



HECSOs
community engagement

D2.4 Mentoring and Instructional Design (guidelines)



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Authorship

Written by Nikitas Kastis

Reviewed by Francesca Lipari, Antonio Fantasia

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The present note serves the consolidation of the driving considerations, which have been reached in the frame of the ERASMUS+ HECSOs Project, for the delineation of an operationalized Mentoring Guide, in order to address the need for relevant guidance to those experienced Civil Society Organization (CSO) Staff and or Tertiary Education Faculty members, so that they become capable to undertake the Role of Mentor and deliver upon the corresponding tasks, eventually offering effective tutoring to the trainees interested in developing the core competences of the job of the Community Engagement Manager (CEM).

Mentoring will be offered in the frame of the CEM training as the corresponding up-skilling is conceived in a way to be preferably provided through work-placed learning programs, within the operations of the CSOs and of the other agencies (stakeholders) mainly active in the field of social work.

We hereby identify a set of recommendations to be taken on board by the HECSOs project's team members and potential stakeholders, in order that they deliver (run or "guide") effective training via activity-based sessions for competence development, to the benefit of those interested in becoming Community Engagement Managers (CEMs). These recommendations aim to serve as guidelines for the work needed in order for someone to sufficiently deliver upon the mentoring tasks of a tutor, in the frame of a state-of-play, on-the-job training program. While this program will adhere to those specifications abiding to a flexible, modular and activity-based course of blended learning, which will include all relevant activities for the learners (trainees) to get gradually engaged into competence-building actions and thus prepare themselves for the job of the CEM.

To this end the present note is further moving to specify certain quality benchmarks for the contextualized delivery of a "prototype" CEM Training Course¹, in order to be validated in this project. The present Mentoring Guide aims to become a concise element of the "Transferability Toolkit", according to the provisions of the HECSOs' PR3.

We have thus foreseen that, for the successful delivery of the CEM Training Course, we need to come up with the following guidelines that comply with the critical aspects for the design of the (training) Modules and eventually for the whole (training) Course. The guidelines will have to

foster, at the same time, the available options for further contextualization, ie. for the needed elaboration at the community (proximal) level of both the structure of each Module – and of the Course – as well as of the accompanying learning materials, including reference readings and other learning progress assessment tools. **More specifically the guidelines should point to certain quality provisions regarding:**

- instructional design principles, to be deployed for the Course and for its parts (the Modules);
- the types of the learning sessions, namely self-learning, tutor-supported learning and other provisions for the delivery of more effective learning;
- the tools for prior-learning assessment as well as for self- and peer- and even external assessment of the learning achievements (and potential accreditation).

In this respect, the instructional design principles imply the following provisions:

1. The core training activities will constitute action-research and project-based sessions in order to facilitate the enhancement of the core competences of the CEM, preferably in collaborative learning (team-based) schemes, while these training activities should be preceded by
2. self-assessment as well as external assessment procedures (tests, etc.) of prior learning – assessing the level of acquisition of the corresponding competences before joining the course –, and they should also
3. be accompanied by self- and peer- assessment of the learning achievements as well as by accreditation procedures, wherever relevant for those would-be Community Engagement Managers who are completing the course and in need such accreditation.
4. The above-mentioned training activities would better be initiated and supported by the gradual engagement of the members of the local communities, through dialogue sessions related to community inspired threads of looking for solutions to the communities' problems and facilitated by webinars as well as f2f seminars and workshops.

¹ With reference to the HECSOs Project PR2/II (Courseware Framework)

**The afore-mentioned provisions should comply to a modular Program/
Course structure which should comprise:**

1. a number of Modules, with every Module being identified by its relevance to a cluster/group of the competences to be addressed, according to the adopted HECSOs Project CME “Competence Framework” and further specified by a set of measurable learning objectives and (optionally) “learning outcomes” (as proxies of the specific competences);
2. with every Module being preferably coupled with prior learning assessment sessions, to measure both prior learning levels and the learning achievements with the completion of each Module and/or with the completion of pre-identified groups of Modules or even with the completion of the Course as a whole;
3. introductory learning materials, usually in the form of small videos, to trigger the interest of the participants, together with other media files (animation with sound, etc.) as well as more traditional but short, yet inspiring thematic presentations (using ppt files);
4. series of both group and individual reflection sessions² with the mentor’ s support, via f2f and online workshops/seminars;
5. project-based sessions, with activities to be run in order to facilitate the enhancement of the corresponding competences, where participants (trainees) would work/study individually and in groups (team work); and, finally,
6. closing assessment rounds, with add-on accreditation procedures, whenever requested to serve professional accreditation purposes.

As it has already been mentioned, the relevant assessment tools³ (“tests”) could be deployed both for the prior learning and for the closing assessment rounds. The tools would have to assess the relative progress for each participant in terms of achieving the corresponding learning objectives – in line with already mature practice for relevant motivation schemes to ensure learning engagement.

² These sessions correspond to those parts of the Course which are prone to significant customization, allowing the local community providers increasing flexibility to define the relevance and thus adapt these sessions to the extend considered necessary.

³ As being prescribed in the HECSOs Project “Competence Framework” (PR2/I).

The training/learning materials would better become available per Module, as reference content – in the occasionally suitable media types and formats –, in order to facilitate the introductory sessions and, further on, when the trainees are assigned to groups, with mentors providing guidance and facilitating the reflections, arranging for f2f workshops/seminars and webinars, so that

- practicing projects, corresponding to real life problems are being assigned to the groups, while at the same time
- the participants’ tasks to address the identified problems (priorities) at the community level and run the fit-to-purpose projects will be specified in order to facilitate the effort to achieve the corresponding learning objectives (ie. the competences to be developed).

At this point, we need to prescribe those pedagogical and organizational aspects of the Training Course for the CEMs, which should be considered as quality benchmarks (and eventually “franchising elements”) of the HECSOs Training Course. Thus, serving a homogeneous approach to offer training opportunities at the community level and across Europe, for those interested to enhance their capacity to deliver in the frame of community engagement actions. In line with the scope and the potential impact, we have considered that

- a reasonable (maximum) period for anyone interested in becoming CEM, by allocating relevant effort and time for her/his capacity building, should not exceed the time of three to four (3/4) months;
- during which, the participant should be asked to allocate no more than 6/8 hours per week for any type of engagement with the various sessions and the team and individual work required.

The Training Programs of this genre could not usually exceed the period of 16 weeks, considered to be sufficient in terms of period available to develop a minimum competency level for the job of the CEM, even for those that are entering the Course with minimum prior learning and corresponding experience. Further pedagogical (structural) aspects include the following provisions:

- Each Module should correspond to one or two clusters (groups) of competences (“Competence Areas” as with the terminology in the HECSOs “Competence Framework” – see Matrix in Table II) and,
- the Course should be consisted of a maximum number of 2 to 3 Modules, addressing a total number of the six Competence Areas, while
- the duration of each Module should not exceed the period of 4 weeks, also considering that each participant will have to allocate some 3–4 hours on a weekly basis, for any sort of engagement with the sessions and other forms of work required for the completion of the Module – including any prior learning and summative learning assessment sessions.

It is further anticipated that a significant number of participants, having run through prior-learning assessment sessions or even having joined any of the Modules offered on their own judgment, will be asked to enhance their other types of Competences (Competence Areas), as they have been grouped under the domains for the Emotional Intelligence capacity building (see at Table II in the “Competence Framework Guide”), as well as for the enhancement of the participants’ digital competencies (compatible to the DigiComp European de-facto standard – see at Table I in the “Competence Framework Guide”). These competences will be addressed by following the same pedagogical and organizational pattern, through

- one (1) or maximum two (2) Modules, to address the four (4) Competence Areas, and
- two (2) or maximum three (3) Modules to address the five (5) Competence Areas, asking the participants to allocate 2 hours every week to relevant sessions and activities, for a maximum period of twelve (12) weeks.

The afore-mentioned instructional design of the Training Course for the CEM implies that having the participants allocating 6–8 hours per week, it would be feasible to join more than one Modules, in parallel, by following those addressing the core Competence Areas, in successive weeks, while enhancing their emotional intelligence capacity, and then, their enabling digital competences.

We expect that each Module will be accompanied by a “library” of reading materials (see the “HECSOs’ Cases”) and thematic discussion and elaboration threads, tests with both closed and open questions as well as with prototype projects (action research examples), to inspire the local communities’ innovation potential. We also foresee that, during the projects’ work (“activities”), whichever additional supporting materials used or even produced out of the trainees’ activities and the reports, would in most of the cases be in the language where the piloting and potential mainstreaming will take place. And in this respect and in order to facilitate the transferability of as much resources as possible, the HECSOs project should set up an efficient mechanism to run periodically filtering of the “local” resources, deserving to be translated to English (as the “lingua franca”).

The **CEM Course Mentors** will be invited to contextualize the structure of the **HECSOs Training Course**, according to the prescriptions which have been specified in the previous paragraphs. Each HECSOs Mentor will then be assigned with groups of trainees to guide them through their mainly work-placed training activities, in the period of the weeks allocated for the running of the Course. **HECSOs Mentors** will be trained in annual cycles of professional competence development, thus re-freshing their guidance skills. In this way both **CSOs and Higher Education institutions will facilitate their capacity building** so that to deliver successful community engagement practice meeting community priorities in the local societies.