Mediterranean Youth, NEETs and Women Advancing Skills, Employment and Awareness in the Blue and Green Economy (MYSEA)

Activity ty 4.6.1: Mentoring Guidelines

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1. Introduction

1.1. The MYSEA Project

MYSEA project promotes social inclusion and fight against poverty by increasing the employability of 1000 youth (18-24 years old), women (all ages) and NEETs (up to 30 years old) in the agrifood and waste management in five Mediterranean countries. MYSEA aims to provide the youth, women and NEETs with the marketable skills to boost their employment rates, make career choices and improve their life. MYSEA builds on the outputs of WP3 to design a total of four cross-border training curricula aiming at the enhancement of transversal skills, digital skills, sector-related skills and entrepreneurial skills. The training programmes will be translated into the five consortium languages (AR, GR, IT, ENG, FR).

The training intends to bridge the skills gaps between labour market needs and supply and equip participants with the much-needed competencies to embark on an entrepreneurship journey through founding their own associations. MYSEA foresees a total of 15 association launched at the end of the project following a total of 350 hours of mentoring and coaching with leading mentors to strengthen personal skills and offer career guidance for promoting safe employment options. MYSEA aims to align the experience gap. Trained and mentored individuals will have opportunities to enhance their soft and hard skills through the training and mentoring activities. To achieve this objective the project is structured in two phases:

1. In principle, the Partners gathered all relevant information about the skills that the Primary Beneficiaries already possess and the ones most required by the Economic Actors of the Blue and Green Economy in every Country, to identify the gaps.
2. The second includes the development of 20 modules for the development and/ or enhancement of the necessary knowledge, skills and competences required to integrate in the labour market and are based on the following 4 cross border topics:
   - Transversal skills;
   - Digital skills;
   - Sector Related skills;

- Entrepreneurial skills

In particular, Youth, Women and NEETs have been identified as the Primary Beneficiaries of the project because they are strongly disadvantaged and underrepresented in the labour market. They are facing high unemployment rates, have scarce work opportunities (especially the graduates and the skilled youth compared to their level of qualifications), have lower quality jobs and are paid lower wages (especially women) compared to the average.

On the other hand, Agri-food and Waste Management are two of the most important sectors for creating job opportunities and attracting investments in the future in the participating countries, given that the European Union and the international Governments are significantly promoting the Blue and Green Economy. The international Communities are concerned about the impact of the current consumption levels, about inequalities that are affecting specific population groups and areas in the planet, about global warming and the consequences of climate change and they are asking for producing and consuming in a more sustainable way. They are fostering the application of the Circular Economy Concept and the Eco-Responsible Innovation, which are key concepts for the design of the modules and training courses of the Skills Development Agenda.

The selected primary beneficiaries of the project (Youth, Women and NEETs) are characterised by a high degree of heterogeneity, in terms of age, field of specialisation, skills and general background. For this reason, the consortium partners have decided, based on the findings of the research carried out, to develop the selected modules in such a way so as to be attended by both low skilled participants and highly skilled ones across all the PPs Countries.

1.2. Scope and Aim of the deliverable

Following the conduction of 70 hours of mentoring and coaching, mentees shall be able to establish associations that foster social inclusions and promote job creation. MYSEA foresees the launching of 3 associations in the agrifood and waste management per country. Mentorship helps meeting the market needs and finding the right engagements to progress. Mentoring activities shall also focus on personal development to help cope with personal difficulties and boost confidence.

The guidelines shall encompass a design thinking approach to providing a framework on which mentors and mentees participate in the program and measure the progress. The guidelines are intended to facilitate the participation of mentors and mentees towards exploring greater opportunities.

Mentoring activities shall be tailored to meet individual needs and give the mentees the platform for growth and development and to develop non-cognitive skills. Leading mentors especially women and experts from the agrifood and waste management industries shall work closely with the target groups for a total of 70 hrs/country and advice on the right engagements that would enable them to progress.

Document outlining the mentor-mentee relationship guidelines framework. Common mentor-mentee and coaching guidelines that respect both the cross-border aspect of the project along with country-specific guidelines. A design thinking and holistic approach should be followed, as the goal of the mentoring is not only personal development, but ultimately the launch of associations with actors of the blue and green economy.

2. What is Mentoring

According to the definition provided by the Cambridge Dictionary, mentoring is "the action of assisting and counselling someone with less experience in order to help them progress in their career." Kram[1] (1985) and Levinson[2] provide a definition that is just slightly different from the one presented here: The term "mentoring" refers to a relationship that exists between an older, more experienced individual (mentor) and a younger, less knowledgeable individual who is known as the "protégé" or "mentee". Mentoring is a practice that, according to theorists of adult and career development, can have a significant positive impact on an individual's growth and has a high potential for doing so[3][4][5]. The mentor-protégé relationship has the potential to play a pivotal role in promoting both the individual and the professional development of both parties. According to Levinson[5], the relationship with a mentor paves the way for young adults to enter the world of work without encountering significant challenges and makes it simpler for them to build their identities.

The meaning of the term "mentoring" has evolved over the years to include a number of important facets, including the following: mentoring is a specific kind of relationship that differs from other kinds of personal relations, due to the fact that it is a developmental relationship. According to the Search Institute[6], developmental relationships are close connections through which people discover who they are, cultivate abilities to shape their own lives, and learn how to engage with and contribute to the world around them.

In addition, mentoring is an essential part of socialisation since it has the power to transform both the mentor and the protégé in a variety of ways, including psychologically, intellectually,

[1] Kram, K. E. (1983). Phases of the mentor relationship. Academy of Management Journal, 26, 608–625.

[2] Levinson, D. J. (with Darrow, C. N., Klein, E. B., Levinson, M. H., & McKee, B.). (1978). The seasons of a man's life. New York: Knopf.

[3] Dalton, G. W., Thompson, P. H., & Price, R. L. (1977). The four stages of professional careers: A new look at performance by professionals. Organizational Dynamics, 6(1), 19–42. https://doi.org/10.1016/0090-2616(77)90033-X

[4] Hall, E. T. (1976). Beyond culture. New York: Anchor Press/Double day.

[5] D.J. Levinson, C.N. Darrow, E.B. Klein, M.H. Levinson and B. McKee. Ballantine Books, New York (1978)": https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/0732118X84900072

[6] Search Institute (2017). The Developmental Relationships Framework. Retrieved from: https://www.search-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/0201/09/DevRel_Framework-1-Pager-04-26-2017.pdf

spiritually, and physiologically[7]. In addition, it is utilised as a method of instruction because it boosts academic achievement, encourages the development of a positive sense of identity and self-confidence, lowers rates of hazardous behaviour, supports professional growth, and minimizes the likelihood of students dropping out of school[8].

2.1. The mentor-mentee relationship

Mentoring is an established relationship between two people, which aims at fostering learning and growth within the workplace. It is based on mutual respect, trust and integrity. Mentoring relationships are proven to improve productivity, staff engagement and retention. The practice of mentoring involves an experienced person assisting a less experienced person in achieving their goals and developing their abilities through a series of time-limited, private, one-on-one conversations and other learning interactions.

Establishing a mentoring relationship entails creating an open dialogue between a person with knowledge and experience who wants to share it and the person with less experience, all within a clearly defined and predetermined timeline. A clear understanding of responsibilities is crucial to the success of the mentoring relationship as a whole. Therefore, in order to avoid disappointments, it is crucial to clearly and exactly outline the expectations that both parties have for this connection. It is equally crucial to understand that mentoring is an ongoing process and that the anticipated or intended results may not be achieved following just the first meeting, but may require time.

Both the mentor and the mentee must be devoted to and engaged in the mentoring relationship in a way that they both find to be most acceptable. Being aware of the bigger picture is crucial because adjustments we make in one aspect of our life eventually have an impact on other areas.

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[7] Chao, G. T., Walz, P., & Gardner, P. D. (1992). Formal and informal mentorships: A comparison on mentoring functions and contrast with nonmentored counterparts. Personnel Psychology, 45(3), 619–636.
[8] DuBois, D. L., Holloway, B. E., Valentine, J.C., & Cooper, H. (2002). Effectiveness of mentoring programs for youth: A meta-analytic review. American Journal of Community Psychology, 30(2), 157–197.

To achieve goals and outcomes in a mentoring relationship, honesty, openness, and trust are essential.

The asymmetrical connection between the mentor and the mentee, which is constantly driven by the mentee's needs, expectations, and ambitions, distinguishes this relationship from many other interpersonal ones. The mentor's job is to act as a conduit while also offering assistance and counsel without expecting anything in return. To impart their own expertise, mentors are motivated. The thrill of seeing the progress and development they helped to foster drives mentors.

2.2. Stages of the mentoring relationship

Mentoring partnerships go through stages, just like any other relationship. For this particular developmental relationship, the following four stages can be identified:

- **Defining the purpose**: the beginning of a mentoring relationship is a crucial phase. The mentor and mentee get to know one another, determine whether they are a good fit, and develop their connection and define together the purpose of the mentoring. Mentors are essential to the success of the relationship, since they need to invest time in building the connection and ensuring that the mentee is at ease with them in order to develop trust and honesty.

- **Creating engagement**: relationships and trust are developed in this stage, putting the emphasis on developing the relationship between the mentor and mentee and getting to know one another better throughout this period. The objectives of this stage are to establish a relationship of trust, reassessing the original goals and discussing progress, setting boundaries and expectations.

- **Promoting growth and achieving goals**: The mentor and mentee will devote most of their time during this stage of their relationship. Their relationship will get stronger as they become more familiar with one another's objectives and work together to achieve them. Progress is the main emphasis at this point, and both the mentor and the mentee should be well aware of the development that is occurring. The mentor will continue to provide

advice and constructive criticism throughout this process, ensuring that consistent progress is made, the trust build is not jeopardised, dedication to the objectives is ongoing and review processes are established and respected. The Growth phase of a mentoring relationship is often the longest and most fruitful phase, where both the mentor and the mentee frequently derive the most benefit.

- **Closing the formal relationship**: the closing phase is the last level of mentoring and comes when the mentee has accomplished their objectives with the mentor's assistance and the mentoring relationship ends organically. At this stage, both parties agree that the original purpose (set at the beginning of this journey) is achieved, along with the goals agreed. It is crucial for both the mentor and the mentee to experience a feeling of closure and discuss what each has gained/ learned from this relationship. This stage represents more than just the breakdown of the relationship. They can consider this as an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate their achievements.

2.3. Types of mentoring

The structure and operation of a mentoring relationship may be influenced by the kind of programme provided, including the objectives that need to be achieved, the expected duration, the possibilities for and frequency of meetings, along with the activities that will take place.

- **Traditional one-on-one mentoring:** one mentor works closely with a mentee having regular meetings every month of at least four hours. There are exceptions, such as mentorship programs that are specifically designed for schools and run during the academic year. Mentees in such unique situations need to know up front how long they may anticipate the relationship lasting so they can modify their expectations.
- **Mentoring in groups**: one mentor establishes a relationship with a group of mentees, where all bring in their own range of knowledge and experience. The mentor takes on the leadership position and commits to long-term, consistent meetings with the group. The session structure includes interaction among the participants, but also time for private sharing, allowing the mentor to direct progress, pace and activities. Group mentoring facilitates the achievement of deeper impact in a short amount of time. It is considered

an effective way for upskilling groups, retaining knowledge and efficiently promoting organisational culture within an organisation.

- **Team mentoring**. A group of mentors and a group of mentees conduct mentoring sessions together as a team. The main distinction between team mentoring and group mentoring is that the latter frequently entails more than one mentor working with the group. A group of mentees working on a same objective or goal may benefit from team mentoring. Each mentee will have personal development objectives that they can pursue jointly under the direction of many mentors. As it offers a space for a variety of people differnt viewpoints and perspectives to learn from one another, this kind of mentorship may aid in the promotion of diversity and inclusion.

- **Mentoring by peers**. Peer mentoring is when two individuals work together in a mentorship but both sides are from a comparable employment level or age range. It is similar to one-on-one mentoring. They might alternate between "mentor" and "mentee" roles or plan flexible sessions, sharing knowledge and expertise and holding one another accountable are the goals.

- **Virtual mentoring**. A mentor and a mentee are connected via e-mentoring, interacting and sharing online. For mentors and mentees in typical one-on-one contacts virtual mentoring can be a starting point or a means to touch base when physical meetings are not possible.

- **Flash mentoring** as the name implies, is brief one-time mentoring sessions designed to teach a crucial concept or ability. Flash mentoring is helpful in fostering significant information exchange without placing undue emphasis on forming a long-term connection. To maximize the impact of the sessions, it may also be utilised in conjunction with other forms of mentoring, such as group mentoring. New mentors and mentees can be introduced through it and before committing to a longer-term relationship, a flash session may serve as a trial run.

3. Design Thinking for Mentoring

3.1. Design thinking overview

"Design thinking is essentially a human-centred innovation process that emphasises observation, collaboration, fast learning, visualisation of ideas, rapid concept prototyping and concurrent business analysis, which ultimately influences innovation and business strategy. The objective is to involve consumers, designers, and businesspeople in an integrative process, which can be applied to product, service, or even business design. It is a tool to imagine future states and to bring products, services, and experiences to market. The term design thinking is generally referred to as applying a designer's sensibility and methods to problem solving, no matter what the problem is[9]."

Design Thinking gained popularity in the 1990s as it promoted having customer-focused workplaces with an atmosphere that encouraged employee experimentation in order to sustain innovation[10]. The phases of the design thinking approach are: 1. Empathise, 2. Define, 3. Ideate, 4. Prototype, 5. Test.

In principle, a thorough understanding of the customer based on fieldwork study must be developed. This includes the process's Empathise step, in which one should gather consumer insights and identify implicit customer demands[11]. This frequently entails observational research and ethnographic techniques, which involve listening, watching, talking, and trying to understand.

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[9] Lockwood, T. (2009) Design thinking: Integrating innovation, customer experience and brand value. New York, New York: Allworth Press.

[10] Reilly, R.L. (2011) Developing a marketing plan using design thinking. (Unpublished Master's project), International Center for Studies in Creativity, Buffalo, NY.

[11] Lockwood, T. (2009) Design thinking: Integrating innovation, customer experience and brand value. New York, New York: Allworth Press.

The engagement of the user through cooperation between the user and interdisciplinary teams is a second crucial component of design thinking. This stage in the process is when one starts to explicitly describe your challenge, which aids in your movement toward radical innovation.

The third step is to hasten learning through experimentation, hands-on learning, and the development of rapid, low-cost prototypes. The ideation phase of the process starts, and only a few ideas will be selected for the prototype step, which is the fourth step in the procedure. Conceptual drawings, physical mock-ups, tales, role-playing or storyboards, and any other sort of design in between may all be considered prototypes. The objective is to transform those concepts into tangible products/ services.

The testing phase is the last step in the process, where the goal is to promote integrative thinking by fusing innovative concepts with more conventional strategic considerations so that lessons may be learned from a more comprehensive and varied perspective.

3.2. Mentoring and design thinking: mechanism

As already mentioned, the foundation of the mentoring process is the relationship that is developed between a mentor and a protégé. It is important to emphasize how unique each mentoring relationship is and how it constantly changes throughout time, being a developmental relationship.

There are two primary purposes of the connection. First off, the mentor provides the student with a career function, which comprises a range of actions that help the learner "learn the ropes." The following behaviours are listed among the many types of behaviour: mentoring, boosting favourable exposure and visibility, and supporting the protégé's growth.

In addition, the mentor fulfils a psychosocial role that is based on closeness, confidence, and interpersonal ties. This promotes the protégé's growth on a personal and professional level. Mentors also provide companionship, guidance, and role modelling.

Every connection has different levels of mentoring functions. For instance, some mentoring relationships have high professional and low psychosocial functions, while others may have low

career and medium psychosocial functions, etc. Depending on the demands of the protégé and/or the mentor's skills, there are many degrees of functions.

Design thinking is not a nearly magical talent for starting from scratch. Instead, it comes from seeing reality and then from thinking about the world the creator has created. The transition from "merely gazing at something" to "consciously observing something" is contemplation. The person seeing an object must understand that it is not theirs and that they do not possess it entirely, but rather that it is something that has been given to them, something outside of themselves. Everything may serve as a source of inspiration for a person who is paying attention. All the necessary answers may be found in the surroundings and context of the object, such as in the locations, the people, and the little things. People's thoughts do not contain responses; instead, a person must train themselves to see and recognise them.

The fact that the work never ends in itself and always has a goal and a receiver is another crucial component of design thinking. Any gesture is done for a certain person, and if that person is not made obvious, the gesture is merely a careless one. Idea generation and creativity are inherent human traits. The purpose of everyone's creation is to think. As a result, learning how to create is crucial.

Before coming up with ideas, everyone should be aware of their location, what the surrounding area suggests about them, and the audience for their work. In order to develop workable solutions, ethnographic observing techniques are used as part of the design thinking process. Empathy is necessary to inspire this action because innovators must comprehend the experiences of their customers.

Design thinking concentrates on and empathises with the user of a product or service across the whole process. The utilisation of methods that foster divergent and convergent thinking, such as idea production and filtering, as well as group problem-solving are essential components. The process begins with a challenge, which is frequently a difficult or complicated problem. It focuses on understanding the challenge and making sure that it is being addressed.

3.3.   Divergent and Convergent thinking

The idea of divergent and convergent thinking is fundamental to any creative problem solving and is especially crucial throughout the Design Thinking process. These two cognitive abilities are necessary for the creation of practical and cutting-edge design thinking solutions.

Divergent thinking is also called lateral thinking. It is a thought process of coming up with varied creative ideas to overcome a problem and generate a solution[12]. The divergent thinking guidelines have been retrieved from BridgePoint Effect[13].

Figure 1: Divergent thinking guidelines

Convergent thinking is a term coined by Joy Paul Guilford to describe the process of choosing the most logical answer to a problem. Convergent thinking is the opposite of divergent thinking. It generally involves giving the "correct" answer to standard questions that do not require significant creativity. Convergent thinking is essentially the process of choosing the obvious

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[12] https://chisellabs.com/glossary/what-is-divergent-thinking/

[13] https://bridgepointeffect.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Guidelines-to-Creative-Thinking-BridgePoint-Effect.pdf

choice. Most would simply call this "common sense."[14] The guidelines for convergent thinking have also been retrieved from BridgePoint Effect[13].

Convergent Thinking Guidelines

Use affirmative judgment — To identify what is good about an option and to continuously work to overcome its flaws. To choose options that are most suited to the situation at hand. Confirming the usefulness, interest and relevance of an option. Focusing on what you want rather than on what you don't want.

Be deliberate — To invest the necessary thought and energy to ensure the best alternatives are selected and then developed. Balancing intuition with analysis.

Check your objectives — To stay aware, while solving a problem, of what you wanted to accomplish in the first place.

Improve your options / Consider novelty — To consider highly original options that you might have a tendency to eliminate. To defend the search for a creative outcome while forging a solution and making decisions.

Allow for incubation — To take a break from actively pursuing a problem or solution by turning your attention to other mental activities or relaxation.
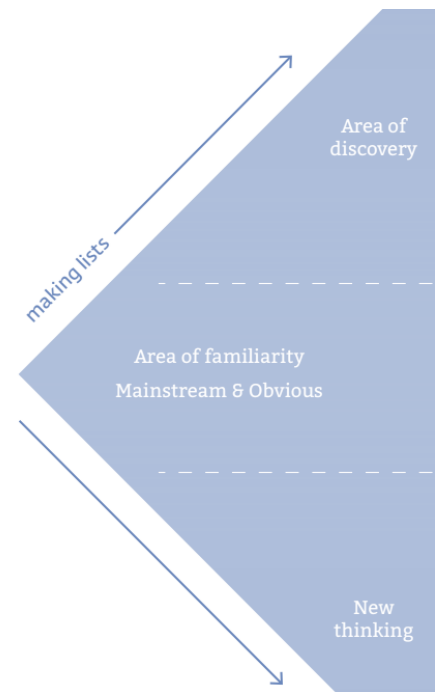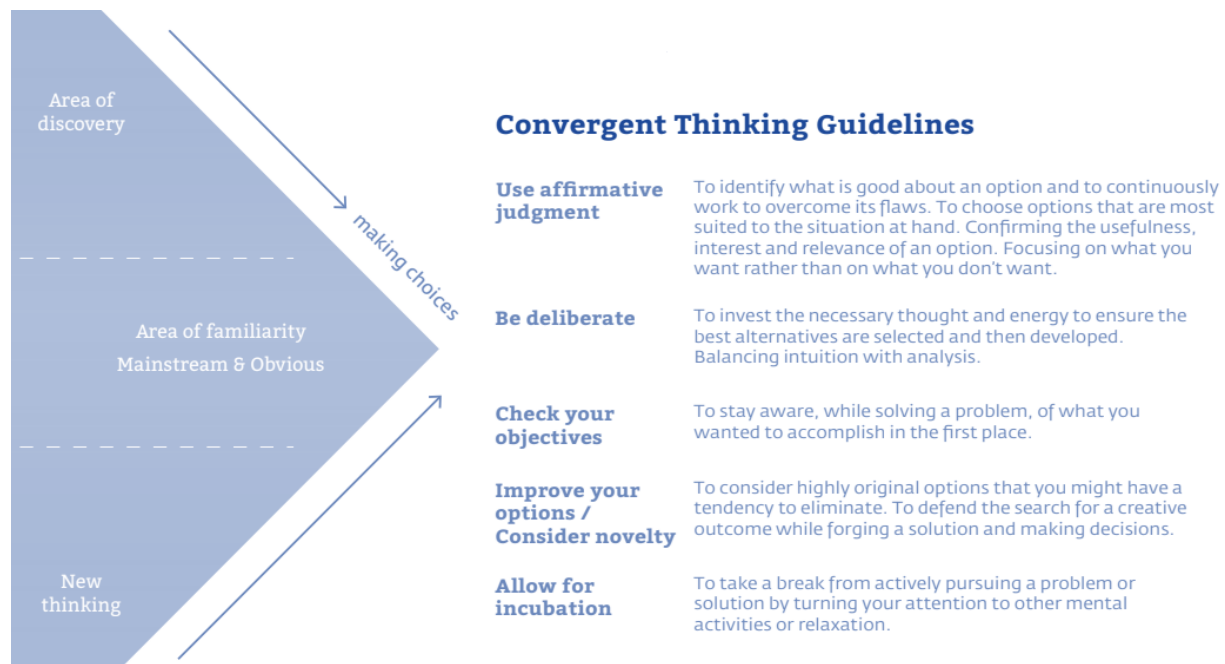
Figure 2: Convergent thinking guidelines

3.4.   Why design thinking for mentoring?

Design thinking is a human centred approach, given that it puts the person/ user in the epicentre of the process. The first step in the process is to look at the wants, aspirations, and actions of the target audience to come up with solutions for the challenge they are facing. Like in any other setting, during a mentoring session, the objective of the mentor is to try to understand the needs of the mentee by listening to them. Throughout the whole design process, the mentor seeks to look at the world through this perspective. After having defined a range of desirable outcomes, they start to evaluate the different options using the criteria of viability and feasibility.

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[14] https://airfocus.com/glossary/what-is-convergent-thinking/#:~:text=Convergent%20thinking%20is%20a%20term,do%20not%20require%20significant%20creativity.

Moreover, since design thinking is not a linear process, but instead allows the parties involved to transition back and forth until they identify the best possible solution, it allows for the mentor and the mentee to reassess and redefine the purpose and objectives of the mentoring session and to set different goals, in the event that a new parameter arises.

Using divergent and convergent thinking interchangeably, contributes to the development of the relationship of the mentor with the mentee, by reinforcing the trust among them. Moreover, it allows for a growth in the mindset of both individuals involved, while it keeps them in check with reality and the possible obstacles/ risks ahead.

Finally, given that this human centric approach is tailored to the needs of each individual/ mentee, it allows for country and sector specific adaptations. In that sense, no particular fine tuning is necessary to be considered in the context of cross-border mentoring guidelines, or whether the mentoring will be delivered to potential entrepreneurs in the agri-food or waste management sector.

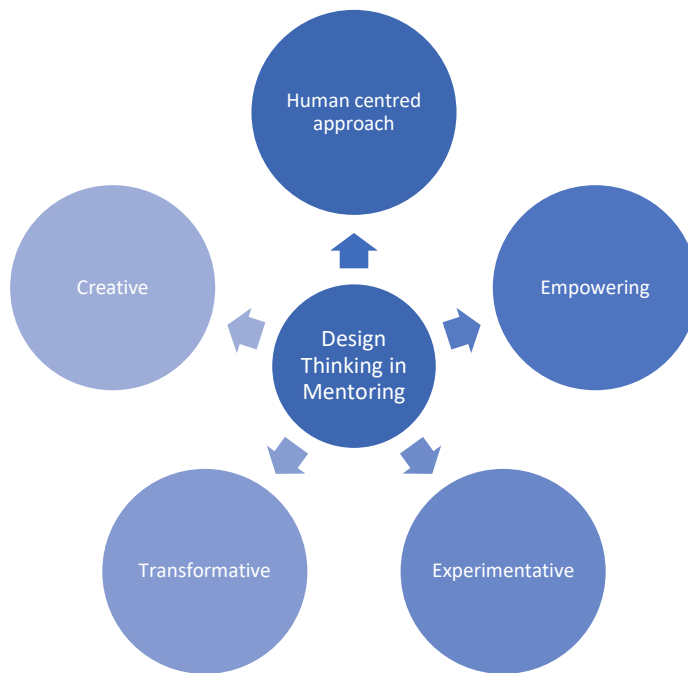In the following figure, the advantages of applying the design thinking approach to mentoring are presented.

Figure 3: Advantages of introducing design thinking in mentoring

4. Guidelines for the MYSEA project

In the workplace, entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurial mindset are becoming more and more crucial. They contribute to reaching objectives and experimenting with new ideas and solutions. Entrepreneurship and design thinking have many things in common, which go beyond creativity and innovation. Such similarities are the emphasis on original approaches to solving problems, the pursuit of fresh concepts and the identification of opportunities, while ensuring that the appropriate means and methods are established to deal with uncertainty.

Entrepreneurs use Design Thinking in some way, even if they are not aware of it, whenever they engage in a creative problem solving or search for fresh possibilities. They may enhance their involvement in and facilitation of innovation processes by gaining better understanding of the dynamism and power of the Design Thinking process and its tools.

Entrepreneurship and design thinking work together to boost competitiveness. Design Thinking has the potential to improve and advance entrepreneurship. It may aid business owners in daily operations, opportunity identification, the development of new business models, and the pursuit of corporate objectives. However, its greatest advantages are in fostering entrepreneurship, cultural sensitivity, and creative thinking.

4.1. Mentoring for specific Impact

These guidelines have been developed to support the training programmes developed in the context of the MYSEA project, in order to strengthen the personal skills of the target group and offer guidance for promoting stable careers. Bearing in mind that goal of the mentoring is not only personal development, but ultimately the launch of associations with actors of the blue and green economy, the consortium is convinced that mentoring through design thinking is the most appropriate way to directly address each individual's needs.

The training courses developed aimed at enhancing:

- **Transversal Skills** to successfully adapt to changes and to lead a productive life. The objective of this programme is to improve managerial and communication performance by enhancing the relevant skills and competencies. Individuals with transversal skills are better prepared to deal with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Teamwork, effective communication, problem solving, time management and conflict resolution are examples of skills that make a difference both at personal, as well as professional level. Soft skills are "life skills," which are defined as "behaviours employed successfully and ethically in handling personal concerns." Through the development of this training programme, the aim is to provide trainees with tools that will allow them to successfully adjust to changes and live a productive life. It is divided in the following modules:
    - o Module 1: Interpersonal Skills
    - o Module 2: Written and Verbal Communication
    - o Module 3: Career Development Skills
    - o Module 4: Advancing Professional Skills for the Agri-Food & Waste Management Sector
    - o Module 5: Thematic Oriented Skills
- Digital Skills to equip the trainees with the needed tools to be active in the digital society and introduce them to multimedia products. In the training curricula of the digital Skills the trainees are invited to be active in the digital society because although there are cultural, social and economic differences among the economies of the Countries involved by the MYSEA project, digital skills are a necessity for achieving employment status. This package introduces digital products that lead to innovation, social media marketing, web presence (from web analytics to creation of websites and blogs), cyber security (for understanding the vulnerabilities of the web and know the tools for protection) and decisions based on digital data analysis and interpretation (how to analyse data and make decisions based on use of software). It is divided as follows:
    - o Module 1: Foundation Module for IT Skills (Introductory training and basic IT skills)
    - o Module 2: IT skills for the Agri-food sector (including IoT applications, e-agriculture, etc.)

- o Module 3: IT skills for the Waste Management sector (including IoT applications)
- o Module 4: IT Skills for Web-design and Development
- o Module 5: IT skills to support SMEs innovation
- Sectorial Skill: to aid the trainees to acquire sector-related skills related to agrifood and waste management. The sector related skills training package aim at providing the participants with sector specific knowledge to better prepare them for the work -based learning workshops. In the context of this training package, fundamental information on the Blue and Green Economy is provided, an overview of the trends in the agri-food and waste management sectors, information on the supply chain and elements of innovation, sustainability and environmental conservation. development of modules for enhancing general tasks of manual workers or specific tasks of skilled workers. They are addressed through the following modules:
  - o Module 1: Foundation Module in the Green and Blue Economy
  - o Module 2: Introduction to the industry activities, production, processing and logistics for the Agri-food Sector. (agriculture, zootechnics, fishing industry, etc)
  - o Module 3: Introduction to the industry activities, production, processing and logistics for the Waste Management Sector (recycling, reusing, upcycling, etc)
  - o Module 4: Supply Chain, Operations and Sales focusing on the Agri-food and Waste Management Sectors
  - o Module 5: Innovation, Sustainability and Environmental Conservation (with a focus in the Agri-food and Waste Management Industry
- Entrepreneurial Skills: to aid the trainees' inclusion into starts-up, SMEs or associations and to advance knowledge in management, administration and bureaucratic aspects. This training package is targeted to enhance the required entrepreneurial skills for Youth, Women and NEETs that are highly in demand for starts-up and for SMEs in the Agri-food & Waste Management Sectors. To train and educate leaders who are agents of change with the ability to analyse, innovate, validate, and start new businesses, in a culture of excellence. Graduates will develop the knowledge necessary to evaluate, transfer, and

implement high-impact, innovative, sustainable solutions within a global environment. Its modules are:

- o Module 1: Business creation
- o Module 2: Human Resources
- o Module 3: Business administration skills (decision making, systems operation, organization)
- o Module 4: Business, marketing and market analysis
- o Module 5: Financial management.

5. Methods and Techniques for mentoring

In the sections that follow, a presentation of design thinking tools which are appropriate for conducting mentoring sessions are presented.

5.1.   Inspiration board

Inspiration boards are tools for illustrating trends and information. This tool may seem familiar since it resembles the Pinterest application. It is a fun approach to gather eye-catching photographs relevant to your project without analysing them. It is also a good method to let go of rational and critical thinking while (re)discovering pieces of a bigger image that accurately depict the dreams, needs, obstacles and goals of each mentee.
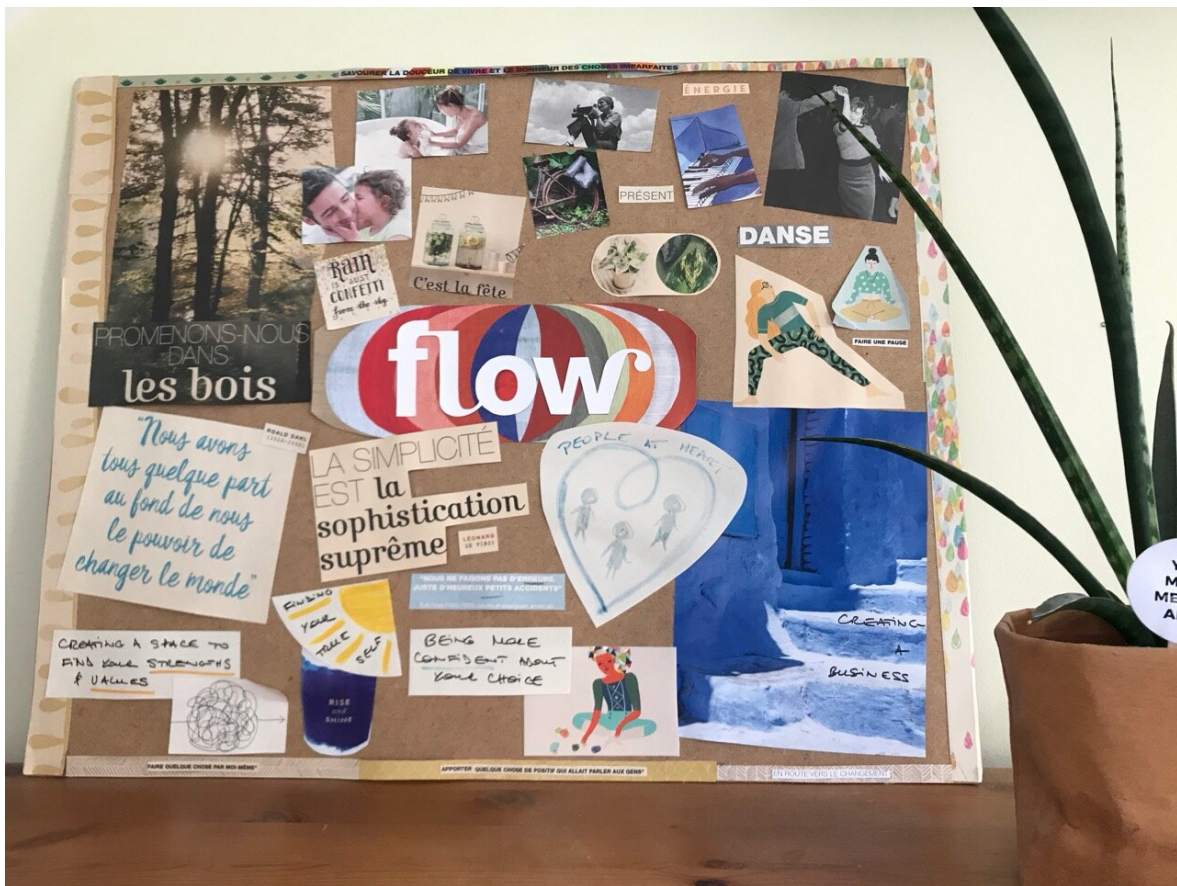

Figure 4: Example of an inspiration board

Figure 5: Example of an inspiration board

The inspiration board for mentoring can be an ongoing process during the sessions that the mentee populates at their own pace and based on the progress achieved with their mentor. It can also be a fun way for bonding and getting to know each other more.

5.2.   Scenario planning

Scenario planning is a method to develop and analyse different hypothetical scenarios based on what the mentee needs/ wants against what drives them and to examine them. From the discussion, the mentor and mentee will decide on the most critical for their commonly agreed purpose and will place them in a 2x2 matrix. For each of the quadrants a different future scenario can be elaborated.
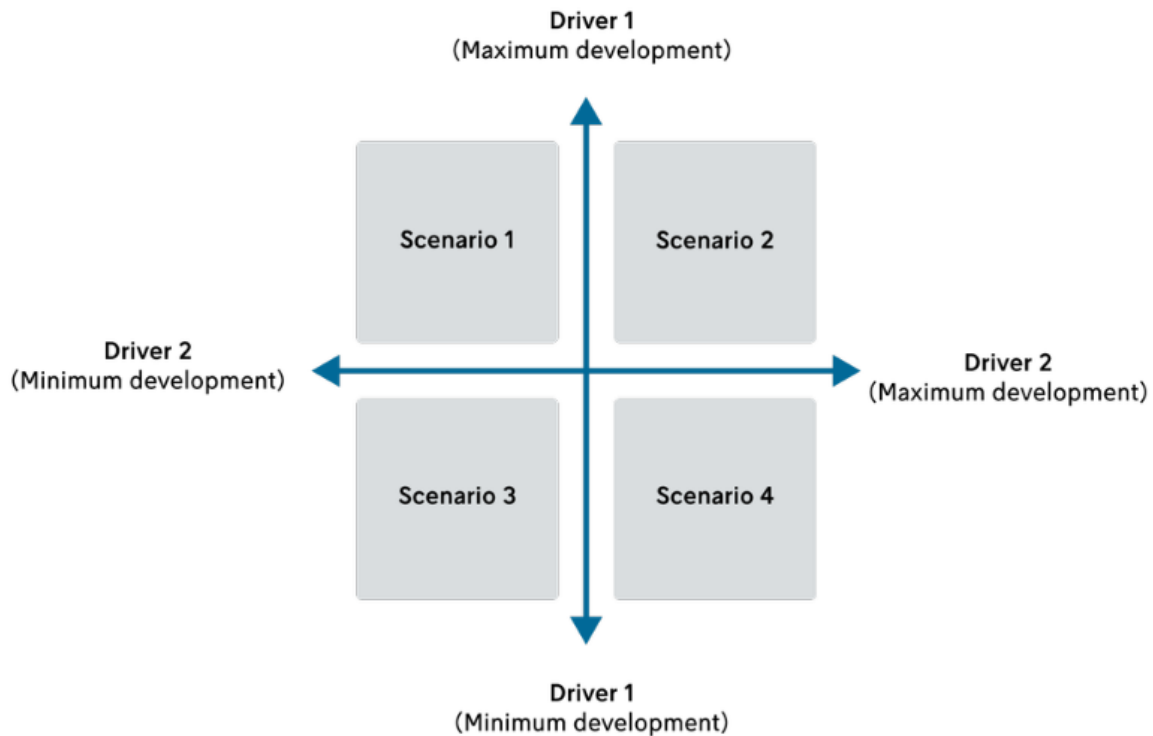
Figure 6: Example of scenario technique

To implement scenario planning, in principle the mentor and the mentee need to compile a list of the drivers that are or may affect their goals/ aspirations/ needs. With the help of the mentor, they create a 2x2 matrix with a horizontal and vertical axis, choosing and taking into consideration the two most significant drivers that will play a role in the personal and professional development potential of the mentee. Then the mentee will be asked to describe a potential future scenario for each of the matrix's four quadrants using the relevance of these various scenarios as their guide.

In order to describe potential solutions for a future framework, they may combine specific themes from any situation. The process is finalised through a discussion on how the outcomes of this exercise may be used most effectively taken into consideration, in combination with the originally set goal of the mentee and their aspirations for the future.

5.3.   Opportunity mind map

The opportunity mind map is a visual that helps identify opportunities for innovation through the visual organisation of selected information. The main objective is to create an overview of a topic, its identified problems, external factors, enablers, opportunities, etc. The data visualisation will help to reveal opportunities and guidelines for the setting up or revising the original idea. The radial organisation of the data will help to find connections between information, ideas and opportunities. It is a technique often used to reinvent and design one's career. Through the opportunity mind map, the mentee will have the opportunity to think out of the box and reconsider the options that lie ahead, freely, without any biased assumptions or feelings of insecurity. Mind mapping helps maximizing the number of career ideas, and create concepts, which can turn to career "prototypes" so the mentee may have more concrete directions to "test" their "prototypes". Mind mapping may be used in the context of a career change, career enhancement or career exploration.
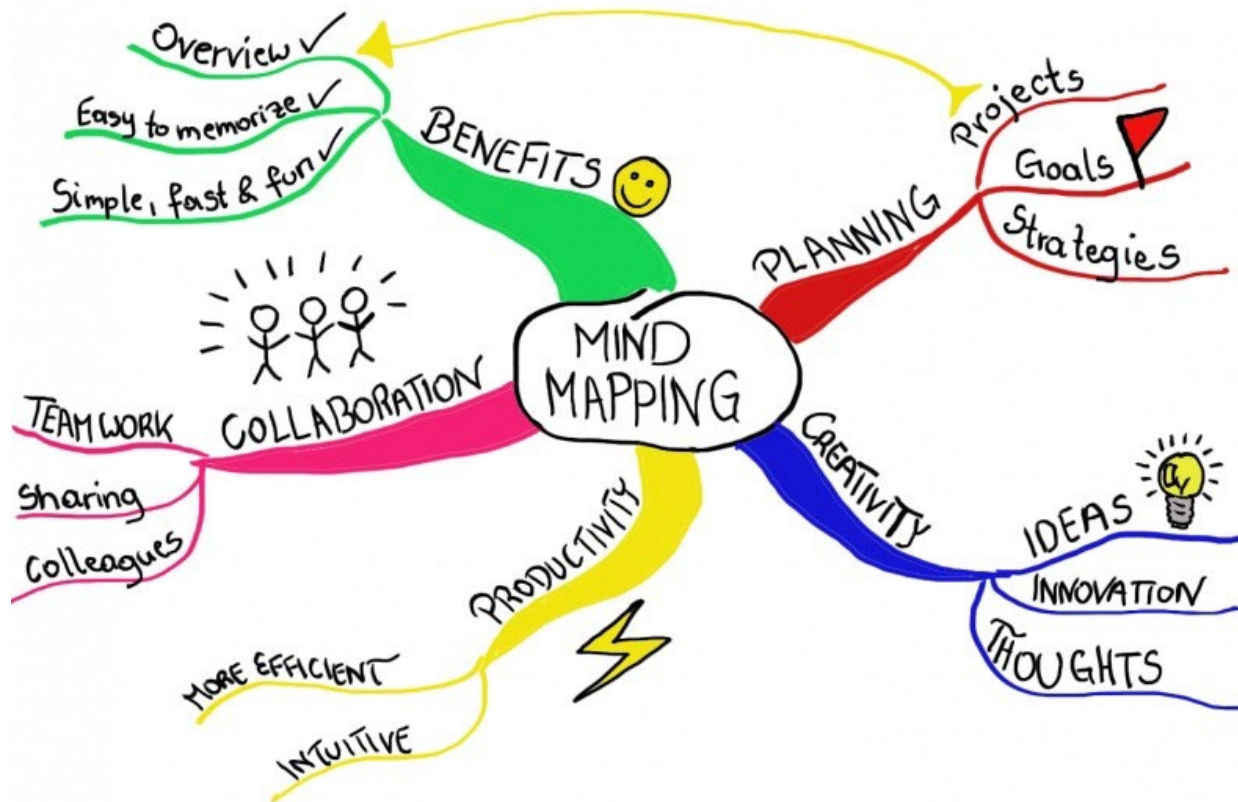

Figure 7: opportunity mind mapping for career design

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5.4.　Brainstorming variations

A technique for generating ideas and exchanging information to address a specific business or technical challenge, brainstorming encourages participants to think freely. When brainstorming as a group, each person offers their ideas as they are thought of. Ideas are categorised and prioritised for further action at the session's end.

When organizing a brainstorming session, it is crucial to specify the subject matter in detail. A topic that is very narrow or poorly defined will not produce enough ideas that are immediately useful. The brainstorming group's composition is equally crucial: people having a direct connection to the topic as well as those who can offer original and unexpected thoughts should be included.

Whatever approach one may pick, the majority of brainstorming approaches incorporate these three steps:

- Jot down thoughts
- Talk about and evaluate the concepts.
- Pick which ideas to implement.

The same components are used in all brainstorming variations; all that is required is a person or group of people, a challenge to take on or an opportunity to seize, and some time.

The selected variations presented below and are considered as appropriate for the context of this project, have been reproduced from Asana[15].

Starbursting
A visual brainstorming technique, starbursting should be used once you or your team of brainstormers has homed in on a single idea. To begin starbursting, put an idea on the middle of a whiteboard and draw a six-point star around it. Each point will represent a question:

- Who?

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[15] https://asana.com/resources/brainstorming-techniques

- What?

- When?

- Where?

- Why?

- How?

Consider every question and how it might pertain to your idea, such as, "Who will want to buy this product?" or, "When will we need to launch this program?" This will help you explore scenarios or roadblocks you hadn't considered before.

The five whys, a.k.a. why analysis

Similar to starbursting, the five whys brainstorming technique helps you evaluate the strength of an idea. Challenge yourself to ask "why" questions about a topic or idea at least five times and consider what new problems you surface—and, importantly, note how you can address them. To help organise your thoughts, consider using a flowchart or fishbone diagram in hand with this brainstorming technique.

How Now Wow

The How Now Wow brainstorming technique is all about categorising ideas based on how unique they are and how easy they are to implement. Once you have collected several ideas, either individually or from team members, talk through where they fall in the How Now Wow spectrum:

- How ideas are ideas that are original but not executable.

- Now ideas are unoriginal ideas that are easily executable.

- Wow ideas are never-been-pitched before ideas that are also easy to implement.

Obviously, you want as many "Wow" ideas as possible since these are executable but also because they might set you apart from competitors or dispel monotony in a company. To help organize your ideas, consider using a matrix of four squares with difficulty weighted on the Y-axis and innovation on the X-axis.

Gap filling, a.k.a. gap analysis

When you are struggling with how to execute an idea that is where gap filling comes in—to address the obstacles standing in your way. Begin by starting with a statement of where you are and then a statement of where you want to be. For example, "Our company creates smart watches; we want to expand our portfolio to also include fitness trackers."

It is worth writing these out on a large piece of paper or a whiteboard for all of your brainstormers to see, perhaps using a flowchart or mind map to do so. Then, list obstacles that are preventing you from getting where you want to be and work through solutions for each of them. By the end of your brainstorming session, you should have a clearer plan of how to get where you want to be.

SCAMPER

The SCAMPER brainstorming technique encourages brainstormers to look at an idea from different angles and it uses its acronym to inspire each lens:

- **Substitute**: consider what would happen if you swapped one facet of a solution for another.
- **Combine**: consider what would happen if you combined one facet of a solution with another.
- **Adapt**: consider how you could adapt an idea or solution in a new context.
- **Modify**: consider how you can modify an idea to make it higher impact.
- **Put** to another use: consider how else you could leverage your idea.
- **Eliminate**: consider what you could remove from the idea or solution so that it is simplified.
- **Reverse** effective: finally, consider how you could reorganise an idea to make it most effective.

When used in a group brainstorming session, you might want to use templates to track responses or pair the SCAMPER method with a brainwriting session to encourage all brainstormers to evaluate ideas from every angle.

The idea napkin

The idea napkin is essentially a brainstorming template that distils a broad topic into tangible solutions. How it works: Every brainstormer has an "idea napkin" that they commit one idea to, beginning by writing down their idea, as well as an elevator pitch for it.

The idea napkin also includes a column for who the idea is targeting—meaning who you're solving a problem for (customers, teammates, etc.)—and a column noting what problems your idea addresses. Brainstormers can fill out their napkins ahead of or during a brainstorming session, each is expected to present or share them.

Figure storming

Ever heard the phrase, "What would Abe do?" That is pretty much the premise of this brainstorming technique in that brainstormers take on the identity of a famous or prominent figure, whether that is a leader or celebrity, and put themselves in their brain space and how they'd approach an idea. This helps teams look at a topic through a different lens and, in the case of group brainstorms, alleviates any nervousness that brainstormers will put out bad ideas. Because they're not putting out their ideas—they're sharing someone else's. So go on and give yourself a new job title for the day.

Reverse brainstorming

Reverse brainstorming is grounded in a little bit of chaos. It encourages brainstormers to play the role of disruptors by brainstorming problems first and then solutions. To kick off the brainstorming questions, a team leader will usually ask, "How do we cause [insert problem]?"

Once your team has listed the causes, they will have a new and different perspective for coming up with solutions to problems.

6. The qualities of a good mentor

- Having respect and humility for others, their skills, and their freedom to live their own lives is another very important quality. Trusting their mentees and the serving as their advisers are won by mentors who project a feeling of respect and equal dignity in the relationship.

- Being empathetic. Mentors who are effective, empathise with individuals and are able to relate to their mentee's emotions and difficulties despite not sharing the same life experiences.

- The capacity to understand and respect different points of view. Finding someone who will put aside their own opinions and truly listen is considerably more difficult. Mentors can provide help to their mentees by just listening, posing probing questions, and allowing them to independently explore their own ideas with little interference. People are more inclined to ask for and act upon good suggestions when they feel appreciated.

- Openness and flexibility. Effective mentors understand that building relationships takes time and that communication is two-way. They are open to spending the necessary time getting to know their mentees, learning new things that are significant to them (music, styles, ideologies, etc.), and even allowing their relationships with them to alter them.

- The ability to recognise obstacles as well as possibilities and solutions. Effective mentors strike a balance between optimism and realism in regards to the severe and genuine issues that their mentees are dealing with. They are able to sort through a confusing array of problems and suggest reasonable solutions.

- The dedication to a long-term relationship is one of the factors that make a good mentor. Mentors want to be a part of other people's lives, support them through difficult choices, and help them develop into the greatest versions of themselves. For them to stay long enough to make an impact, they must be committed to the mentoring relationship over the long term.

7. Evaluation

Evaluation is critical for mentoring because it promotes greater understanding of effective practices in mentoring relationships and programmes, and contributes in the avoidance of unintended negative effects of interventions. It is important to create a procedure according to which evaluation will be carried out and it is recommended that it does not happen just at the end of the sessions, but at critical points during the mentor-mentee journey.

Regular reviews of the mentoring goals ensures that they are both on track and aligned. It is also important to discuss and assess the originally set goals, whether there have been any changes in the needs of the mentee and the achievements accomplished.

Continuous evaluation may include the following aspects:

- A thorough discussion of the mentoring relationship. Does it work for both individuals? Does the mentee identify any difficulties? If so, which ones?
- An analysis of the originally set purpose. Are the goals set feasible? Is the timeframe suitable? Is the approach of the mentor appropriate for the mentee? What about the tools they are using?
- Are there any adjustments that need to be made? If so, which ones? Do they affect the original objective of the mentoring?
- Is everything going as expected in terms of execution? Does the mentee need more support and if so, in which aspect? Which are the obstacles they face (if any)?
- Reality check: if something is not working, both the mentor and mentee need to discuss and analyse the cause. They should agree on the appropriate corrective actions and validate once more the original plan and adjust it accordingly.

After some time spent working together, it is crucial to conduct a more thorough assessment of the objectives and plan agreed upon. It is equally important to think about whether there are any additional approaches to achieving the main objective.

In the sections that follow, three templates are presented, to facilitate the process of original goal setting, interim assessment(s) and the final evaluation of the relationship.

7.1. Preliminary goals setting

Date	Name
• Describe your primary objective	
• State your specific objectives: a. … b. … c. …	
• How do you intend to work in order to achieve these objectives?	
• Create a time plan for your specific objectives and how they will lead you to your primary objective.	

7.2. Continuous evaluation

Date	Name
Date of previous evaluation	
• Based on your progress until now, do you think your objectives are realistic? Do they need adjustments?	
• In terms of your schedule, do you think it needs to be reconsidered? How?	
• Do you think that your relationship with your mentor is working? Does it help you reach your goals?	
• What has worked well until now?	
• What would you change?	
• Do you think that you need to reconsider your time planning and/ or your objectives? How?	

7.3.   Final evaluation

Date	Name
• Why has your mentoring come to an end?	
• Have you achieved your primary objective(s)?	
• What do you think has helped be successful?	
• What would you say worked well during this period?	
• If you could, what would you change?	
• What is the most beneficial change you identified in yourself as a result of your mentorship?	

• As the result of having a mentor, I've gained the following knowledge, skills, and/or attitude change:
• Something I plan to do or have done more of as the result of the relationship:
• Knowing what you do now, would you choose to do it all over again? Why?

8. Further reading

[D-Think Toolkit](#)

[Mentor Scenarios-Handbook](#)

[Human Centred Design Toolkit](#)

[MENTORING GUIDE A Guide for Mentors](#)

Gray, D., Brown, S., Macanufo, J. (2010). Gamestorming. A Playbook for Innovators, Rulebreakers, and Changemakers. Sebastopol: O'Reilly.