoring, why to implement Peer Mentoring as a strategy of social inclusion for migrants and refugees, skills needed and trained

### 2.1. Characteristics of migrants and refugees' integration process

Migrants and refugees face unique challenges when integrating into new communities, including language barriers, cultural differences, and a lack of social support networks. Peer mentoring programs can help to address these challenges by providing newcomers with guidance and support from experienced individuals within their new community.

One key characteristic of the integration process is the importance of building relationships with local community members. Peer mentoring can facilitate the development of these relationships by connecting newcomers with mentors who can offer guidance, support, and a sense of belonging. This can be particularly important for migrants and refugees who may feel isolated or marginalized within their new communities.

Another important characteristic of the integration process is the need to develop language skills. Many migrants and refugees struggle with communication and language barriers when first arriving in a new country. Peer mentoring programs can provide valuable language support by connecting mentees with mentors who are fluent in the local language. This can help newcomers to better understand course material, communicate more effectively with peers and instructors, and ultimately feel more confident and included within their new community.

In addition to language support, peer mentoring programs can also help migrants and refugees to develop career skills and find employment. Mentors can provide guidance on career goals and offer networking opportunities with potential employers. This can be particularly important for newcomers who may lack the professional connections or knowledge of local job markets necessary to find meaningful employment.

In consequence, peer mentoring programs can play a critical role in facilitating the integration process for migrants and refugees. By providing guidance, support, and a sense of community, mentors can help newcomers to overcome the challenges they face and achieve greater success in their new homes (López-Fernández, O., & Molina-Sánchez, H., 2019).

## 2.2. Challenges of Peer Mentoring as an integration tool

While peer mentoring can be a highly effective integration tool, there are also some challenges that need to be addressed. Some of these challenges include:

1. **Limited Resources:** One of the biggest challenges of peer mentoring programs is the limited resources available to support them. This can include funding, staff time, and mentor training.
2. **Matching Mentors and Mentees:** Finding the right match between mentors and mentees can be a challenge, as individuals may have different needs, experiences, and backgrounds. This can require a significant amount of time and effort to ensure that the match is successful.
3. **Language and Cultural Barriers:** Language and cultural barriers can be a significant challenge for peer mentoring programs, particularly if mentors and mentees come from different cultural backgrounds. It can be difficult to bridge these differences and may require additional resources and training.
4. **Lack of Commitment:** Maintaining the commitment of mentors and mentees can be a challenge, particularly if they are not properly trained or supported. This can lead to high levels of attrition and may result in a negative experience for both parties.
5. **Evaluation and Accountability:** It can be difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of peer mentoring programs, and to hold mentors and mentees accountable for their participation. This can be particularly challenging if the program is run on a volunteer basis, and there are no formal mechanisms in place for evaluation and accountability.

In other words, while peer mentoring can be an effective integration tool, it is important to be aware of these challenges and to take steps to address them. This may involve investing in additional resources, providing training and support, and developing systems for evaluation and accountability.

## 2.4. Benefits of Peer Mentoring as an integration tool

Peer mentoring can be a highly effective integration tool for a variety of reasons. Some of the benefits of peer mentoring include:

1. **Building Relationships:** Peer mentoring can help newcomers to form meaningful relationships with people who have similar experiences and backgrounds. These relationships can help to ease the transition into a new environment and provide a sense of belonging and community.
2. **Providing Support:** Peer mentors can offer emotional and practical support to newcomers. This can include helping them navigate cultural differences, providing information about local resources, and offering advice on how to succeed in a new environment.
3. **Improving Communication Skills:** Peer mentoring can help newcomers to improve their language skills, as they will be interacting with their mentors on a regular basis. This can also help to build confidence in communicating with others.
4. **Enhancing Cultural Competence:** By working with a peer mentor, newcomers can learn about the culture and customs of their new environment. This can help to bridge cultural differences and create a more inclusive and welcoming community.
5. **Increasing Access to Opportunities:** Peer mentors can help newcomers to identify and access educational, career, and other opportunities. This can be particularly helpful for those who may not be familiar with the local landscape.

Overall, peer mentoring can be a valuable integration tool that offers numerous benefits to both newcomers and the broader community. By building relationships, providing support, improving communication skills, enhancing cultural competence, and increasing access to opportunities, peer mentoring can help to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for everyone.

## 2.5 Examples of application of Peer mentoring in adult vocational training

Peer mentoring develops a personal and reciprocal relationship, this relationship is less formal than a traditional mentoring one, yet structured so that it's mutually beneficial.

- Defining the purpose and goals of the program
- Creating a structure for how the program will work

- Who will be matched with who, how often they'll meet, what topics they'll discuss, etc.
- Deciding on what kind of support the training center will give to mentees and mentors.
- Planning out how long the program will run and when/how it will be evaluated.

Effective mentorship requires more than just knowledge and experience in a particular field. **It requires unique skills and qualities, including patience, effective communication, providing constructive feedback, empathy, active listening, and a willingness to learn.**

On the other hand, when it comes to implementing a peer-to-peer mentoring program, there are typically two main structures that can be utilized: **one-to-one mentorship** and **group mentoring**.

One-to-one mentorship involves pairing a mentor with a mentee for a more personalized and individualized mentoring experience. This structure is often preferred when there is a specific skill or knowledge gap that the mentee is looking to develop or when the mentee requires more personalized attention and guidance. In this structure, the mentor is solely responsible for guiding and supporting the mentee, and the mentee has the opportunity to receive more individualized feedback and support.

On the other hand, group mentoring involves pairing a group of mentees with one or more mentors, who work together to provide guidance and support to the mentees. This structure is often preferred when there are common goals or issues that the mentees are facing and when the mentees can benefit from learning and sharing experiences with their peers. In this structure, the mentor serves as a facilitator and guide, helping to create a collaborative and supportive environment where mentees can learn from each other and grow together.

Ultimately, the choice between these two structures will depend on the specific goals and needs of the mentoring program, as well as the preferences and availability of mentors and mentees. Both structures can be effective in their own ways and can provide valuable learning and growth opportunities for mentees. It's important to carefully consider the benefits and limitations of each structure before selecting the best fit for your program.

### 3. Why Peer Mentoring, Benefits for Peer Mentors and for Peer Mentees, expectations

#### 3.1. PeerMentoring for migrants and refugees. Why?

PeerMentoring; The relationship of two people whose careers are at a similar point and they both have experience and knowledge in an area that the other is seeking support in.

Migrants and refugees may experience personal, cultural and structural challenges as they adapt to new lives in host countries. In this sense, Peer Mentoring programs are used to facilitate resettlement, build empowerment and improve job-readiness for refugees and migrants; It is a very crucial point that the Peer Mentoring programs are designed by using participatory approaches to ensure cultural acceptability. We can say that communication and sharing approaches are the main powerful phases of the Peer Mentoring because the main point is always supporting the migrants and the refugees in their adaptation process to a host country.

Peer Mentoring programs enhance social support, greater empowerment and confidence for migrants and refugees. Similar experiences always create stronger bounds and more effective contribution between peers. These positive bounds can get stronger with future Peer Mentoring programs and lead best practices related to the integration periods of the migrants and refugees to host countries.



Image: Freepik.com



At this point it is important to know that a Peer Mentoring partnership is based on mutual trust and respect. Mostly it includes two people within the same networking organization. We need to underline that one of the main purposes of mentoring process is to share knowledge and experience. Having the guidance, encouragement and support of a peer as mentor can provide a broad range of personal and professional benefits to migrants and refugees.



Image: Freepik.com

As it is stated in previous parts, Peer Mentoring aims to encourage and empower migrants and refugees in personal development area. In this sense, a peer mentor helps to identify the mentees' career goals and supports them to achieve these goals in the most effective and soft way.

Being helped to identify and correct the gaps in generic skills and knowledge increase the mentees' confidence in a positive way. It is also a clear fact that Peer Mentoring develops and maintains a broader perspective on career options and social opportunities.

For migrants and refugees the first arrival time to the host country is the most challenging process. They have the adaptation steps that require paperwork, accommodation, work-based challenges, social integration, cultural adaptation and many more. In this period, it is a great chance to be able to share all these points with someone just had the same path before. The same kind of experience will certainly guide the newcomer and support them both in psychological and social aspects.

Thereby, **PeerMentoring** becomes a very inspiring and supportive method for the migrants and refugees in their adaptation process to the host country and its cultural aspects.



Image: Freepik.com

### 3.2. Benefits for Peer Mentors?

Through Peer Mentoring programs, mentors could find the chance to share their constructive feedback with mentees. Giving constructive feedback is a key element of a good Peer Mentoring process. This may become a powerful tool for the mentor to guide the practical part of the process. In this practice; the transmission of knowledge should be in a soft manner to create a collaborative atmosphere with the mentee.

#### To give constructive and effective feedback:

<b>Peer Mentor</b>
should maintain eye contact and a measured tone of voice

should be specific in providing feedback
should establish an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect
should keep the feedback simple
should decide on a small number of areas that they want to cover
Should not provide any negative feedback in an open area with others around

**PeerMentoring** sessions enable mentors to develop their communication skills and ability of expression. As it is necessary to stay in a non-judgemental manner during a mentoring session, mentors practice listening to the mentees with an open mind. This manner directly creates an attitude of empathy and therefore allow the mentee to express their feelings and ideas clearly. At this point, it is also important to maintain positive body language for both sides.



Discussing different opinions and being open to new options during the mentoring process most of the time leads to a stronger relationship between the mentor and the mentee.

When we include voices that are different than ours, we can solve challenges and have more shared success. We can say that different opinions inside the mentoring sessions gives them the real strength and support.

☑ For a PeerMentor, it is also very helpful being open to different perspectives in a mentoring session. We can underline some hints to achieve this manner;

- 
- Realize that each person has a unique way of self-expression
- 
- Recognize the contributions and value of different opinions
- Remember that there is no single truth about any subject



☀️ **Sincere collaboration** between the mentor and the mentee is another key aspect of the Peer Mentoring sessions. The whole Peer Mentoring process is mutual and needs to be directed with a common contribution from both sides.

**In a collaborative PeerMentoring session, the mentee receives help and direction, but the mentor also benefits. The process is being guided by both sides and this creates a common approach between them.** During the whole Peer Mentoring process, the mentor should be aware of the mentee's needs.

The mentee should feel free to share his/her preferences about creating the learning environment. It is crucial to decide about all the details of the mentoring sessions with the contributions of both the mentor and mentee.

By time Peer Mentors have the chance to upgrade their communication and guidance skills. They are also very good listeners and a good peer mentor usually include someone that is able to listen and provide feedback while being respectful. As

peer mentors help mentees grow and develop into the person or professional that they are striving to become. It is a great opportunity for mentors to think and develop their own mission statements afterwards.

<b>Some of the skills and qualities that a good peer mentor develop by time:</b>
● Being an active listener
● Showing mutual respect
● Being enthusiastic
● Helping people self-advocate
● Connecting people to resources and work
● Goal setting
● Facilitating support groups
● Learning Face-to-face recovery coaching
● Providing honest feedback
● Being interested in helping others

### **Availability, Active Listening and Analysing skills of peer mentor:**

- **Availability** means that a mentor should offer or avail you of their time, experience, encouragement, feedback, and advice.
- **Active listening** means your mentor should be quiet and attentive when you're speaking, and not distracted.
- **Analysis** means good mentors should be able to analyze what you're saying, your situation, and provide detailed feedback or solutions so that you can grow.

### **3.2. Benefits for Peer Mentees?**

In Peer Mentoring, it is very fruitful to realize that the whole process includes co-learning between the mentor and the mentee. For example, a newcomer to the host country may start off as the learner, but as the relationship develops s/he usually discovers s/he has something to offer the partner in terms of other experience. The relationship then develops into an environment for co-learning.

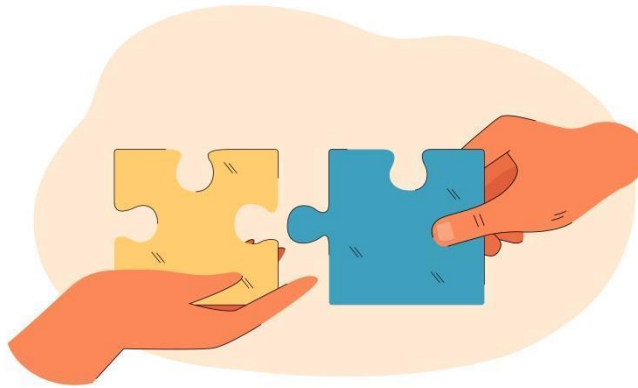


Image: freepik.com

In conventional mentoring, the mentor is more experienced, may be perceived as substantially more 'senior' in the profession or subject. This can create a power differential between mentor and mentee, which can inhibit development of rapport, especially in the early stages. Peer mentoring overcomes the hierarchical gap. In conventional mentoring relationships the exchange is more one-way (even though mentors benefit), in peer mentoring the balance is more even. This creates a more comfortable sharing atmosphere for the migrants and refugees.

It is always easier when we share our experiences with people who just got through the similar ones. Besides Peer Mentoring may be more accessible to potential mentees simply because there are more peers available than experienced mentors.

Kram and Isabella (1985) suggest that peer mentoring can offer greater opportunity for empathy, and a sense of equity and expertise. Their study suggests that peer relationships may have more longevity and that whilst traditional mentoring relationships might be most useful at early stages of career, peer relationships may have more to offer at later stages. The relationship is less formal than a traditional mentoring relationship, yet structured so that it's mutually beneficial. Both parties should feel like they are getting something out of it.

Peer mentors provide support and advice and function as a resource for inspiration and new opportunities for the mentees.



image: elements.envato.com

**Peer Mentoring programs enable mentees to develop their communication and social skills such;**

- **Active Listening:** This is a vital skill both for a mentor and mentee as they both spend most of their time speaking and talking. It requires focusing on what has been said, understanding and responding to it. It is a skill that can be improved. So, both sides should consider the listening process as a learning experience.
- **Establishing goals:** Establishing goals is the first and the most important step of the mentoring phase. Because the goal is at the centre of mentoring and its success or lack of success. Being far from, or close to, the improvements and achievements defines the quality of the mentoring. So, a mentee should have a good understanding of goal setting and the power to achieve it. Although this is something to be done together with the mentor, the main responsibility falls on the mentee. Essentially, the final aim and expected achievements at the end of mentoring should be defined clearly and be shared with the mentor.



- **Being a continuous learner:** Mentoring is a reciprocal process both for mentor and mentee. It allows them to learn together. So, it is essential for both to be willing to learn, open-minded and happy to share knowledge with each other. During the peer mentoring sessions, the mentee experiences being a continuous learner which contributes his/her personal development in a very positive way.

Peer mentoring sessions for migrants and refugees creates the atmosphere that the mentee feel free to share his/her preferences. The details of the mentoring sessions shape with the contributions of both the mentor and mentee.

<b><u>Some other benefits of peer mentoring for a mentee:</u></b>	
● <b>Clear communication</b>	
● <b>Motivation to succeed</b>	
● <b>Confidence in her/himself</b>	
● <b>Flexibility</b>	



Peer Mentoring programs supports the processes of the adaptation for migrants and refugees in socio-cultural spaces of the host countries. It is a great tool to empower migrant and refugees especially in their first arrival period to the host country. It is beneficial both for the mentors and the mentees to share common experiences. As described by participants of the similar programs, it is a win-win experience for both sides.

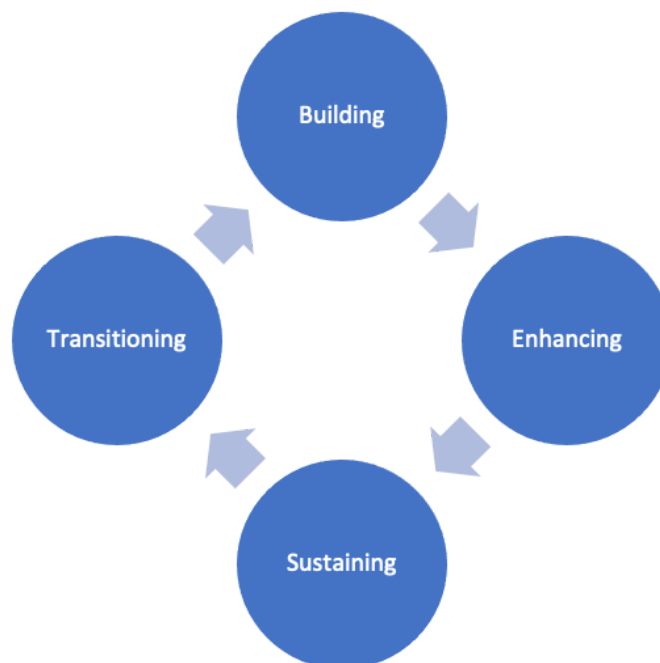
## 4. How to implement a Peer Mentor Program with migrants and refugees based on BEST Model (Building/Enhancing/Sustaining/Transitioning).

### 4.1. What is and what means the BEST Model

There are a lot of ways to implement a peer mentor program, either it being on a formal level with rules and guidelines, or an informal level where the steps are not as distinct. One structured model with certain goals and step stones is the BEST model. This chapter will explain the BEST model and how to apply it on a Peer Mentor program with migrants and refugees. The focus will primarily be how to act as a mentor, but the information is important for both parties.

The **BEST model** can be seen as the lifecycle of a relationship between a mentor and a mentee.

The stages in the model are called Building - Enhancing - Sustaining - Transitioning:



The stages are not always a clear cut, and can be pretty dynamic - just as a relationship. The different stages are known to overlap and can go back to the start or cycle through more than once (The Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern PA, n.d). To understand how this model can be implemented in a Peer Mentor Program with

migrants and refugees we need to go through the different stages of the model and their meaning.

## 4.2. Stages of implementation

### First stage – Building

The very first thing you will need to do is to start building the relationship between you and your mentee. What are your common interests? As with every relationship the start is very fragile, as what you decide here will more or less set the tone for the rest of the relationship. It is therefore very important to be open-minded, steady and trustworthy.

The Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern PA (n.d) suggest in their handbook that the first meeting should follow this type of structure:

- Introduce yourself with confidence and a smile!
- Learn how to pronounce your mentee's name
- Tell your mentee about yourself and ask questions about your mentee
- Your mentee may take a while to warm up to you. Be patient, non-judgmental, and open
- Remain positive and end on a good note!

All parts are very important and applicable for a Peer Mentor Program with migrants and refugees. For example, sharing personal migratory narratives can help to build intimacy and connection, making your mentee feeling safe and relaxed in the situation. Your end goal in this process should be about enabling trust, so that your mentee can feel secure in your role as a mentor.

As building trust can be quite difficult, the Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern PA (n.d) has also set up some good tips on how to work with trust as a mentor:

- **Remember to be a Friend**

Earlier research suggests that refugees or migrants can be afraid of authorities, so it is very important to be a friend, instead of an authority figure. It can make your mentee feel a lot safer.

- **Mutual respect**

This is of course applicable for both parties, but as a mentor, please remember not to push your mentee to do things they do not want to do. And be aware of any signals of discomfort.

- **Be supportive**

Show that you are on your mentee's side, no matter what. Have their back.

- **Listen**

Try to be an active listener, try to pick up on interests, concerns and goals that your mentee might have.

- **Take a step back**

You as a mentee are the one in focus, it is important for the mentor to be aware of this. As a mentee, you can decide what to do, what to talk about and what goals to work on.

- **Be consistent**

Follow through on what you have said. Be present and attentive.

- **Be realistic**

Do not agree on extravagant requests, be realistic when setting goals.

- **Be yourself and have fun!**

As a mentor, you do not need to put on a role to be able to connect with your mentee. Be authentic. And please remember to have fun, not every conversation has to be about goals. In the beginning, it is important to have fun so that you can work on challenging things later on.

Once you have built a steady ground, it is time to go to the next step.

## **Second stage – Enhancing**

It is now time to improve the mentoring relationship even more. Explore your interests, set goals, and introduce yourself as a resource to your mentee. In general, the goals can be personal in nature, such as:

- Career-oriented
- Academics focused

The Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern PA (n.d) recommends using the goal model called S.M.A.R.T:

**Specific** - Answer the “who, what, when, where, why, how, and which” questions

**Measurable** - Determine how exactly you will know when your goal has been attained.

**Achievable** - Make sure that it is realistic to attain the goal within your timeframe keeping other responsibilities in mind.

**Relevant** - Does the goal matter? How will it create positive change? What will be the impact of reaching the goal?

**Timely** - Create a timeframe for the goal to be achieved. Have a due date and check-in dates to measure progress.

In a program for migrants and refugees, your goals might be a bit different. Maybe you would like to discuss goals that can help your mentee feel a sense of belonging, you can also provide earlier experiences on the topic of being a migrant. The goal might be to reach the same level of security as you might feel in your role as a migrant already integrated in the host society. However, please remember to focus on your mentee's ambitions and hopes for the program. Once this is set, it is time to move on to sustaining the relationship.

### Third stage - Sustaining

Trust has now been established, which makes the conversation proceed more smoothly. You can now discuss on a more personal level, and be a bit more open. In this stage you are working more on your goals, and it is probably the central focus.

If you have built a steady ground for your mentorship in the first stage (**building**), then this stage probably will proceed without trouble. But, if your mentee starts to struggle to live up to the exceptions or ambitions you have set earlier, then you might need to evaluate what you have accomplished this far, set up new goals and how you would like to work moving forward. This is a clear example of how the BEST model is like a cycle. Do not let a bump in the road give up on what you have decided to do together.

### Fourth stage – Transitioning

The last stage, and probably the scariest one for the mentee. It is important here to talk about transitioning, and also celebrate how much you have accomplished this far. Prepare the mentee as much as you can, and also remind them how much time it is left on the program. A part of this discussion should include how both parties want the relationship to look like once the program is finished.

When the program ends - **provide closure!** Closure means ending the relationship on a good note, celebrate the time you have spent together, and clarifying your relationship moving forward (The Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern, n.d).

## 4.3. Generating the program and encouraging the participants

### Generating the program

Using the same step as written in the earlier chapter would be a good start to generate a Peer Mentor program, with migrants and refugees. Some of the earlier steps are more crucial than others. MENTOR (2009) writes in their handbook that working with immigrants and refugees requires a great deal of empathy care. It is essential to take the time to listen, to really hear the experiences, hopes and challenges that each immigrant or refugee mentee faces.

Young migrants, or migrants in general, transitioning into a new country may be dealing with loss - of homeland, family or friends. When planning these kinds of programs, it is strongly recommended to explore ways to create program climates that are welcoming, responsive and inclusive (MENTOR, 2009).

MENTOR (2009) has developed a good toolkit to use when you are planning or generating a program, this is mainly focused on young American migrants that might need help with learning English, or a mentor that can provide important support when feeling socially isolated or help with other practical tasks. Read more below about the different kinds of mentors that a young migrant or refugee might need:

**Cultural Assimilation Mentors** can serve as “cultural translators” and guides to negotiating American culture as well as supporters of their mentee’s culture. They can also provide perspective to help the young person better cope with and respond to conflicts that may occur with his or her parents during the assimilation process.

**English Language Acquisition Mentors** can help their mentee learn to speak and read English (or the language applicable to your host country).

**Emotional Support** Immigrant youth often feel socially isolated and may be victims of teasing and bullying because they are different. A mentor can provide important support by creating a strong sense of attachment and belonging in the mentoring relationship.

**Advocacy Mentors** can help their mentee learn to access resources to meet a variety of needs. Examples include how to use public transportation; find and use a local library; get involved in other youth programs.

**Advice and Counsel Mentors** can help both the mentee and his/her family (as appropriate) on issues such as homework, job application skills, obtaining a driver's license and applying for college.

**Role Modeling** When it is possible to have same culture matches, the mentor provides an important model for assimilation, developing a bicultural or bilingual identity, and achieving success in a new culture.

*(MENTOR, 2009)*

Generating a program with The BEST model according to above criteria should be much easier once it is established what kind of migrant mentee it is and what kind of mentor they need.

Using the tools **Building - Enhancing - Sustaining – Transitioning** on, for example **emotional support** could look something like this –

- Building trust would be the most important key in this situation. Be supportive, listen, be a friend and have mutual respect.
- Enhancing, set the goals that you aim for. What do your mentee need in order to feel less isolated? What do they require from you? The goal would be for example to try to get your mentee feel safe in new situations.
- Sustaining, keep working on your goals. Or do you need to take a step back?
- Transitioning, would probably be the most difficult step in this kind of situation, as the mentee might built a strong sense of attachment to you. But please remind your mentee that the relationship is not over, and what you have achieved this far.

If you would work as someone responsible for setting up a peer mentoring program for migrants and refugees, it is very important to be very structured. MENTOR (2009) suggests a timeline that could be applicable for this kind of program:

### **FIRST MEETING**

**Have a clearly defined structure for the first meeting** between mentor and mentee. Determine where, when, and who will be present when the mentor and mentee first become acquainted. Staff should always be present for the first meeting—offering introductions and making sure that both the mentor and mentee feel comfortable. Your program should also decide whether the mentee’s parent(s) or caregiver(s) will also be present.

**Use an ice-breaker that allows mentors and mentees to share their culture.** One suggestion—have mentors and mentees draw a “mentor/mentee” map of their lives leading up to the present. Tell them to include the places they have lived, significant events, and “milestones” that they want to share. This can also include interests and hobbies and when they first started enjoying an activity.

**In order to help the match build continuity,** have mentors and mentees set up their next three meetings. By starting the relationship out with a defined schedule, mentors and mentees can begin the process of building expectations with each other.

**Have mentors and mentees sign a contract.** Give them an opportunity to add different items that they feel are important such as what they can expect if someone must miss a meeting.

### **FIRST MONTH**

**Keep parents informed about your mentoring program.** Having materials translated into different languages is appropriate. However, keep in mind that illiteracy may be an issue. Therefore, you should also develop pictures and other visual materials that can help to communicate what it is your program is doing and how to get in contact with your staff.

**Check in with both mentors and mentees on a frequent and consistent basis.** Remember that you are also trying to build trust with your new matches—reaching out to do in-person check-ins can really help to facilitate your place in these new relationships.



**Provide a new mentor support group at the end of the first month.** This can give them a chance to share their initial challenges and successes with other new mentors—building a solid support of peers when they most need to feel that their concerns needs are being addressed.

**Send out weekly newsletters via email to mentors,** giving them “tips of the week” and highlighting suggested strategies from their initial training.

## **MONTHS 2–6**

**Continue to check in with mentors and mentee’s frequently** and consistently to troubleshoot problems that may occur.

**Provide recognition of milestones** for mentoring matches—offering certificates and/or cards to matches after duration milestones in their relationship have been met.

**Sponsor program-wide events.** These events can include holiday celebrations from different cultural and ethnic groups, international potluck dinners with meals representing all the cultures of your program, outings to special events or festivals, or servicelearning activities.

**Provide mentors with updates about news in their mentee’s homeland,** forwarding any relevant information that may be particularly important (if applicable).

**Offer parent or family support groups (if appropriate).**

**Generate and document best practices from your agency** that have been particularly positive for young people during the initial months of their match. This can help your program to record and retain practices that can be replicated.

**Celebrate and recognize the accomplishments of each unique mentoring match.** Provide certificates in the mentee’s native language as well as English.

**Provide optional ESL training sessions for mentors,** having expert teachers provide instruction on grammar, tenses, and strategies to encourage experiential learning.

**Document all meetings between mentors and mentees** and detail types of activities they engaged in as well as mentee progress.

## **MONTHS 6–12**

**Continue to offer monthly or quarterly mentor support groups.** Enhance these support groups with speakers from local immigrant or refugee social support agencies, educational professionals, mental health practitioners, ESL teachers, and others that have expert knowledge around issues facing immigrant youth. Give your mentors opportunities to evaluate and assess the usefulness of these sessions as well as contribute to selecting topics of interest to them.

**Recognize mentors by sending inspirational quotes,** thank you notes, and certificates for their hard work and dedication. Be creative.

**Recognize mentees during special events,** send text messages to thank them for participating in your program (if appropriate), give them donated tickets to special cultural celebrations

**Document all mentor and mentee activities.**

**Provide updates to parents regarding your program.** Remember to use a variety of outreach strategies, including translation and picture representations—don't assume that they can read and write.

**Ask high performing mentoring matches to take leadership roles in your agency**—involve them in steering or advisory groups, recruitment efforts, and speaking to new mentors and mentees to let them know what they should expect during their new match.

**Provide opportunities for reflection and closure preparation** if the match will terminate at the end of the year. Have mentors and mentees add on to their initial “mentor map” showing where they see themselves going from this juncture. This can also give them an opportunity to share what they have learned from each other.

*MENTOR, 2009*

### **Best practices and strategies that have been effective in integrating migrants and refugees into the labor market**

Reports from various EU members were able to identify key elements for effective labor market integration of refugees and migrants. Effective policies and good practices can be summarized below:

- a) language and skills training,

- b) job search assistance and career guidance,
- c) mentoring
- d) networking opportunities,
- e) support for credential recognition, and
- f) outreach to employers to increase awareness and reduce biases.

### **Definition of peer-mentoring**

Peer mentoring is a process through which a more experienced (mentor) individual encourages and assists one or more less experienced individuals (mentees) to develop their potential within a shared area of interest. The resulting effect is that all participants have an opportunity for growth and development. Mentees are individuals who may have some common background, characteristics, or circumstances. These could be related to gender, age, social status, ethnicity, ability, interests, etc. The examples are many and diverse. Peer mentors are individuals who have more experience within a common area and with proper training are able to assist another in acquiring knowledge and skills and attitude in order to be successful.

### **How to develop a peer mentoring program**

A peer mentoring program can be specifically targeted to those with little education, those with higher education, women, refugees from certain regions or countries, etc. Recent studies have indicated that a variety of peer mentoring projects can be an efficient way of integrating refugees and immigrants into the labour market.

#### **1. Define the purpose and goals of the program**

The purpose of a peer mentoring program refers to the intended outcome or result. A peer mentoring program with a purpose: the integration of refugees and migrants in the labor market of a host country, should be designed in such a way that provides all the support and guidance for the success of refugees and migrants in their chosen field of employment in the host country.

On the other hand, goals refer to a specific and measurable target that needs to be set in order to achieve a desirable outcome. Examples of goals of a peer mentoring program for refugees and migrants are:

- To help refugees and migrants obtain employment in their desired field
- To provide support and guidance to refugees and migrants as they navigate the job market
- To help refugees and migrants build a professional network in the host country
- To help refugees and migrants gain self confidence in their job search
- To promote cultural exchange between mentors and mentees

## 2. Identify the target participants

The participants of a peer mentoring program are mentors and mentees. Mentors are experienced individuals with prior knowledge and expertise in a given field. Mentors who are eager to give support and advice to the mentees. Mentees are individuals who are seeking guidance and support in a given field.

A peer mentoring program designed for refugees and migrants can recruit mentors that have already secured a job and are familiar with the workforce flow and norms. The mentees may be refugees and migrants who are seeking to enter the job market or even improve their currently holding position.

### ***Selection criteria of the mentees***

Some common criteria of the mentees in a peer mentoring group are necessary in order to find suitable mentees. They should be similar for all the participants. Therefore, for example, factors that need to be taken into account are:

- Personal (Age, Gender)
- Working experience and employment status of the mentee
- Language skills of host country language
- Educational level of the mentee
- Year of arrival in the host country
- Coming from an EU-country or a non-EU country\*

*\*If from a non-EU country permanent residence/citizenship might be needed, thus additional help*

For example, questionnaires with a focus on the activities of the program projects can be filled in by the participants before the start of the program in order to elicit information about the selection process in the projects.

## 3. Recruit and train mentors

It is important to recruit mentors who are passionate and motivated and are willing to help and support refugees and migrants integrate into the job market. Training of the mentors could entail information about the program, and highlight key skills that a mentor should have such as active listening, cultural sensitivity and communication skills.

## 4. Matching mentors and mentees

It is crucial to be precise and clear in regards to the roles of the mentor and the mentee. A good and careful match is considered important for the participation of mentee and the outcome of the mentoring program. The relationship should be aimed

at maintaining the mentee's identity and at helping them establish skills that will make them be occupationally motivated and active persons.

### **5. Set up the program structure**

The program should present the frequency, duration, format and content of the mentoring sessions. For example:

- Number of sessions (6-12 sessions, depending on the duration of the sessions)
- Frequency of the peer-to-peer mentoring sessions (weekly, biweekly, monthly)
- Duration of peer mentoring sessions (30 min-2 hours)
- Format of mentoring sessions (in person meetings, virtual meetings, group meetings)

### **6. Evaluation of the program**

Investigate the impact of the mentoring program targeting migrants and refugees in the host country in order to evaluate whether the participants moved closer to the labour market (outcome/result). The outcomes of mentoring can be subjective or objective. Subjective or qualitative outcomes are, for example, the impact on job satisfaction, experienced stress, or the impact on self-esteem. Examples of objective or quantitative outcomes are the impact on income or on the probability of securing a job or a promotion.

### **Practical examples of peer mentoring sessions that can be effective in integrating them into the labor market.**

#### **Session 1: Get to know each other**

In order for the program to be successful, it is important to create an environment where both mentors and peer mentees feel comfortable to share their experiences, ask questions and support each other. Icebreaker activities are a great way to help your new mentees to get to know each other in a fun way (Supplement 1).

The icebreaker activity can be followed by a group discussion where participants can share some common challenges that people new to the host country have and how they can be addressed. The facilitator can summarise the goals of this program and maybe present a schedule of the upcoming sessions.

#### **Session 2: Language and Skills Training\*<sup>i</sup>**

Providing language training, vocational education, and skills training that are specifically tailored to the job market can help migrants and refugees better integrate into the workforce. Many education providers in EU countries offer free language

courses and vocational training, which can help migrants and refugees obtain the skills they need to work in the host country.

Language tuition should be started within 3 months of arrival for migrants and refugees with high prospects of being allowed to stay. Refugees with skills beneficial to the host country should be prioritised in language courses. During the second session an assessment of the language level can be made. In addition, the mentees can get information on how to apply to the language course and help support the application.

### **Session 3: Resume (CV) and cover letter**

Peer mentors can help the mentees by providing guidance on how to format their CV and cover letter according to a template and use the appropriate language, and content. Therefore, the mentees can learn how to highlight their skills, qualifications, and previous work experience that are relevant to the position they are applying for. They may also consider emphasising their determination, adaptability, and resilience, which are often important qualities for success in the workplace.

### **Session 4: Providing social and cultural orientation of the host country**

Providing social and cultural orientation to individuals who are new to a foreign country can be a crucial aspect of their integration and success in their new environment. This orientation can include information about cultural norms, social customs, local laws and regulations, and other important aspects of daily life in the host country. The abovementioned factors can also help them to better understand how the host country's labor market operates and what employers are looking for in job candidates.

Some examples of social and cultural orientation (apart from offering language classes) are:

- Providing information about public transportation and local services
- Arranging cultural events and activities
- Connecting newcomers with local community groups or organisations.
- Information about housing, healthcare
- Session in the form of quiz or games in relation to the norms of the host country (Suppl.2)

Examples specific to work culture can be:

- dress codes,
- communication styles

- workplace etiquette.

In addition to practical information, it's important to provide emotional and psychological support to individuals who are new to a foreign country. This might include:

- offering counselling services
- providing opportunities for social connection
- addressing concerns or questions that individuals may have

### **Session 5: Support for Credential Recognition**

Migrants and refugees may face challenges in having their skills and qualifications recognized in the host country. Therefore, providing support to the mentees for credential recognition can help them find work that matches their qualifications. Evaluation of already existing credentials and skills for people that cannot provide documentation (t.ex. refugees) can take place through interviews and practical tests. Under a mentoring session, a few practical activities (Suppl 4) that can take place are:

- Research the credential recognition process
- Provide emotional support
- Help gather required documents
- Help with translation of document if possible
- Review application

### **Session 6: Job Search Assistance**

Providing job search assistance, career guidance, and counselling services can help migrants and refugees find employment that matches their skills and qualifications. A few examples of how to help with a Job search are:

- Help mentees navigate job search engines
- Identify job opportunities
- Reaching out to recruiters
- Mock interviews.
- Provide advice on how to network and find job leads

### **Session 7: Networking Opportunities:**

Peer mentors can help mentees build their professional networks by introducing them to other professionals in their field, providing guidance on networking events, and helping them establish a professional online presence.

### **Session 8: Outreach to Employers:**

Working with employers to increase awareness and reduce biases can help create more job opportunities for migrants and refugees. Many employers are open to hiring migrants and refugees, but may not know how to navigate the process or be aware of the benefits of hiring diverse talent.

**Session 9: Information about self-employment:**

Encouraging self-employment can be an effective strategy for integrating migrants and refugees into the labour market in the host country. Self-employment can provide an alternative to traditional employment, and can allow migrants and refugees to use their skills and expertise to start their own businesses.

**Session 10: Celebrate their success**

During this last session it is important to recap key takeaways, highlight milestones and encourage next steps. If possible, discuss ideas for future steps. Thank participants for their participation and contributions and have a small mingle.



## 5. Advantages of Peer Mentoring for labour and social inclusion

### 5.1. Which is the objective of a social integration process?

Integrating into a new place is a multidimensional and complicated process. Migration journeys can affect a person's mental health in many ways therefore access to some social support such as peer mentoring is essential for migrants and refugees.

The extent of the concerns related to the migrants and refugees largely depends on how well they can integrate socially, where social integration can be understood from two perspectives.



Image: freepik.com

For migrants, it means developing a sense of belonging to the host society. This often involves accepting and acting according to that society's values and norms and, if necessary, building up the social capital that is deemed necessary by the host country's institutions. The role of the native population is equally important: social integration is only feasible once migrants are accepted as members of society. Such mutual recognition, apart from improving individual well-being, leads to better social cohesion and has considerable economic implications, from the provision of public goods and redistribution to teamwork and productivity in firms. Yet, if migrants and the native population differ in many social and cultural dimensions, social integration poses a challenge. Understanding the determinants of social integration and how to facilitate it thus represents a policy-relevant research area.



**There are several explanations for the observed gap between immigrants and the native population.:**

- First, immigrants might be different across some fundamental characteristics, such as age or education, which are relevant for explaining social behaviour and choices.
- Second, in particular upon their arrival, immigrants face different constraints: a lack of language skills, insufficient economic or time resources, uncertainty regarding their length of stay, and direct obstacles to access certain areas of social life, such as voting or political activities.
- Third, immigrants have been exposed to a different culture either in their country of origin, ethnic neighbourhoods or in families. Culture influences preferences and beliefs and thus affects people's trust, risk attitudes and social preferences, as well as their views on religion, family ties, gender roles and political involvement.

**The recent research shows that naturalisation seems to positively impact migrants' and refugees' social integration. In this special process, the positive impact of peer mentoring is very clear and it directly fosters a sense of belonging for the migrants and refugees.**



In this sense, **it should be stated that emotional integration is a key element for migrants' and refugees' well-being.** In addition, emotional integration is not only of great relevance for the individual migrant or refugee; rather, the whole society benefits from migrants having high levels of emotional integration. This is because high levels of emotional integration, specifically national identification, can be considered basis for national solidarity.

First assumptions on the relation between social integration and national identification can be drawn from the concept of social distance. Social distance is seen as a subjective measure describing the perceived void toward another person or social group. It can be expected that migrants who have social networks similar to that of natives, that is, networks including large shares of natives, perceive a smaller social distance toward natives and the host society and, therefore, exhibit a greater sense of belonging.



We can also underline the integration theories that suggest a strong relation between other forms of integration and national identification. These forms include:

<b>Structural integration</b> – the migrants position in society and its core institutions
<b>Cultural integration</b> – the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors specific to a certain country or region and
<b>Social integration</b> – (regular) contact to and interactions with natives.

Social integration occurs in the public and private realms, across generations, and at the individual, family, community and national levels. Some typical indications of successful migrant integration are the decrease of the differences between migrants and non-migrants according to data on employment education, health and social inclusion, among other areas.

This process of integration does not – as is often supposed - only take place at the level of the individual immigrant, whose integration is measured in terms of his/her housing, job, education, and social and cultural adaptation to the new society. It also takes place at the collective level of the migrant group. Migrant organisations mobilize resources and express the ambitions of the group. These organisations may also integrate: that is, they may become an accepted part of civil society and a potential partner in integration policies -- or they may isolate themselves or be excluded. And thirdly, integration processes take place at the institutional level.



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Two types of institutions are relevant here. The first are general public institutions of the receiving societies, such as the educational system or institutional arrangements in the labour market. Laws, regulations and executive organisations as well as unwritten rules and practices are part of such institutions. These public institutions may promote integration processes of immigrants, but they may also

hinder access or equal outcome for newcomers, or they may even completely exclude them. The functioning of these general public institutions, and the possible adjustment of them in view of growing diversity, is of supremely importance: on this level, integration and exclusion are mirror images.

## **5.2. How social integration is achieved through Peer Mentoring programs?**

The concepts of social integration, embedding and sociabilities of emplacement all refer to how migrants forge social relations which enhance their connectedness with the place in which they settle and the wider society around them. The concept of social integration has been the most widely used across disciplines in regards to migrant settlement, including in policy discourse, and, accordingly, has been contested across academic disciplines (Ager and Strang, 2008). The concepts of embedding and sociabilities of emplacement relate less to the role of social relations in regards to practical aspects of the settlement, but more to notions of belonging, here defined as emotional attachment to a social group or location and feeling at home (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

Integration' has generally been used in public and academic discourse to refer to processes that entail the socio-economic, political, social and cultural adaptation of newcomers, and emergence of shared social relations, values and practices, including, at least in theory, the adaptation of the long-settled population to newcomers. Sociologists have differentiated between different realms of integration such as structural, social and cultural integration. 'Social integration' refers to the relations migrants establish after they arrive in a new country. Such relations can be with members of the receiving society, through clubs, associations and institutions, or with co-ethnics. Importantly, social integration is considered to be instrumental regarding access to more structural aspects of integration because information about jobs, housing and schools is often gained through social connectedness (Vermeulen and Penninx, 2000).



At this point we can state that the effectiveness of a peer mentoring program strengthens the social integration process for migrants and refugees. Peer mentors are able to guide the mentees on how to prioritize their time and determine the significant issues related to their integration process to the host country. As the mentors have similar experiences related to the social integration process to the host country, it is very guiding and useful to share their suggestions and advices with mentees. When the mentee has a road map about this process, everything becomes more clear and less challenging. The social patterns, formal documentation stages and other issues are carried out more accurate with the guidance of the mentor.

Peer mentoring programs foster the self confidence of the migrants and refugees especially in their arrival period to the host country.

As we stated it in previous chapters, refugees and migrants experience personal, cultural and structural challenges as they adapt to new lives in host countries. In this sense, Peer mentoring programs are used to facilitate resettlement, build empowerment and improve job-readiness for refugees and migrants. Most mentoring programs are co-designed with community-based service providers, using participatory approaches to ensure cultural acceptability. Communication and sharing activities are facilitated using workshops and special sessions.



### 5.3. Differences between peer mentoring and traditional guidance programmes

There are several differences between a traditional guidance programme and the peer mentoring sessions. In traditional guiding programmes, the mentor is active and guides the mentee with concrete ideas and statements. On the other hand, in peer mentoring programmes, the mentor is an active listener and guides the mentee by asking helpful questions.

**Active listening** is a technique where you completely concentrate on what is being said and observe non-verbal cues like body language. You listen with all your senses without being judgemental. You show interest in the conversation by maintaining eye contact, nodding, saying words like 'yes', 'okay', or 'I know', and more.

#### **The Importance of Active Listening in Mentoring:**

- defuse conflicts
- build trust
- identify issues and find better solutions



**Giving constructive feedbacks** is another key element of a good peer mentoring process. This may become a powerful tool for the mentor to guide the practical part of the process. Transmission of knowledge should be in a soft manner to create a collaborative atmosphere with the mentee.

**To give constructive and effective feedback:**

<b>MENTOR</b>
<b>should maintain eye contact and a measured tone of voice</b>
<b>should be specific in providing feedback</b>
<b>should establish an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect</b>
<b>should keep the feedback simple</b>
<b>should decide on a small number of areas that they want to cover</b>
<b>Should not provide any negative feedback in an open area with others around</b>



**Being non-judgemental** is another key element to maintaining an open and welcoming mentoring session. It is very important for a mentor to maintain a positive attitude and open mind to be truly supportive.




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Mentors should keep in mind the below themes to stay in a non-judgemental manner during a mentoring session

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Be curious about the whole process

Try to use the word 'interesting' instead of 'good' or 'bad'

<p>Keep listening with an open mind</p> <p>Allow the mentee to express their feelings and ideas clearly</p>	<p>Adopt an attitude of empathy</p> <p>Maintain positive body language and recognize cultural differences</p>
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**Valuing diversity of perspectives** requires self-awareness, intellectual flexibility, and broad knowledge that enable perception of the world through the eyes of others.

Discussing different opinions and being open to new options during the mentoring process most of the time leads to a stronger relationship between the mentor and the mentee. When we include voices that are different than ours, we can solve challenges and have more shared success. We can say that diversity inside the mentoring sessions gives them the real strength.

Another key factor for a fruitful mentoring program is a sincere collaboration between the mentor and the mentee. The whole mentoring process is mutual and needs to be directed with a common contribution from both sides.

**In a collaborative peer mentoring session,** the mentee receives help and direction, but the mentor also benefits. The process is being guided by both sides and this creates a common approach between them.

## 6. Conclusions

Summarizing, it can be said that **peer mentoring can offer several benefits for migrants and refugees**. Peer mentoring can enhance cultural understanding by connecting students from different backgrounds and experiences, improve language skills for non-native speakers of the local language, increase retention rates by providing additional support to students, facilitate better integration into the local community by offering opportunities for students to connect with local mentors and gain insights into job opportunities and resources, and promote the development of career skills by offering guidance on career goals and networking opportunities.

To maximize the benefits of peer mentoring for migrant and refugee students, it is important **to design programs with their unique needs in mind**. This may include offering language support, cultural training, and resources to help students integrate into the local community. Mentors should be carefully selected and trained adequately to ensure that they are equipped to provide effective support to their mentees. They should also be **culturally sensitive, empathetic, and have a good understanding of the challenges that migrant and refugee students face**.

**Institutions should invest in peer mentoring programs and provide the necessary resources to support their implementation and sustainability**. This may include funding for mentor training, program coordination, and support services for mentees. Institutions should also evaluate the effectiveness of peer mentoring programs regularly and make adjustments as needed. This may involve gathering feedback from mentees and mentors, tracking academic progress and retention rates, and assessing the overall impact of the program on the institution and its student body.

In conclusion, peer mentoring can be a powerful tool for supporting the success of migrants and refugees. With careful planning, implementation, and evaluation, **peer mentoring programs can be a valuable addition to any institution** that serves migrants and refugees.

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