



## Mentor / Buddy Programme; A good practice from primary to high school

## Section 1: Presentation

According to Homer, in the ancient Greek Poem “the Odyssey”, Mentor is the friend of Ulysses who received an important task and responsibility once Ithaca’s king had to leave the island with his army for the Trojan War. After Ulysses’ departure, Mentor was in charge of education and warfare training of the king’s son Telemachus. Without Mentor’s training, Telemachus would not have been able to help his father regain control of his island from the Suitors and live happily ever after, upon his return. Since then, the word “mentor” refers to someone who puts his experience and skills at the disposal of a younger person. A person that became for him/her a friend, a positive role model, a confidant. Being a mentor requires a voluntary perception, an open-minded approach, and a good degree of empathy, in offering their personal time.

In this context, being a mentor means supporting migrant/refugee students in their process to a smoother inclusion at secondary school. The mentor, by being an older student who has enough experience and knowledge of the local school system and local culture, will pass this knowledge on to the mentee. This means that mentors will be supporting mentees not only from an academic but also from an emotional point of view. A buddy refers to a mentor in primary education. “Buddy”, as a term, is proposed for primary school students because of the use of a more every day languages or every day expressions. “Mentor” is proposed for secondary schools because of the maturity of students to fully understand the notion.

Mentor/buddy programmes involve the creation of pairs of students, one older and one younger, which meet at least once every two weeks and discuss the younger students’ social and/or academic difficulties. The process is mediated by a teacher, who is available to consult the mentor/buddy pair.

### **How to set up a mentor/buddy programme?**

If you are interested in setting up a mentoring (secondary education) / buddy (primary education) in your school or in your class, the following steps are proposed:



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**Step 1:** Introduce the mentor/buddy programme to your school.

**Step 2:** Identify the students who would like to become mentors to newly arrived migrant/refugee students. Those could be migrant/refugee students who have gained a sense of belonging in the host country and can help the newly arrived ones. Alternatively, (see Section 6: Tips!) they could be native students.

**Step 3:** Discuss this possibility with the migrant / refugee children that might be interested or the ones you believe might benefit from such a programme and with their parents.

**Step 4:** Match the pairs.

**Step 5:** Monitor that the pairs meet once every two weeks minimum and that both students are satisfied with the process. In case they are not mediate, whether they would like to change pairs or stop the programme altogether.

**Step 6:** Use the following tips to enrich your scope and involve parents. (Section 6: Tips!)

**Step 7:** Evaluate yourself first and the mentors / buddies and mentees second! After the end of the first implementation you should coordinate the evaluation of mentors / buddies and mentees for the further adaptation of these project in your school. Feel free to self-evaluate for the better results and the better adaptation of the project concerning the needs of your school and the real needs of the newly arrived refugee / migrant children. The evaluation will help you and the whole educational professional at the end to decide if you will continue the programme or not, if you will need to add more actions or not and so on.

**Step 8:** Decide whether to establish the mentoring programme at the school, in each original version or with adaptations relevant to your school context.

## Section 2: Resources

To implement this good practice, you will need:

- Human resources such as educational professional staff, migrant/refugee students and their parents, and/or native students.
- Guides and guidelines for mentors and buddies. (see Section 7: Mentor/Buddy Guide)
- Educational material.
- The school building for further use.
- Rooms.
- Computers (if applicable).
- Projectors (if applicable).
- Volunteering.

## Section 3: Duration

The duration can vary, but it is recommended that for the benefit of the mentee student, the mentor/buddy programme last for a minimum of 3 months. Ideally, it should last for the whole academic year.

If this is the first time you set up a mentor/buddy programme in your school, it is recommended that the good practice be implemented in 3 phases for the better results of the programme and for the smoother adoption of it in the school environment:

The 1<sup>st</sup> phase will be a *pilot implementation* in school environment continuously for the entire/whole school year, if the implementation starts at the beginning of the school year. In other cases where the implementation starts during the school year, the programme should last until the end of the school year. The 2<sup>nd</sup> phase will be the *evaluation* of the previous pilot with quantitative/qualitative indicators from involved students, mentors, buddies and mentees.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> phase will be the *adoption* of this good practice in the school environment. Note that, if you indicate that the good practice was not effective for your school, feel free to reform it, change

it, redefine it or reject its adoption. Consequently, the answers to these questions will influence the permanent adoption of the good practice in school for the next years.

#### Section 4: Expected results

By implementing this good practice, you will:

- Create a contact network for the inclusion of migrant/refugee students.
- Promote intercultural exchange.
- Stimulate the learning of the host country language.
- Migrant/refugee students' integration into school and further into society.
- Deepen the students' sense of belonging.
- Succeed in the inclusion of parents from both migrant/refugee and native students.
- Share experiences between students.
- Enhance the performance of migrant and refugee students in primary and secondary schools.
- Strengthen collaboration amongst all members of the school community (school leaders, teachers and non-teaching staff, learners, parents/families).
- Creating a sense of belonging in the school.
- Capacity building increased empathy, understanding and acceptance of difference.
- Raise awareness.

## Section 5: Evaluation

### **How can we adapt this good practice to our context?**

If you are interested in applying this good practice to your school, here is the section where you should think of how it would be adapted, what would you keep/not keep, how will it become more relevant to your school's context etc.

## Section 6: Tips!

1. Mentors can be native students, aiding the exchange of native and migrant/refugee students, enhancing inclusion in schools.
2. Involvement of the family:
  - a. Organise world food/picnic days, where parents can bring a traditional food from their country and everyone can eat together. This requires the use of a room from school or the outside area.
  - b. Organise movie afternoons. Each week or every second week a movie by a different country of origin of the students can be shown. For this activity, a room with a computer and projector (or a TV screen and a video/DVD player) is essential.

## Section 7: Guides to be used (provisional)

### **10 activities that mentor/buddy pairs can do:**

1. Take a walk.
2. Read a book.
3. Visit a museum.
4. Go to a movie together.
5. Play sports together.

6. Tell stories about your childhood.

7. Attend athletic event.

8. Complete a DIY project together.

9. Exercise together.

10. Make a list of things you want to do together in the future.

For further / more activities you can visit the following website <https://www.buddyprogram.org/100-buddy-activities-2016/> from the Buddy Program.

### **General Guidelines for Mentor / Buddy**

- Have the ability to keep a commitment of consistent contact for a minimum of one year or the rest of the implementation.
- Be flexible.
- Be consistent.
- Be loyal during challenging times.
- Be patient.
- Be empathetic.
- Be a non-judgmental person.
- Understanding that being a Mentor / Buddy requires work.
- Have an open-minded approach.
- Have a sense of involvement.
- Trust each other and do not share your discussion with third parties, unless consulting the responsible teacher.

- Respect that the other is different.
- Be open and honest with your mentee.
- Listen the personal history of your mentee.

### **General Guidelines for Mentee**

- Mentor / buddy is a person you can discuss your difficulties and happy moments with and who can help you with your social or academic concerns.
- Trust each other and do not share your discussion with third parties, unless consulting the responsible teacher.
- Feel free to address any concerns that you have to the responsible teachers if you feel that this does not work for you, or that you would like a change of mentor/buddy.

### **Evaluation**

As already mentioned, the evaluation will constitute the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of this good practice in school environment and will be done by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the pilot implementation. Therefore, the results will help you / the educational professional to better adopt this good practice.

Evaluation for teachers / educational professional:

1. Firstly, could you describe your thoughts about this good practice? Did you believe that you learned something new for helping the inclusion of migrants and refugees students in your school?
2. Can you think about the difficulties, the challenges and the problems that you were concern about? How did you deal with them?
3. Did you believe that the effect would be long lasting? / Did you believe that a permanent adaptation would be long lasting? So, did you believe that you would continue to be part of this programme?
4. Finally yet importantly, did you involve parents finally? If yes, in which way? Could you describe in a few words their feelings?

Evaluation for mentors / buddies:

1. Could you describe your thoughts about the mentoring/buddy programme? Did you believe that you learned something new?
2. Did you believe that you had enough information's and space for the implementation of the programme (by the side of your school)? (from 1- not at all to 5 – everything I needed)
3. Can you think about the difficulties, the challenges and the problems that you were concern about? How did you deal with them?
4. Did you believe that the effect would be long lasting? / Did you believe that a permanent adaptation would be long lasting? So, did you believe that you would continue to be part of this programme? Have you any changes or ideas for the further implementation of mentoring/buddy programme? (form 1 to 5)

Evaluation for mentees:

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1. If you participate as a mentee how you will rate the whole practice, included the interaction with your mentor / buddy (from 1 to 5).
2. Did you feel that you were been helped by this mentoring / buddy programme?
3. Did you interested to adopt the role of a mentor / buddy in next years? (form 1 to 5)