



Erasmus+

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## **MENTEE – Mentoring, Networking and Training for European Entrepreneurs**

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### **Competence Framework for key Mentoring Competences**

This report has been drafted by Knowl Social Enterprise with the support of the MENTEE project Consortium for the purposes of the MENTEE project: [mentee-project.eu](http://mentee-project.eu)

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## Executive Summary

This report highlights goals, methodologies and outcomes of the **2<sup>nd</sup> Intellectual Output** of the **MENTEE project**.

The main objective of Intellectual Output 2 was to list and prioritise the key competences a mentor should possess in order to successfully support new and aspiring entrepreneurs. The activities that were implemented by the MENTEE Consortium in order to collect the information that led to the design of the “Competence framework for key mentoring competences” are presented and extensively analysed in the following sections.

Intellectual Output 2 (IO2) goals and activities are significantly connected to Intellectual Output 1 (IO1). Taking into account the conformity of scope and tasks that were to be carried out throughout IO1 and IO2 (both final outputs are the competence frameworks for key mentoring and entrepreneurship competences), the partnership agreed to carry out and coordinate activities following a common methodological approach. For this purpose, IO1 and IO2 leaders have worked in close cooperation to jointly define methodological approaches, templates, guidelines, protocols and reports for the foreseen activities.

The IO2 implemented activities were structured in to three (3) phases:

### **PHASE 1: Qualitative interviews** (see section 3)

The purpose of this activity was to explore key mentoring competences (including knowledge, skills, attitudes and characteristics) needed to be a successful entrepreneurship mentor, by exploiting the knowledge and experience of experienced mentors. The qualitative survey was structured taking into consideration the relevant elements derived from good practices highlighted in the desk research conducted within the frame of IO1.

As foreseen in the project, 5 interviews were conducted at national level by each country participating in the activity, analysed and reported upon, following a specially designed qualitative semi-structured questionnaire, consisting of open-ended questions aimed at collecting qualitative aspects and insights on needed mentoring competences.

Knowl with the support of the Consortium analysed the findings of the interviews and identified the key knowledge, skills, attitudes, characteristics and competences that were used as the main input for the design of the next activity, the quantitative questionnaire of phase 2.

Indicatively, some of the elements of successful entrepreneurship mentoring that were highlighted in the collected interview reports include: Empathy, active listening, honesty and openness, patience, ability to build trustful relationships, communication skills and problem solving.

### **PHASE 2: Online Qualitative Questionnaire** (see section 5)

The purpose of the online quantitative questionnaires was to capture views on the key competences (knowledge-skills-attitudes) that were identified within the frame of the previously conducted qualitative interviews.

The online quantitative questionnaire has been the last part of planned pathway to structure a framework of competences for entrepreneurs. The quantitative analysis confirmed or complemented the input provided from the experienced mentors interviewed in the previous phase. The findings of this activity were analysed and used to develop the “Competence Framework for key Mentoring Competences”.

The survey was conducted among 112 experienced mentors from diverse educational backgrounds, age groups and years of mentoring experience. Indicatively, the majority of respondents (63,4%) held a master's degree or equivalent, 47% have mentoring experience of between 2 and 5 years, while 67% have experience in mentoring aspiring entrepreneurs.

**PHASE 3: Competence Framework of key Mentoring Competences** (see section 4)

The final output of IO2, the "Competence Framework for key Mentoring Competences", resulted from the two (2) preparatory activities presented above.

Along with the "Competence Framework for key Entrepreneurship Competences" that has been developed in separate but complementary activities, this framework will be the key reference to adapt, update and further develop a blended learning model, based on the "Mentoring Circles™" product. Moreover, these "inventories" will be a good base for VET operators willing to focus their training on entrepreneurship with a more practical approach, and also for the entrepreneurs to understand how and where to concentrate their learning efforts.

## 1. Introduction to MENTEE project

Europe needs more enterprises. For over a decade the EC has been championing measures to create a more business-friendly environment to promote economic growth through entrepreneurship. Think Small First<sup>1</sup> and the Small Business Act<sup>2</sup> sum up the strategy of the EC on entrepreneurship promotion: "Create an environment in which entrepreneurs can thrive and entrepreneurship is rewarded ... to care for future entrepreneurs... by fostering entrepreneurial interest and talent, particularly among new people".

The Green paper on entrepreneurship<sup>3</sup> states that the main challenge for the EU is "to boost the Union's level of entrepreneurship, (by) adopting the most appropriate approach for producing more entrepreneurs". Furthermore, the current Action Plan for Promoting Entrepreneurship<sup>4</sup> writes: "the EU is not fully exploiting its entrepreneurial potential. It is failing to encourage enough people to become entrepreneurs" (European Commission).

Europe has a problem with creating new businesses. According to the 2013 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor<sup>5</sup>, early-stage entrepreneurs made up 2.3% of Italy's adult population, 4.2% of Germany's and 5.8% of France's. European countries are below the USA's 7.6%, China's 14% and Brazil's 17%. As showed by stats from partner countries, in Europe of every 10 start-ups born 7 did not survive after the first year. New entrepreneurs and start-ups are the groups with the highest rate of failure. The reason for this is the lack of entrepreneurial experience rather than the weakness of ideas or lack of funds.

Current statistics show that the best approach to develop a business idea is to shadow experienced entrepreneurs gaining practical entrepreneurial skills. Reaching out to would-be entrepreneurs to share information about starting a business, promoting role models and providing mentoring can be just as important as making credit available and cutting red tape, especially when it comes to encouraging new people to seize fresh business opportunities.

70% of mentored small businesses survive 5 years or more, which is double the number for non-mentored firms. The Small Business Survey 2013<sup>6</sup> showed that 21% of businesses that sought external advice were more likely to have grown their workforce. The Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs (EYE)<sup>7</sup> programme connects new and experienced entrepreneurs: New Entrepreneurs can develop their business know-how and Host Entrepreneurs share their wisdom on overcoming obstacles and developing a sound company. However, what happens when the benefit of the EYE relationship is over? From over 3,600 New Entrepreneurs taking part in EYE<sup>7</sup>, just 30% are able to realize a business idea at the end of the project, of

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<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/small-business-act/think-small-first/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/small-business-act/think-small-first/index_en.htm)

<sup>2</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2008:0394:FIN:EN:PDF>

<sup>3</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/invest-in-research/pdf/download\\_en/entrepreneurship\\_europe.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/invest-in-research/pdf/download_en/entrepreneurship_europe.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0795:FIN:EN:PDF>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.gemConsortium.org/docs/3106/gem-2013-global-report>

<sup>6</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/finance/data/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/finance/data/index_en.htm)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu>



these 30% the 80% which succeed do so because the Host Entrepreneurs keep on shadowing them as a mentor and supporter.

MENTEE aims to ensure a mentoring process for all entrepreneurs, who are involved in EYE (Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs) programme after the end of their relationship, applying the adopted Mentoring Circles™ methodology and connecting them through the web, via a highly interactive networking and learning platform, for future opportunities.

MENTEE aims to support aspiring and new entrepreneurs across Europe, providing them with practical entrepreneurial experiences and know-how, together with entrepreneurial models to follow, inspiration and informal competences that could be ensured by the constant connection created with mentors/experienced entrepreneurs. The project aims at creating a network where new entrepreneurs could find, from similar experiences, reliable partners for their business to grow stronger, together with the most up-to-date information and opportunities for start-ups around Europe and further learning experiences. Through the project's portal, the MENTEE aims to provide all potential entrepreneurs with a supportive community of other entrepreneurs (potential, recent, experienced) who can provide new ideas and advice together with a business platform and marketplace. Additionally, the Consortium will encourage peer interaction, helping users to become entrepreneurs or strengthen their current activities through mutual support.

## 2. IO2: Competence framework for key mentoring competences

### Coordinating Partner:

Knowl Social Enterprise for Education & Lifelong Learning

### Participating organisations:

- INnCREASE Sp z o.o. (Poland)
- Quality Programme (Italy)
- Mentortec Servicos De Apoio A Projectos Tecnologicos SA (Portugal)
- Inova Consultancy Ltd (United Kingdom)

### Target groups:

- Experienced mentors
- Experienced entrepreneurs acting as mentors

Intellectual Output 2 purpose was to list and prioritise the key competences a mentor should possess in order to successfully support new and aspiring entrepreneurs. The activities that were implemented by the MENTEE Consortium in order to collect the information that lead to the design of the “Competence framework for key mentoring competences” are briefly presented below and extensively analysed in the following sections.

### 2.1 IO2 main activities

The activities implemented to support the “Competence framework for key mentoring competences” design are:

#### 1. Qualitative Interviews

The purpose of this activity was to explore key competences needed for mentors to support new entrepreneurs, by exploiting the knowledge and experience of experts in entrepreneurship training.

As foreseen in the project proposal, 5 interviews were conducted at national level by each country participating in the activity, with the exception of United Kingdom, that provided the Consortium with the findings of 8 interviews. Knowl, with the support of the Consortium had the opportunity to analyse the findings of the 28 interviews and identify the key knowledge, skills, attitudes, characteristics and competences that were used as the main input for the design of the next activity, the quantitative questionnaire.

#### 2. Online Quantitative Questionnaire

The purpose of this activity was to capture views on key competences (knowledge-skills-attitudes) required for successful entrepreneurship mentors.

The Consortium used as the main input for the design of the questionnaires the identified from the previously conducted interviews key mentoring competences

#### 3. Competence Framework for key entrepreneurship competences

This is the final output resulting from the two (2) preparatory activities presented above.

This framework, along with the "Competence Framework for key entrepreneurial competences" that has been developed in separate but complementary activities, will be the key references to adapt, update and further develop a blended learning model, based on the "Mentoring Circles™" product. Moreover, these "inventories" will be a good base for VET operators willing to focus their training on entrepreneurship with a more practical approach, and also for the entrepreneurs to understand how and where to concentrate their learning efforts.

The implemented actions within these activities also aimed at laying the foundation for the further work of the project by:

- Analysing in detail the structure and content of the products to be transferred.
- Investigating its potential relation and integration to EU28 best practices on mentoring new entrepreneurs.
- Developing active strategies to integrate transferred products to mentoring strategies and programmes of participating countries.
- Analysing specific needs, contexts and conditions to apply the mentoring process at the end of the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme.
- Giving all project staff an induction to the products.
- Involving other Intermediate Organisations of the EYE programme and other VET bodies/academic institution/business associations/public bodies interested in the topic of start-up support/entrepreneurship education for the following WPs of the project (training and application of mentoring tools) and for the exploitation of results.



### 3. Qualitative Interviews

For the purpose of developing a “Competence framework for key mentoring competences”, the Consortium of the MENTEE project was interested in identifying those key mentoring competences that are necessary for successful entrepreneurial support and guidance practices. To this end five (5) qualitative interviews per participating country (Greece, Portugal, Italy, United Kingdom and Poland) were conducted, analysed and reported upon, following a specially designed qualitative semi-structured questionnaire, consisting of open-ended questions, to collect qualitative aspects and insights on needed mentoring competences.

The findings of these interviews served as a basis for the quantitative survey that followed, sent to more than thousand (1000) operators across the Consortium countries, in order to collect data on key mentoring competences across a wide range of actors and stakeholders in the field. Furthermore, main aspects of the qualitative survey will be communicated through dissemination activities carried out throughout the project.

At the end of the interviews performed on relevant actors of the entrepreneurial/business/education world, the partnership composed a list of mentoring competences that are considered as key elements of a mentoring approach and relationship. The collected data were analysed and used to develop a “Competence framework for key mentoring competences”.

The main purpose of the conducted interviews is to identify the mentor's competence profile (including knowledge, skills, attitudes and experience), those competences, that are considered important for a successful entrepreneurship mentor. For the analysis of the interviews and the identification of usable data contained therein, each interviewer composed a summary of the responses per question for all the interviews collectively, highlighting key information/data according to the purposes of this activity. For each question most of the interviewers also noted possible comments, observations and additional questions and answers that resulted during the interviews. A template for the interviews reports had been handed electronically to the partners participating in this activity, filled and sent to knowl (the leading partner of the activity) in English.

The qualitative surveys/interviews consisted of thirteen (13) open questions. However, in order to process the provided information it has been deemed helpful to collect some basic demographic and background information as well.

Following the expert's profile, the interview had been structured in four (4) parts:

- A) Part A – Getting to know the mentor should be considered as a “warm-up” to allow the interviewee to share some personal experience and knowledge, raise the awareness of the issue of mentoring (in opposition to other forms of guidance, such as coaching / consulting) and share some practical experience of past or current mentoring relationships. The answers will help to put the following question in a greater context.
- B) Part B - Mentor's Skills and Competences focused more on the overall skills and competences that a mentor ideally should own, the mentor's personality, and on understanding to what extent training can someone help to become a (better) mentor.

C) Part C – The Mentoring Relationship will distinguish between the key elements of a mentoring relationship and discuss what specific skills and competences are needed for each of them.

D) Part D – Closing serves to finish the interview and allow the expert to freely share additional information related to the topic.

Knowl also provided the interviewers with an interview protocol that extended to the procedural level of interviewing and included instructions for the interviewers to prepare, collect informed consent, and implement the interviews by staying focused on the information needed throughout the interview process.

The final guidelines for the interview protocol and conduction can be found in ANNEX 1

### 3.1 National Outcomes

All the interviewees that took part in this activity provided the Consortium with very interesting and useful information for the overall project implementation. For the purpose of staying within the scope of this activity and for keeping the report consistent and efficient, in this section we will only be highlighting the information that was directly relevant with the implementation of the “Competence framework for key mentoring competences”; That is, the skills, attitudes and competences of a successful entrepreneurship mentor.

Following are listed the main findings of all interviews per country.

#### United Kingdom

| Method of interview | Organisation/Company                                  | Economic sector         | Interviewee's job title      | Interviewee's Qualification/ Level of Education |
|---------------------|---|-------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| Online              | Public Hospital of Monfalcone (Italy)                 | Healthcare              | Nurses Manager               | Master of Science                               |
| Phone               | London School of Economics Student Union              | Education               | Engagement Coordinator       | Master of Science                               |
| Face to face        | National Health Service (NHS)                         | Healthcare              | Community Nurse              | Post-Graduate Diploma                           |
| Phone               | City Oberhausen                                       | Law Enforcement         | Probation Officer            | Higher  |
| Phone               | Städtische Gesamtschule Heiligenhaus                  | Education               | Teacher                      | Master of Science                               |
| Online              | Teaching Leaders                                      | Non-profit/third sector | Programme Experience Manager | Master of Science                               |
| Electronic          | Public Primary School of Ronchi dei Legionari (Italy) | Education               | Teacher                      | Higher  |

|       |                             |           |                              |                   |
|-------|-----------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Phone | Sheffield Hallam University | Education | Freelance Associate Lecturer | Master of Science |
|-------|-----------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|-------------------|

### Findings

| Competences   | Skills   | Attitudes/Characteristics  |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empathy</li> <li>• Methodological competences</li> <li>• Pedagogical competences</li> <li>• Professionalism</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening skills</li> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Organisation skills</li> <li>• Management skills</li> <li>• Problem solving</li> <li>• Analytical thinking</li> <li>• Observation skills</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creativity</li> <li>• Honesty</li> <li>• Authenticity</li> <li>• Trustworthiness</li> <li>• Self-confidence</li> <li>• Respectfulness</li> <li>• Charisma</li> <li>• Patience</li> <li>• Sense of humor</li> <li>• Openness</li> <li>• Knowledge sharing willingness</li> </ul> |

### Conclusions

The questions were generally understood by the respondents, whose answers together give an in-depth overview of the skills and competences a mentor should have to perform their role in the most successful way.

The most important skills that have been individuated are communication and listening abilities with the highlighted competences being the capability of being empathic, understanding, open and professional.

### Portugal

| Method of interview | Organisation/Company | Economic sector      | Interviewee's job title                                      | Interviewee's Qualification/Level of Education |
|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--|--|
| Face to face        | Index Talent         | Investment           | Partner  | Master of Science                              |
| Face to face        | INOVA+               | Consulting           | Scientific Officer   | Master of Science                              |
| Face to face        | ANJE                 | Business Development | Executive Director of the Entrepreneurship & Innovation Unit | Master of Science                              |
| Face to face        | Index Talent         | Investment           | CEO  | Master of Science                              |
| Face to face        | Cria & Inova         | Services             | Project Manager  | Higher   |

### Findings

| Competences   | Skills   | Attitudes/Characteristics   |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be emphatic</li> <li>• Ability to and inspire to trust</li> <li>• Be able to adopt the mentee perspective in order to guide him on the difficulties</li> <li>• Be able to communicate in a persuasive way</li> <li>• Be able to be committed in a mentoring relation</li> <li>• Be able to attend to the non-verbal communication</li> <li>• Be able to establish a trustful relationship; Capacity to establish, maintain and manage a strategic network</li> <li>• Capacity to identify and suggest new ways of doing “things”</li> <li>• Capacity to understand the mentees’ ideas, questions and company</li> <li>• Capacity to know and understand training programmes that could be useful to the mentee</li> <li>• Ability to lead the entrepreneur to insight</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training skills</li> <li>• Active listening</li> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Capacity to share knowledge and experiences</li> <li>• Capacity to identify entrepreneurs’ needs</li> <li>• Capacity to identify business opportunities</li> <li>• Capacity to leverage the skills of the entrepreneurs</li> <li>• Processes management skills;</li> <li>• Ability to monitoring business growth/development</li> <li>• Ability to focus on results and process</li> <li>• Entrepreneurial skills</li> <li>• Ability to held market research and identify funding</li> <li>• Ability to analyze the potentialities and challenges of the idea/company of the mentee;</li> <li>• Provide opinions arguing properly</li> <li>• Ability to focus on the entrepreneurs’ idea/business</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability of initiative</li> <li>• Invest and participate in lifelong training initiatives/courses</li> <li>• Be able to establish and maintain harmonious relations</li> <li>• Be able to be honest and truthful with the entrepreneur</li> <li>• Be able to focus on the solutions and not on the problems</li> <li>• Guide the entrepreneurs to results,</li> <li>• Extroverted personality</li> <li>• Optimism;</li> <li>• Motivation/desire to share knowledge and competences with newer entrepreneurs</li> <li>• Be able to be altruism</li> <li>• Be able to be patient</li> <li>• Be able to think fast</li> <li>• Be able to have positive attitude</li> </ul> |

## Conclusions

Regarding the mentor's profile is important to highlighted in the perspective of the most part of interviewees the technical training (e.g. specific training which allow to the mentor provide guidance in a specific field, such as management), entrepreneurial experience and personal features are more relevant for a mentoring relationship than theoretical knowledge about mentoring. The experience of the mentor was mentioned several times during the interviews by all mentors. In fact, the as an entrepreneur, in the business economic sector were identified as being quite important. As personal features and referring only the most mentioned, mentors identified the altruism and the will and desire of sharing knowledge and experiences as the most relevant personal traits of a mentor.

### Mentoring Relationship (as a process)

None of mentors follows a specific or structures practice / approach in their mentoring relationships. In fact, they all showed a preference for establishing and maintaining a more spontaneous open mentoring relationship. This is mostly related to the fact of the mentoring be related to the personal and professional development of the entrepreneurs, as well as his/her availability and capacity to incorporate practices, knowledge and experiences. Thus, the mentoring relationship must be managed according to the stage and growth process of the business idea/company and also with the entrepreneurs needs availability, investment and interest. Nevertheless, mentors identified some questions/issues that should be negotiated and established between mentor and mentee, since the very beginning of the relation:

- The terms of the mentoring relationship must be defined and clear to both parts;
- The roles of mentor and mentee must be clear to both parts;
- Mentor and mentee must share general objectives related to their relationship;
- The benefits of the mentoring relationship to mentor and mentee must be also clear.

By defining these issues the mentor will be able to:

- Establish and maintain a clear and trustful relation with the mentee;
- Act and deal with a potential conflict in a proper way.

#### Mentor's training needs

Some mentors expressed, during the interview, the interest and need to get involved and participate in a specific training to increase their knowledge, improve their skills and competences about mentoring, reinforcing their capacity to be a successful mentor. At this level, were identified as mentor's training needs the following ones:

- Management platforms to support and monitoring the growth of entrepreneurs' ideas/business:
  - There are some entrepreneurial platforms for sharing materials/best practices, which also promote the contact and interaction between mentors, entrepreneurs and mentors-entrepreneurs. Nonetheless, it is also important to provide platforms which allow to mentors monitor and follow the maturation, growth and evolution of the entrepreneurs' idea/business.
- Strategies to create and maintain regular contact and mentoring relationships through a platform;
- Design and development of tools and instruments to support mentoring relationships;
- Communication skills and motivation.

### Poland

| Method of interview | Organisation/Company                 | Economic sector | Interviewee's job title | Interviewee's Qualification/Level of Education |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|--|
| Face to face        | Mariusz Orzelski                     | Private         | CEO                     | Higher   |
| Face to face        | Vital Voices                         | Sector prywatny | Mentor                  | Higher   |
| Face to face        | Coaching Balance<br>Joanna Jagielska | Private         | CEO                     | Master of Science                              |
| Face to face        | Europejskie                          | Private         | CEO                     | Master of                                      |

|              |   |         |        |                      |
|--------------|---|---------|--------|----------------------|
|              | Stowarzyszenie Mentorek<br>Mentoring Bez Granic |         |        | Science              |
| Face to face | Youth Business                                  | Private | Mentor | Master of<br>Science |

## Findings

| Competences  | Skills   | Attitudes/Characteristics   |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distance oneself</li> <li>Empathy (the mentor should feel oneself into the mentees role)</li> <li>Self-criticism</li> <li>building an open atmosphere</li> <li>focus on mentee's problem</li> <li>Clarity of messages</li> <li>earn mentee's respect and trust</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active-listening skills</li> <li>Providing a calm environment in terms of time</li> <li>Easiness in sharing the experience and knowledge</li> <li>Psychoanalysis skills</li> <li>Business skills</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outgoing</li> <li>Open</li> <li>Honesty</li> <li>Calmness</li> <li>Respect for the other</li> <li>Humility</li> <li>Patience</li> <li>Modesty</li> </ul> |

## Conclusions

- In the field of mentoring inspirations it is possible to mention two general patterns: 1) the mentor received great support at some point of career, either from his/her mentor at the workplace; or the mentor participated in a mentoring programme and was inspired by that; 2) the mentor decided to become one as a path of professional development.
- The mentors define mentoring as: a relationship of two people where one is professionally experienced (mentor) and the other is not (mentee); and where the mentor's role is to show the directions for action to the mentee.
- Most of the mentors emphasized the importance of adapting to mentee's expectations.
- Most of the mentors prefer more spontaneous open mentoring relationship.
- All mentors obtained higher education, whereas less than half of them obtained relevant education and most of them have been successful in business before.
- Most of them expressed interest in further training as mentors and listed the following skills they want to develop:
  - Active-listening skills (being a good listener in order to focus more on the mentee's problems and not business advisory);
  - Theoretical background (for those mentors that did not receive education connected with mentoring);
  - Business skills and experience (for those mentors that specialize in mentoring and do not have a large business experience);

7. Mentors can be divided into two groups according to the sphere of mentee's private problems: 1) mentors believe that sharing the personal problems and performing a psychological therapy is "the icebreaker"; 2) mentors touch the private sphere only when the mentee agrees and signalizes the need;
8. These mentors that experienced conflicts in their mentoring relationships emphasize that they never faced large scale conflicts with their mentees. The small-scale conflicts that they meet usually apply to the creation or change of goals, and this is mostly describe as a positive/creative process (by the mentors).
9. Mentors tend to gain most satisfaction when their mentees develop themselves and become successful with their business.

## Italy

| Method of interview | Organisation/Company   | Economic sector                  | Interviewee's job title | Interviewee's Qualification/Level of Education |
|---------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Online              | Basilicata Innovazione | Consultancy                      | Mentor                  | Master of Science                              |
| Online              | Basilicata Innovazione | Consultancy                      | Incubator Expert        | Degree   |
| Face to Face        | Consorzio Materahub    | Creative and Cultural Industries | Vice-President          | Degree   |
| Online              | Casa Netural           | Social Economy                   | President               | Master of Science                              |
| Online              | Atena Studio           | Manager                          | Architecture            | Master of Science                              |

## Findings

| Competences   | Skills   | Attitudes/Characteristics  |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empathy</li> <li>• Capacity to find immediately the nature of the problem, where the problem is coming from</li> <li>• Understanding verbal and non-verbal communication</li> <li>• Proactivity</li> <li>• Capacity to play the role of the counterpart</li> <li>• Stimulate strong points and reduce the impact of weaknesses</li> <li>• Flexibility</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening skills (active listening)</li> <li>• Communication skills and communication flow management</li> <li>• Role switching</li> <li>• Networking and capacity to activate networks</li> <li>• Objectives and goals setting</li> <li>• Problem solving</li> <li>• Business planning</li> <li>• Needs analysis</li> <li>• Entrepreneurial skills</li> <li>• Relationship management</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patience</li> <li>• Possitivity</li> <li>• Trustworthiness</li> <li>• Inspiring profiles (or charisma)</li> <li>• Respect</li> <li>• Openness to criticism</li> <li>• Fairness</li> <li>• Confidence</li> <li>• Humanity and Altruism</li> <li>• Honesty</li> </ul> |

## Conclusions

Mentors have been more open to this interview than entrepreneurs, furthermore when we presented the project all mentors gave their availability to be involved in the following steps. Some of them, being already involved in Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs, approved project choice to give a continuation to the relationship established by that program on the platform that will result from MENTEE.

The interviewed mentors did not have a formal training on “how to be mentors” so their answer were more useful to understand how they were seeing the role rather than collecting inputs for a training path based on case studies.

## Greece

| Method of interview | Organisation/Company                   | Economic sector   | Interviewee's job title | Interviewee's Qualification/Level of Education |
|---------------------|--|-------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Face to Face        | Militos                                | Consulting        | President               | Masters of Science                             |
| Face to Face        | Costwise                               | Consulting        | General Director        | Masters of Science                             |
| Face to Face        | Greek Association of New Entrepreneurs | Association       | President               | Masters of Science                             |
| Face to Face        | Itec                                   | Training Services | Managing Director       | Masters of Science                             |
| Face to Face        | WOMEN ON TOP                           | Mentoring Network | Journalist - Mentor     | Masters of Science                             |

## Findings

| Competences   | Skills   | Attitudes/Characteristics  |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of filters (beliefs / feelings / values / experiences) through which mentee interprets reality</li> <li>• Differentiation of the experience of Mentor and Mentee.</li> <li>• Setting Boundaries</li> <li>• Be able to build a transparent relationship/set limits</li> <li>• Be able to raise pointed questions when he/she needs to avoid giving answers</li> <li>• Building a trusting</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empathy</li> <li>• Active Listening</li> <li>• Pointed questions</li> <li>• Problem Solving</li> <li>• Effective Communication</li> <li>• Assessment of different opportunities / risks</li> <li>• Narration/storytelling</li> <li>• Reframing skills</li> <li>• Understanding body Language</li> <li>• Strategic Planning</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creativity</li> <li>• Humor</li> <li>• Imagination</li> <li>• Humility</li> <li>• Selflessness</li> <li>• Honesty</li> <li>• Patience</li> <li>• Openness</li> <li>• Optimism</li> <li>• Maturity</li> <li>• Confidence</li> <li>• Excitement for the achievements of the mentee</li> <li>• Authenticity</li> </ul> |



relationship

- To gain the attention and interest of the mentee
- Self-observation
- Self-discipline
- Building a trusting relationship

## Conclusions

Mentoring is an exchange of experience and knowledge between people from the same professional field. A mentor has more experience than the mentee, in level of particular technical knowledge, not in age. He illuminates signs that are cloudy for the mentee.

### Relationship Characteristics:

- Open relationship of trust which is built mainly on a voluntary basis and with greater freedom than other practices, such as coaching and consulting. It is a relationship that is not described in a contract and does not require client. Under no circumstances, however, it is just a free service.
- It evolves in time, and it lasts, without being verbose. The mentor can become a friend too.
- Bidirectional and open to surprises and mutual benefits that both members of the process can gain. In the beginning it is very clear, who asks for guidance and who offers it, but it is actually from the beginning a two-way relationship. Mentor conveys experiences, discusses them and simultaneously improves his/her ability of thinking and communicating effectively, as per the mentee's needs, as he/she also becomes a listener of himself and receiver of thoughts and queries of the mentee. Mentor gains by the freshness of the other person too, refreshing and enriching his personal perspective on things. He is powered by new images and stimuli which help him on a personal level too.

### Starting point - Target – Standpoint

- It is specific the context of the need expressed by the Mentee, not so much the need itself (e.g. start-up an entrepreneurial effort, current conditions in personal life, etc.). Must be specific and might be different according to the area of expertise.
- Most comprehensive perspective of things, beyond the problems that mentee identifies. He comes to show you the forest, touches personal issues, focusing on the whole ecosystem. Someone can be a mentor in marketing but is able to offer assistance in a new topic, if arises, since he has the experience.
- It is a general guidance on where he stands as an individual, in society, in family, in business (e.g. Strategic guidance, how he will exploit other advantages).

### Methodology - Process:

- Do not give the solution but ground Mentee in the tools and skills that will lead to a solution. "Not giving a man a fish but teaching him how to fish".
- No teaching. Give the information and the mentee decides whether it matches his beliefs and/or his experience.

### Structure of the relationship

- Depending on the circumstances, it is more or less structured, considering what facilitates the needs of the mentee. Ideas should not be imposed. Strict style should not be adopted, because this can spoil the magic of the relationship. Things should remain in an informal level.
- Until trust is built, some structural characteristics must be set. These will clarify the relationship, not necessarily in a contract, in order to ensure its continuity. Especially in the beginning of the relationship, when there isn't a strong sense of commitment to the subject of the relationship, always by choice and not by obligation.

The structural characteristics of the relationship which is good to clarify, especially at the beginning, are:

- Periodicity / frequency of meetings
  - Means of communication - meeting room (online, in writing, face to face)
  - Next steps
  - To clarify, as far as possible, what the mentee wants to achieve.
- Throughout the relationship, it's good to have a general plan, an agenda with some basic program and specific duration.
  - It is not necessary to record the proceedings and the content of the meetings, but it is important to have a periodic assessment of the state of the relationship and the degree to which objectives are achieved. In any case, however, the aim of the relationship is ending up to an impact, have a positive effect, regardless of what that will be. Besides, this is something that, among other things, separates it significantly from simple friendship.

### 3.2 Conclusions

The outcomes of the national interviews provided to consortium essential information for the design of the online quantitative questionnaire, allowing us to identify core competences required for successful entrepreneurship mentoring.

Knowl with the support of the Consortium analysed the findings of the interviews and identified the key knowledge, skills, attitudes, characteristics and competences that were used as the main input for the design of the next activity, the quantitative questionnaire.

Indicatively, some of the elements of successful entrepreneurship mentoring that were highlighted in the collected interview reports include: Empathy, Active listening, honesty and openness, patience, ability to build trustful relationships, communication skills and problem solving.

The structure of the interviews and the collected responses, allowed the Consortium to draw conclusions on:

1. The understanding of the majority of mentors on what mentoring is and what is not;
2. The skills and competences a mentor needs to possess to build and maintain a successful mentoring relationships;
3. The skills and competences a mentor needs to possess to create trusting relationships and rapport;
4. The skills and competences a mentor needs to possess to create and maintain clear communication;

5. The skills and competences a mentor needs to possess to manage conflict within the mentoring relationship;
6. The personal characteristics and/or traits that are considered essential for a mentor;
7. The skills and competences a mentor needs to facilitate the personal development of a mentee, supporting him/her in improving talents and bringing out the real potential.

## 4. Framework for key mentoring competences

The “Competence framework for key mentoring competences” allows us to easily identify competence areas and abilities that, based on the project research outputs, enable mentors to successfully support entrepreneurs to achieve success.

Through the online quantitative questionnaires, the Consortium gathered information from 112 experienced mentors who, according to their experience, rated the perceived importance of a predefined set of competences, hard and soft skills, knowledge, attributes and personal characteristics a successful entrepreneurship mentor should possess.

### 4.1 Framework Structure

The quantitative questionnaire structure has been designed in way that is directly linked with the concept and design of the framework. All questions are functional to the completion and correct construction of the framework.

The information and results gathered from the online quantitative questionnaires have been analysed to isolate core themes including **3 Levels of Achievement** correlated to the grade of professional potential:

- **LEVEL 1 – High Potential;**
- **LEVEL 2 – Moderate Potential;**
- **LEVEL 3 – Limited Potential**

Each level has been built on the first, second and third group of 3-4 items of question 16 (“The characteristics of a successful business mentor”) all resulting from the order of importance provided by the respondents in the survey.

Each level of achievement is then associated with:

- **One Mentoring Competences Cluster** where the main competences of each level, resulting from the analysis of question 15 “Core competences that a business mentor working with aspiring entrepreneurs should possess”, are listed and briefly described
- **One Abilities/Skills Cluster** where hard and soft skills, knowledge, attributes are listed. For this cluster, the results of the following questions were analysed and listed:
  - Question 11: core hard skills that a business mentor working with aspiring entrepreneurs should have in order to help them develop and succeed as entrepreneur
  - Question 12: core soft skills that a business mentor working with aspiring entrepreneurs should have in order to help them develop and succeed as entrepreneurs
  - Question 13: core attitudes that a business mentor working with aspiring entrepreneurs should have in order to help them develop and succeed as entrepreneurs
  - Question 14: core knowledge that a business mentor working with aspiring entrepreneurs should have in order to help them develop and succeed as entrepreneurs

## 4.2 Framework Outcomes

In the following tables we introduce the mentoring competences identified for each one of the 3 levels of achievement.

## LEVEL 1

| LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT                 | LEVEL 1 – HIGH POTENTIAL  |   |   |  |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| <b>MENTORING COMPETENCES CLUSTER</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Building rapport</b> (The ability to establish a meaningful dialogue. It includes the skills of active listening, empathising and giving positive regard; of offering openness and trust to elicit reciprocal behaviour; and of identifying and valuing both common ground and differences.)</li> <li>▶ <b>Active listening</b> (It includes the skills of listening; observing as receiver; parallel processing; projecting; observing as projector; exiting)</li> <li>▶ <b>Setting direction</b> (It includes the skills of goal identification, clarification and management; personal project planning; testing the mentee’s level of commitment to specific goals; reality testing)</li> </ul> |   |   |  |
| <b>MENTORS' KEY CHARACTERISTICS</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Openness</li> <li>▶ Integrity</li> <li>▶ Responsibility</li> </ul>   |   |   |  |
| <b>COMPETENCES</b>                   | ATTRIBUTES/PERSONAL ATTITUDES   | SOFT SKILLS   | KNOWLEDGE   | HARD SKILLS  |
|                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Orientation towards success</li> <li>▶ Integrity and reliability</li> <li>▶ Lifelong learning</li> <li>▶ Optimism</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Motivation</li> <li>▶ Giving and receiving feedback</li> <li>▶ Active Listening</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ General business &amp; management (goal setting, organizing, strategic planning, delegating etc.)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Goals reframing skills</li> <li>▶ Managing mentoring meetings</li> <li>▶ Solution focused skills</li> <li>▶ Leadership skills</li> <li>▶ Results orientation</li> <li>▶ Planning skills finances</li> </ul> |

## LEVEL 2

| LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT          | LEVEL 2 – MODERATE POTENTIAL   |   |  |   |
|-------------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| MENTORING COMPETENCES CLUSTER | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Action planning and goal setting</b> (It includes the skills of obtaining information on the mentee's goals; defining and detailing the mentoring goals; planning the achievement of the proposed goals; establishing and applying short-term and medium-term decision-making procedures)</li> </ul> |   |  |   |
| MENTORS' KEY CHARACTERISTICS  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Creativity</li> <li>▶ Honesty</li> <li>▶ Enthusiasm for the field</li> <li>▶ Emotional Intelligence</li> </ul>  |   |  |   |
| COMPETENCES                   | ATTRIBUTES/PERSONAL ATTITUDES  | SOFT SKILLS   | KNOWLEDGE  | HARD SKILLS   |
|                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Respect of the perspective and individuality of the mentee</li> <li>▶ Vision</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Understanding boundaries and confidentiality</li> <li>▶ Patience</li> <li>▶ Flexibility</li> <li>▶ Adaptability</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Field or economic sector in which to provide mentoring</li> <li>▶ Marketing (marketing planning, strategic positioning, advertising, market research etc.)</li> <li>▶ Processes that can be useful for start-ups and firms engaged in growing fast (Funding opportunities, training programmes, business incubators etc.);</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Business/professional savvy (specific technical knowledge)</li> <li>▶ Questioning skills</li> <li>▶ Training skills</li> </ul> |

### LEVEL 3

| LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT                 | LEVEL 3 – LIMITED POTENTIAL   |   |   |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| <b>MENTORING COMPETENCES CLUSTER</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Building rapport</b> (The ability to establish a meaningful dialogue. It includes the skills of active listening, empathizing and giving positive regard; of offering openness and trust to elicit reciprocal behaviour; and of identifying and valuing both common ground and differences.)</li> <li>▶ <b>Active listening</b> (It includes the skills of listening; observing as receiver; parallel processing; projecting; observing as projector; exiting)</li> <li>▶ <b>Setting direction</b> (It includes the skills of goal identification, clarification and management; personal project planning; testing the mentee’s level of commitment to specific goals; reality testing)</li> </ul> |   |   |   |
| <b>MENTORS' KEY CHARACTERISTICS</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Openness</li> <li>▶ Integrity</li> <li>▶ Responsibility</li> </ul>   |   |   |   |
| <b>COMPETENCES</b>                   | <b>ATTRIBUTES/PERSONAL ATTITUDES</b>  | <b>SOFT SKILLS</b>  | <b>KNOWLEDGE</b>  | <b>HARD SKILLS</b>  |
|                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Positive thinking</li> <li>▶ Strong and constant faith in mentees capabilities</li> <li>▶ Understanding diversity</li> <li>▶ Empathy</li> <li>▶ Willingness to share and acquire knowledge and experience</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Storytelling</li> <li>▶ Networking</li> <li>▶ Sustaining commitment</li> <li>▶ Emotions regulation</li> <li>▶ Persistence</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Finance (planning, budgeting, accountancy etc.)</li> <li>▶ Human resources management (recruitment/selection, training, compensation etc.)</li> <li>▶ Information &amp; Communication Technology (social media, informational portals, support communities &amp; forums etc.)</li> <li>▶ Sales (planning sales, building rapport, presenting products/services to customers, negotiating contracts, influencing decision makers etc.)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Use of technology (e-mentoring)</li> <li>▶ Drafting Business Plans</li> <li>▶ Processes management skills</li> </ul> |



## 5. Online Quantitative Questionnaire

In this section we present how the information that built the Competence framework for key mentoring competences presented in section 4 was gathered and analysed.

In order to ensure that training tools/methods to be developed in the following project IOs are up-to-date with best practice in teaching entrepreneurship & mentoring, the main goal of the online survey conducted in Poland, Italy, Greece, Portugal and United Kingdom was to identify the key competences required to successful mentoring of new and aspiring entrepreneurs.

The **online Quantitative Questionnaire** has involved:

- Experienced mentors
- Experienced entrepreneurs acting as mentors

The final Online Quantitative Questionnaire can be found in ANNEX 2

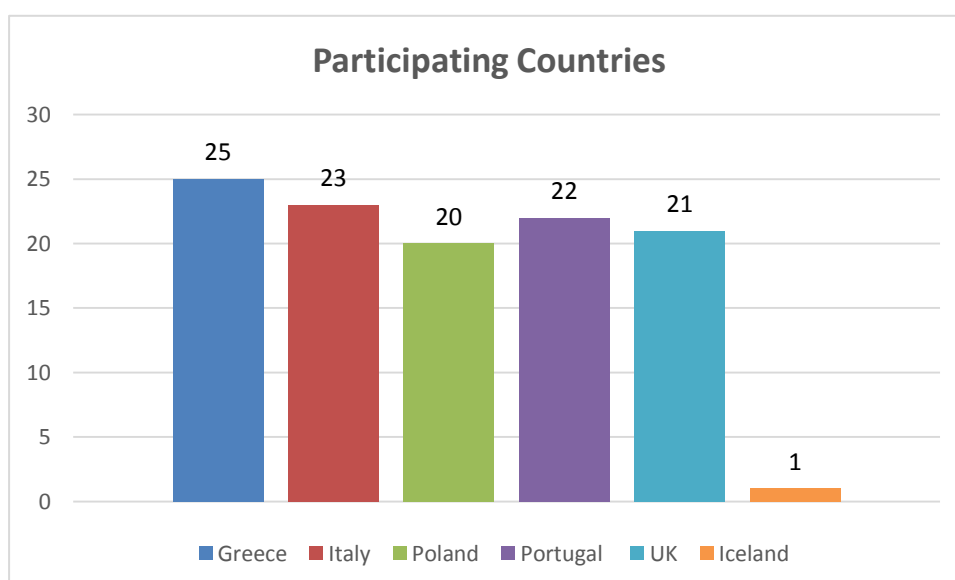
### 5.1 Online Quantitative Questionnaire data analysis methods

The methodology applied consisted of:

1. Calculating the percentages using the overall number of responses provided for the respective question
2. Summing the results of priority/rank from 1 to 6 depending on the length of rankings for each questions from 10 to 16
3. Calculating the range of the 3 clusters/levels using minimum and maximum percentages
4. Defining the clusters/levels based on the range defined on 3
5. Applying conditional formatting to identify the correspondent cluster/level

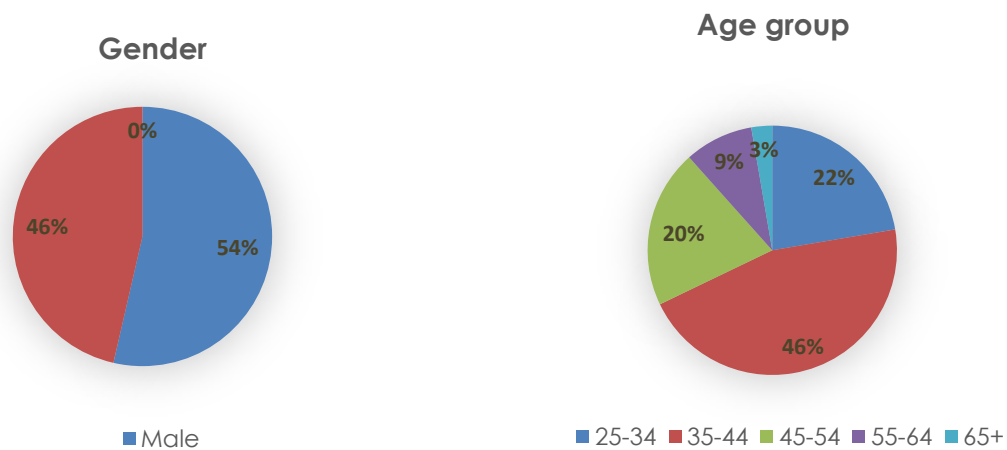
### 5.2 Online Quantitative Questionnaire Outcomes

112 responses were collected as of the 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2015. As shown in the graph below: 25 from Greece, 23 from Italy, 20 from Poland, 22 from Portugal, 21 from UK and 1 from Iceland



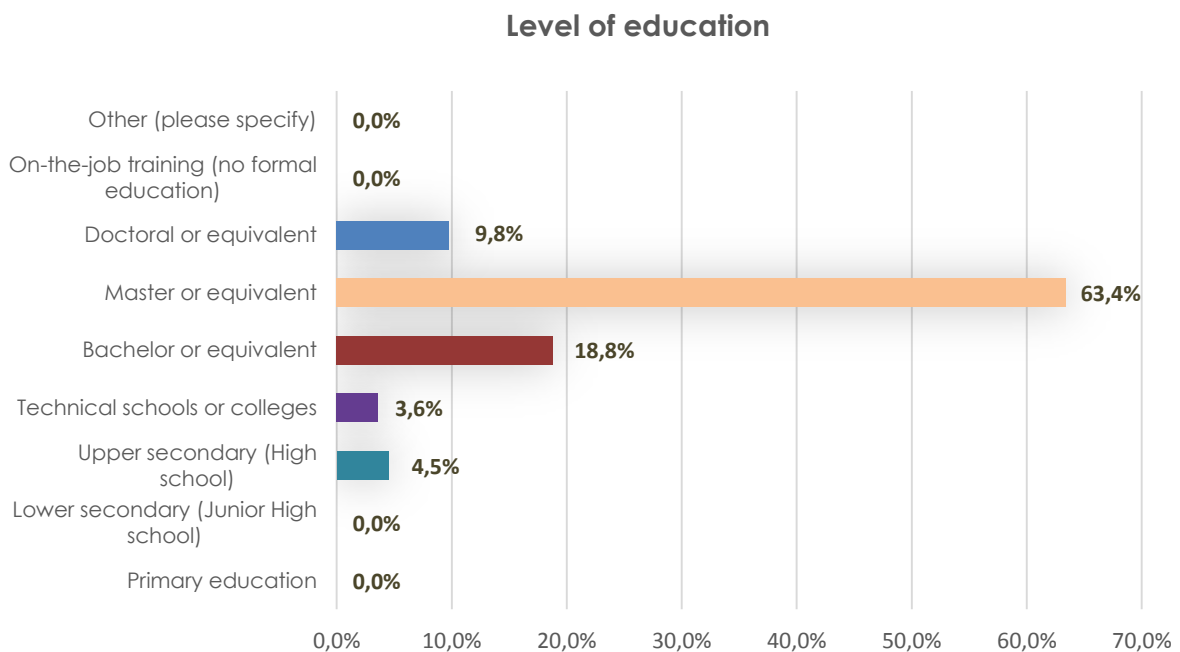
### Respondents' characteristics by gender and age.

As shown in the graphs below, there is a balance in the representation of both genders among the survey respondents, while respondents from all age groups participated, the majority of them belonging to age group 35-44 years old (46%).



### Respondents' characteristics by level of education

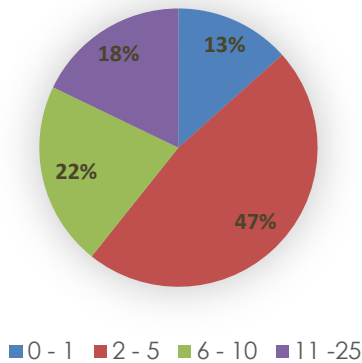
As shown in the graph below, the majority of respondents have an academic education (92%), while the majority of them (63,4%) hold a master's degree or equivalent.



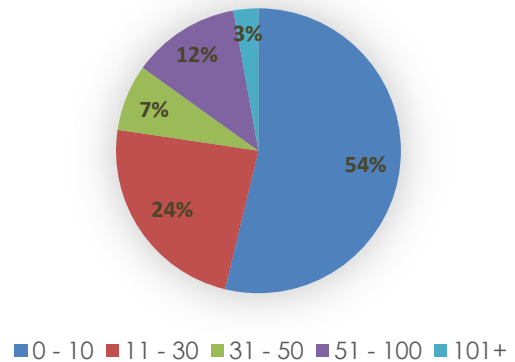
**Respondents' characteristics by years of mentoring experience and number of mentoring relationships.**

The graphs below present the years of mentoring experience and number of mentoring relationships of the respondents, highlighting that the majority (47%) have mentoring experience of 2 to 5 years, while 54% had up to 10 mentoring relationships so far.

**Years of mentoring experience**



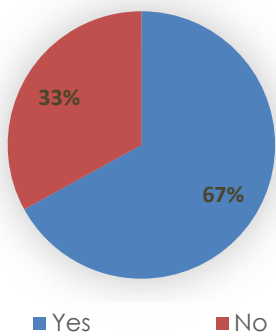
**Mentoring relationships (as a mentor)**



**Respondents' experience as business mentors.**

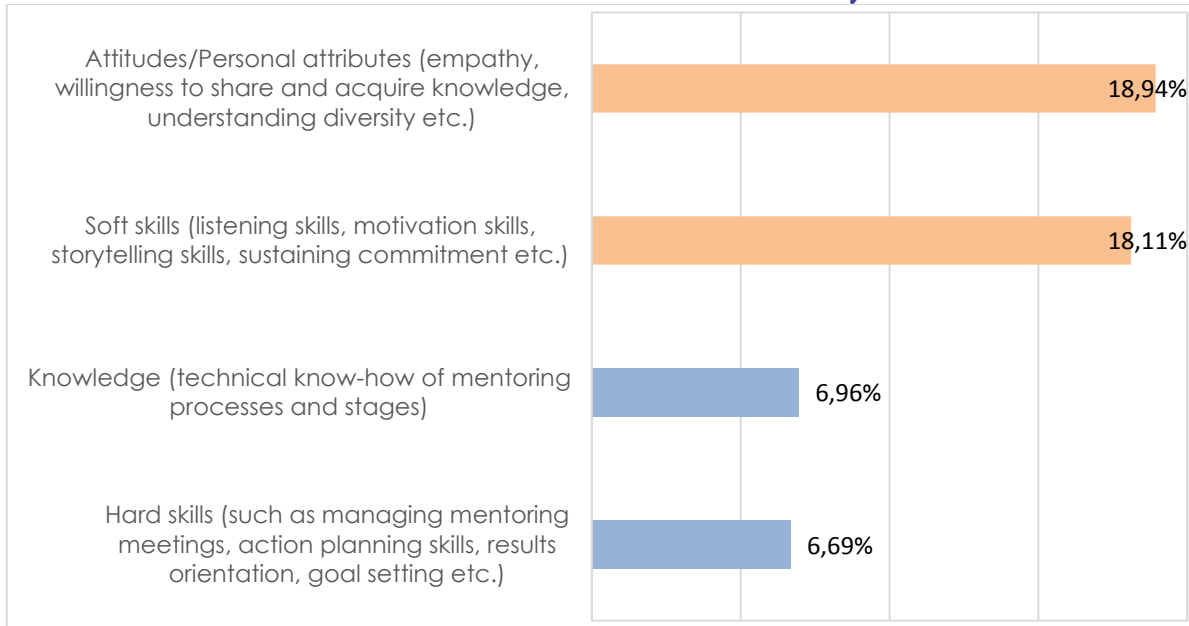
The graph below shows the percentage of the respondents with or with no experience in business mentoring. The majority of them (67%) had previous business mentoring experience.

**Do you have experience specifically as business mentor, mentoring aspiring entrepreneurs?**

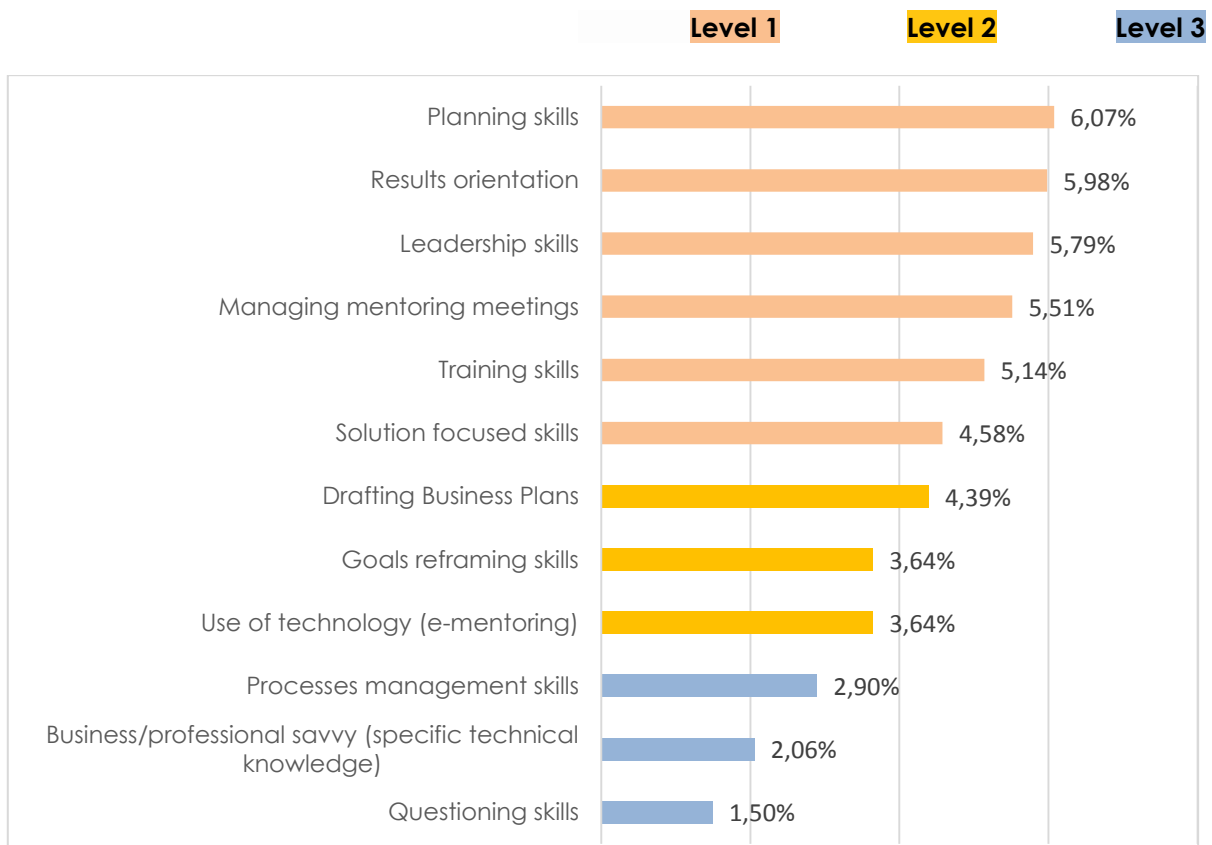


**Key characteristics required for successful mentors in entrepreneurship**



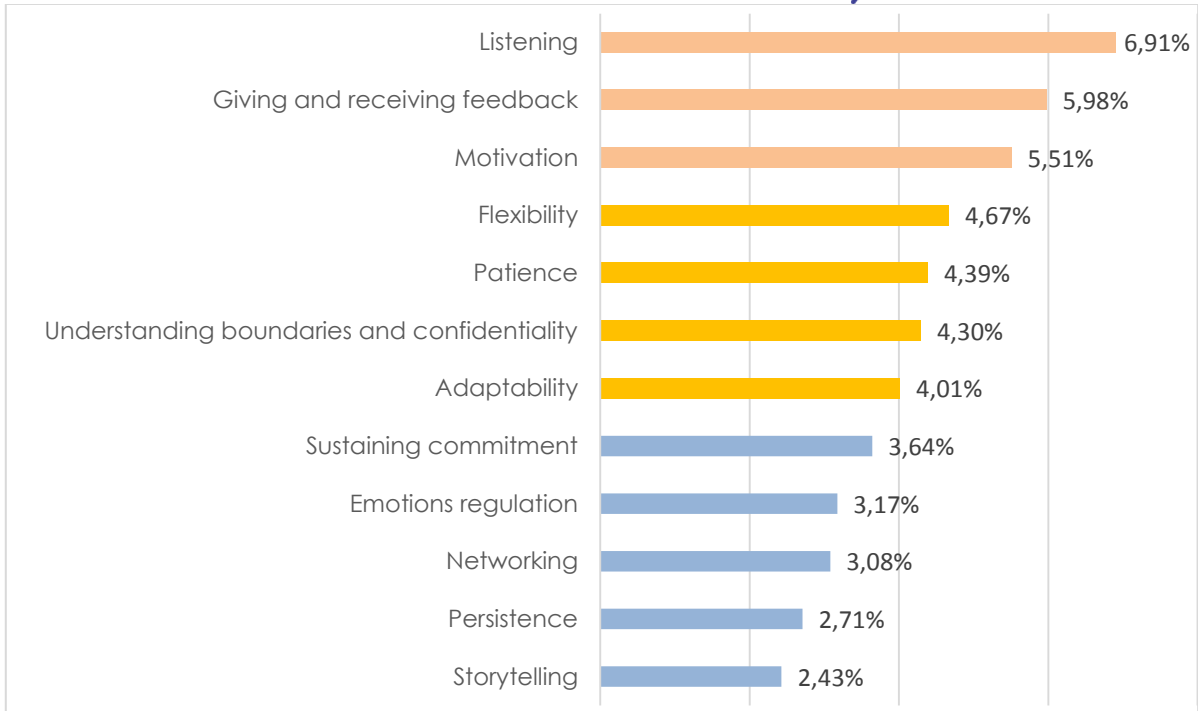


### Key hard skills required for successful mentors in entrepreneurship

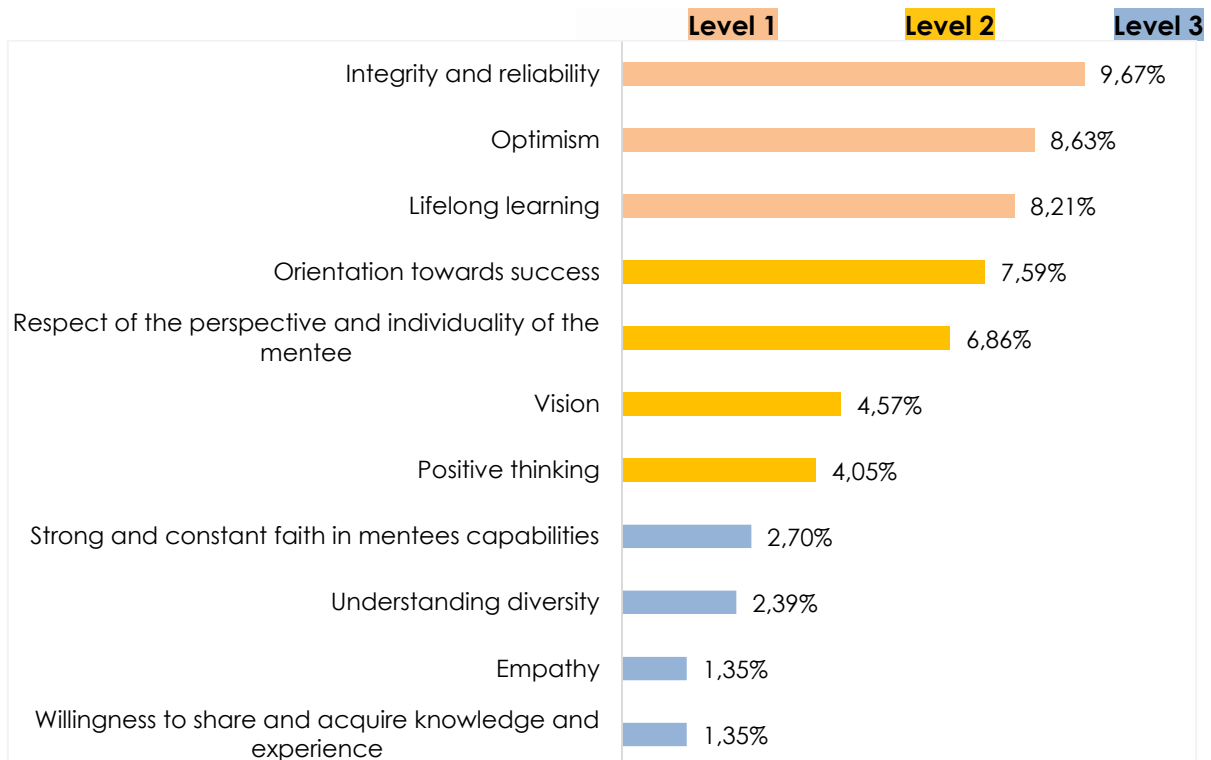


### Key soft skills required for successful mentors in entrepreneurship



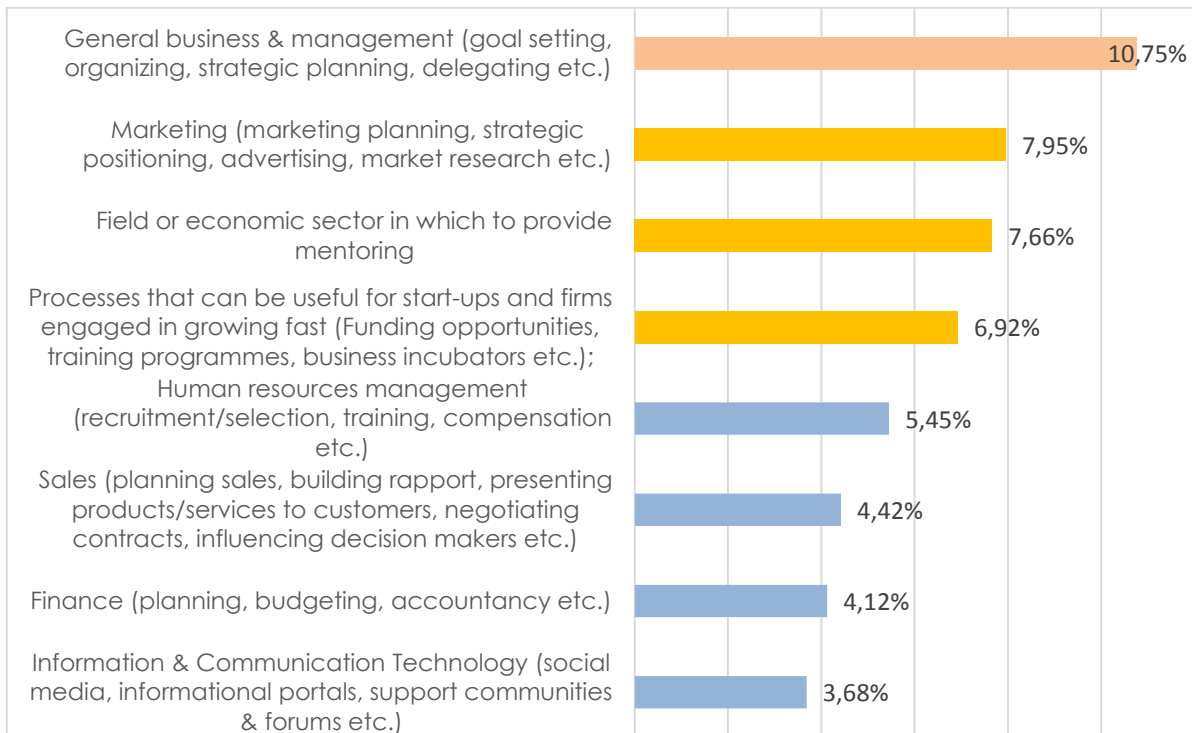


**Key attitudes required for successful mentors in entrepreneurship**

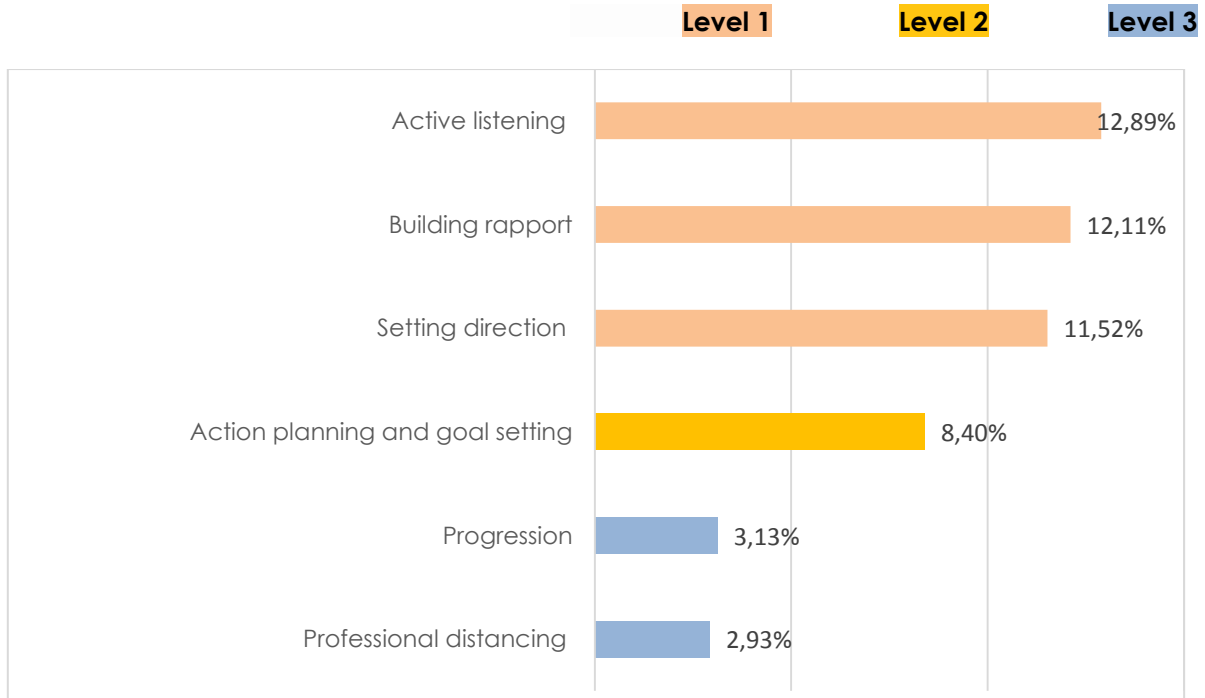


**Key knowledge required for successful mentors in entrepreneurship**





### Key competences required for successful mentors in entrepreneurship



## ANNEX 1 - Qualitative Questionnaire & Interview Protocol

### 1. Introduction

The aim of this document is to provide guidelines for the preparation, implementation and reporting of the foreseen qualitative interviews with experts in entrepreneurship training, predominately mentors, providing support and guidance to aspiring entrepreneurs.

In particular, in order to develop a "Competence framework for key mentoring competences", the Consortium of the MENTEE project is interested in identifying key mentoring competences in entrepreneurial support and guidance practices. To this end five (5) qualitative interviews per participating country (Greece, Portugal, Italy, United Kingdom and Poland) will be implemented, analysed and reported upon, following a specially designed qualitative semi-structured questionnaire, consisting of open-ended questions, to collect qualitative aspects and insights on needed mentoring competences.

The findings of these interviews will serve as a basis for the quantitative survey to follow, to be sent to approximately thousand (1000) operators across the Consortium countries, in order to collect data on key mentoring competences across a wide range of actors and stakeholders in the field. Furthermore, main aspects of the qualitative survey will be communicated through dissemination activities carried out throughout the project.

The qualitative interviews protocol is structured as follows:

- a) Interview preparation
- b) Interview conduct
- c) Interview closure
- d) Reporting
- e) Questionnaire

### 2. Qualitative Interviews Protocol

The interview protocol extends to the procedural level of interviewing and includes instructions for the interviewers to prepare, collect informed consent, and implement the interviews by staying focused on the information needed throughout the interview process.

#### i. Interview preparation

1. **Find a place with no/little distraction.** Arrange the interview in a quiet, semi-private place. Avoid loud places, or places where you will be distracted by others, ensure the interviewee is comfortable (you can ask them if they are), etc. *Tip: Interviewees often feel more comfortable at their own working environment.*
2. **Introduce yourself and the project to the interviewee.** Give a short presentation about the project, its main goals and activities.
3. **Explain the purpose of the interview.** Describe the purpose of the interview, the goals to be achieved and the way the collected data/information will be analysed and used.
4. **Indicate how long the interview will take.** Typically, six to ten well-written questions can easily take an hour to an hour and a half to get through.

5. **Address confidentiality terms and collect consent forms.** Explain the interviewee who will get access to their responses and how those will be used. Obtain their written consent on the confidentiality terms (publication of responses, intellectual agreement on quotes etc.). Ask for permission to record the interview.
6. **Explain the format of the interview.** Explain the type of the interview and its nature. If you want to allow them to ask questions, specify if they can ask them as they emerge or wait until the end of the interview.
7. **Ask the interviewee if he/she has any questions/concerns** before you start the interview.
8. **Memorise questions and their order.**

## ii. Interview conduct

1. **Keep the interview flowing naturally.** You don't need to follow a strict structure or move from one subject to another. If you feel that the order of the proposed questions is not appropriate for the interview flow, feel free to re-order them. Additionally, if you feel that a question didn't get an adequate response and that more elaboration from the interviewee is required, provide some additional prompt questions. If you get an interesting response that leads to more questions that will be of added value to the research, don't hesitate to ask.
2. **Occasionally verify the recording device is working and still recording.**
3. **Ask one question at a time.** Don't overwhelm the interviewee with questions that include several parts, or asking multiple relevant questions at once.
4. **Provide transition between major topics,** For example, "we've been talking about (some topic) and now I'd like to move on to (another topic)."
5. **Maintain control of the interview.** Don't let the interviewee stray to a topic that is not useful/usable for the research, or start asking questions to the interviewer. If the interviewee takes too long to respond to a question try to guide him/her using prompt questions.
6. **Get prepared and use the comments provided** next to each question not to guide the interviewee's answers, but to have a solid grip on the scope of the responses.
7. **Remain neutral.** Don't show strong emotional reactions to the interviewee's responses. Don't be eager to rush to take a note, as it is possible to give the impression you were surprised or very pleased about a response, and this may result in influencing the responses of future questions.
8. **Be a good listener.** Ask for details, clarifications and examples where necessary and allow time for the interviewee to think without interrupting her/him
9. **Keep the interview within the estimated timeframe.** The duration of an interview is better to not exceed one (1) hour. Pragmatically it is less likely to get people to agree to be interviewed and devote their time to a long session.

## iii. Interview closure

1. **Verify that the recording device worked throughout the interview.**
2. **Review and edit your notes.** Clarify scratch notes, and/or notes that don't make sense etc.



3. **Note observations made during the interview.** Note down possible reactions of the interviewee to specific questions, misconceptions, comments you may have etc.
4. **Ask permission to follow-up.** The nature of qualitative research is emergent. Once you listen to the recorded interview, you may not understand what was said or what your interviewee meant. A short follow-up interview allows the interviewee to clarify anything that she/he did not understand. When interviewing more than one person it is possible that another interviewee say something interesting that could have been asked to the previous interviewees as well. A follow-up interview, alternatively a brief discussion over the phone, also provides the opportunity to ask early interviewees questions that may have arisen in later interviews.

#### iv. Interviews reporting and data use

At the end of the interviews performed on relevant actors of the entrepreneurial/business/education world, the partnership will compose a list of mentoring competences that are considered as key elements of a mentoring approach and relationship. The collected data will be analyzed and used to develop a Competence framework for key mentoring competences. This framework, along with the Competence Framework for key entrepreneurial competences that will be developed in separate but complementary activities, will be the key references to adapt, update and further develop a blended learning model, based on the "Mentoring Circles" product. Moreover, these "inventories" will be a good base for VET operators willing to focus their training on entrepreneurship with a more practical approach, and also for the entrepreneurs to understand how and where to concentrate their learning efforts.

Indexing and transcribing interviews are two exceptionally valuable ways to identify major topics and quickly skim and assess the relevance of an interview. This procedure though is very time-consuming and will result in a great amount of raw data, requiring the allocation of a lot of time for translation and analysis. Such a procedure is not necessary and consequently not required in our case. The main purpose of the conducted interviews is to identify the mentor's competences profile (including qualifications, knowledge, skills, attitudes and experience), those competences, attitudes, experiences and knowledge that are considered important for a successful entrepreneurship mentor. For the analysis of the interviews and the identification of usable data contained therein it is proposed that each interviewer will compose a summary of the responses per question for all the interviews collectively, highlighting key information/data according to the purposes of this activity. For each question the interviewer will also note possible comments, observations and additional questions and answers that resulted during the interviews. A template for the interviews reports will be handed electronically to the partners participating in this activity, to be filled and sent to knowl (the leading partner of the activity) in English.

### 3. Interview

The qualitative surveys/interviews consist of thirteen (13) open questions. However, in order to process the provided information it will be helpful to collect some basic demographic and background.

Following the expert's profile, the interview is structured in four (4) parts:

- E) Part A – Getting to know the mentor should be considered as a “warm-up” to allow the interviewee to share some personal experience and knowledge, raise the awareness of the issue of mentoring (in opposition to other forms of guidance, such as coaching / consulting) and share some practical experience of past or current mentoring relationships. The answers will help to put the following question in a greater context.
- F) Part B - Mentor’s Skills and Competences focused more on the overall skills and competences that a mentor ideally should own, the mentor’s personality, and on understanding to what extent training can someone help to become a (better) mentor.
- G) Part C – The Mentoring Relationship will distinguish between the key elements of a mentoring relationship and discuss what specific skills and competences are needed for each of them.
- H) Part D – Closing serves to finish the interview and allow the expert to freely share additional information related to the topic.

### Expert’s profile

|                                  |  |                         |  |  |          |          |
|----------------------------------|--|-------------------------|--|--|----------|----------|
| <b>Name:</b>                     |  | <b>Surname:</b>         |  | <b>Gender:</b>                           | <b>M</b> | <b>F</b> |
| <b>Organization / Company:</b>   |  | <b>Economic Sector:</b> |  | <b>Qualification/Level of Education:</b> |          |          |
| <b>Function in organization:</b> |  | <b>Website:</b>         |  | <b>Email:</b>                            |          |          |

Mentoring experience (in years):

Number of mentoring relationships (past and present):

|  |
|--|
|  |
|  |

### Interview Questions

#### Part A – Getting to know the mentor

1. What has inspired you to become a mentor?

Expected outcomes:

- Understanding the personal motivation of mentor peers.
- Her / His personal story will allow the contextualization of the following questions.
- First conclusions whether mentoring is more understood as a personal or strictly professional development practice.

The answer to this question should lead to the next question about the interviewee’s ‘definition’ of mentoring.

**Notes:**

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

2. Please try to define or summarize your personal understanding of what "mentoring **is**", and what "mentoring **is not**" (e.g. in opposition/addition to consulting / coaching).

Expected outcomes:

- Expert's understanding / definition of mentoring.
- Differences / Similarities to other related practices.
- Creating a sense of awareness of the special traits / needs / challenges / characteristics of mentoring.

**Notes:**

3. Do you follow a certain practice / approach in your mentoring relationships (e.g. "mentoring contract", commonly agreed, clearly set goals and objectives, fixed regular meetings, a more standardised approach) or do you prefer more spontaneous open mentoring relationship?

Expected outcomes:

- Understanding of mentor's practices and approaches.
- The way the mentor is structuring the mentoring relationship will reveal some of the needed skills and competences.

**Notes:**

## Part B – Mentor’s Skills and Competences

4. If understanding the term “skills” as knowing “how to do”, and “competences” as “how to be”, what would you consider as the most important skills and competences that a mentor needs to have or acquire in order to build and maintain a successful mentoring relationship?

Expected outcomes:

- Based on the personal experience of the expert the answer should reflect a collection of the most important skills and competences
- Be sure that the answers distinguishes skills and competences and that both are addressed

**Notes:**

5. What are the personal characteristics and/or traits that you consider essential for a mentor and that cannot be learnt, besides skills, competences, knowledge and expertise?

Expected outcome:

- Understanding the weight of the personal character on the establishment and maintenance of a mentoring relationship, in comparison with the weight of theoretical knowledge about mentoring.
- Collection of personal characteristics needed to sustain a fruitful mentoring relationship
- Understanding of what MENTEE should NOT focus on

**Notes:**

6. Please describe your main qualifications (formal and informal) that qualify you as mentor?

Expected outcome:

- Understanding of what the experts regard as the most important aspects on being a mentor.

**Notes:**

7. Have you received any training to become a mentor?  
If yes, what skills and competences have been learned? What skills and competences should have been learned?  
If not, would you be interested in receiving further training? What skills and competences would you like/need to develop in order to improve your role as mentor?

Expected outcomes:

- Based on the personal experience of the expert, collect the most important skills and competences to be developed under the MENTEE training course

**Notes:**

### Part C – The Mentoring Relationship

8. Creating a **trustful relationship and rapport** with the mentee could be considered as a key element especially in the beginning of every mentoring relationship. Please tell us what you believe are key elements for this process. What are the specific key skills and competences that a mentor needs to have?

Expected outcomes:

- Based on the personal experience of the expert, collect the most important skills and competences for building rapport.

**Notes:**

9. Can you identify the skills and competences of a mentor that you regard as necessary to create and maintain clear **communication** with the mentee?

Expected outcomes:

- Based on the personal experience of the expert, collection of the most important skills and competences for sustaining a good communication.

**Notes:**

10. Improving talents and bringing out the real potential of the mentee - both with respect to professional life, and in terms of personal growth is another essential element of mentoring. What skills and competences does a mentor need to facilitate especially the personal development of the mentee?

Expected outcomes:

- Discussion and collection of skills and competences needed to handle conflicts.
- Collection of approaches in conciliation of professional and personal development as interlinked.

**Notes:**

11. Have you ever experienced **conflicts** in any of your mentoring relationships? How did you manage them? What skills and competences do you regard as essential for conflicts management?

Expected outcomes:

- Discussion on skills and competences needed to manage conflicts.

**Notes:**

## Part D – Closing

12. What are the most satisfying and the most frustrating parts of your role as a mentor?

Expected outcomes:

- Based on the experts' experience, explore mentoring's potential and limitations.

**Notes:**

13. Is there anything else you would like to share with us?

**Notes:**

## ANNEX 2 – Online Quantitative Questionnaire

Dear Mentor,

This survey is part of a research conducted within “MENTEE: Mentoring, Networking and Training for European Entrepreneurs”, a transnational project co-funded by the European Commission.

INnCREASE (Poland) is coordinating the project in partnership with European organizations based in Portugal, Greece, Italy and United Kingdom.

Entrepreneurship and the development of an entrepreneurial spirit among European citizens are considered a priority, particularly nowadays if we consider that unemployment rates has hit historic highs across many EU countries. Although aspiring and new entrepreneurs are already benefitting from several initiatives already carried out across Europe looking into boosting entrepreneurship, they are in need of a more favourable, promotive and lasting environment for business ideas to flourish.

Aware of this, **MENTEE** project aims to:

- ▶ provide a constant mentoring scheme to new entrepreneurs who either are involved or have recently participated in the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs program as well as new entrepreneurs of the countries involved in the project
- ▶ adapt and further develop a blended learning model (face-to-face and virtual) to meet the needs of new entrepreneurs, promoting entrepreneurship education
- ▶ provide a networking platform to enhance a peer interaction among entrepreneurs (potential, new, experienced) and foster their business ideas through further e-learning opportunities and business connections
- ▶ develop a news aggregator and content curation platform for new entrepreneurs experiences around Europe

Thus, the main goal of this survey that will be conducted in Poland, Italy, Greece, Portugal and United Kingdom is to identify the key competences required to successfully mentor aspiring entrepreneurs.

We would much appreciate if you could answer the following survey, as your contribution is extremely important and valuable to us. Your answers will be treated confidentially and they will be used by the internal project team only. For further information about this European initiative, we invite you to visit [www.mentee-project.eu](http://www.mentee-project.eu).



## Part A - Background information

1. **Country** \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Gender:**

Male       Female       Other

3. **In what age group do you belong?**

- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+

4. **What is your level of education?**

- Primary education
- Lower secondary (Junior High school)
- Upper secondary (High school)
- Technical schools or colleges
- Bachelor or equivalent
- Master or equivalent
- Doctoral or equivalent
- On-the-job training (no formal education)
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

5. **How many years of mentoring experience do you have?**

**Define target group** (e.g. college students, people with disabilities, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

6. **How many mentoring relationships (as a mentor) did you have during this period?**

\_\_\_\_\_

7. **Do you have experience specifically as business mentor, mentoring aspiring entrepreneurs?** (conditional question)

Yes     No

8. (if 7 is Yes, display this) **How many years of business mentoring experience do you have?**

\_\_\_\_\_

## Part B – Mentor’s Profile

9. Below find a list of **competence areas** that a business mentor working with aspiring entrepreneurs should be able to efficiently attend in order to help them develop and succeed as entrepreneurs.

Please order them according to their importance from 1 (the most important) to 4 (the least important).

| COMPETENCE AREAS  | Your rating |
|---|-------------|
| <u>Hard skills</u><br>(such as managing mentoring meetings, action planning skills, results orientation, goal setting etc.) |             |
| <u>Soft skills</u><br>(listening skills, motivation skills, storytelling skills, sustaining commitment etc.)                |             |
| <u>Attitudes/Personal attributes</u><br>(empathy, willingness to share and acquire knowledge, understanding diversity etc.) |             |
| <u>Knowledge</u><br>(technical know-how of mentoring processes and stages)  |             |

10. Below find a list of the core **hard skills** that a business mentor working with aspiring entrepreneurs should have in order to help them develop and succeed as entrepreneurs.

Please order them according to their importance to you from 1 (the most important) to 12 (the least important).

| HARD SKILLS  | Your rating |
|--|-------------|
| Goals reframing skills                                     |             |
| Managing mentoring meetings                                |             |
| Business/professional savvy (specific technical knowledge) |             |
| Solution focused skills                                    |             |
| Leadership skills  |             |
| Results orientation  |             |
| Use of technology (e-mentoring)                            |             |
| Drafting Business Plans                                    |             |
| Planning skills  |             |
| Processes management skills                                |             |
| Questioning skills   |             |
| Training skills  |             |

11. Below find a list of the core **soft skills** that a business mentor working with aspiring entrepreneurs should have in order to help them develop and succeed as entrepreneurs.

Please order them according to their importance to you from 1 (the most important) to 12 (the least important).

| SOFT SKILLS                                  | Your rating |
|--|-------------|
| Storytelling                                 |             |
| Motivation                                   |             |
| Understanding boundaries and confidentiality |             |
| Giving and receiving feedback                |             |
| Networking                                   |             |
| Sustaining commitment                        |             |
| Listening                                    |             |
| Emotions regulation                          |             |
| Patience                                     |             |
| Flexibility                                  |             |
| Adaptability                                 |             |
| Persistence                                  |             |

**12. Below find a list of the core attitudes that a business mentor working with aspiring entrepreneurs should have in order to help them develop and succeed as entrepreneurs.**

Please order them according to their importance to you from 1 (the most important) to 11 (the least important).

| ATTITUDES/PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES                              | Your rating |
|--|-------------|
| Orientation towards success                                |             |
| Integrity and reliability                                  |             |
| Lifelong learning  |             |
| Optimism   |             |
| Positive thinking  |             |
| Respect of the perspective and individuality of the mentee |             |
| Strong and constant faith in mentees capabilities          |             |
| Understanding diversity                                    |             |
| Vision   |             |
| Empathy  |             |
| Willingness to share and acquire knowledge and experience  |             |

**13. Below find a list of the core knowledge that a business mentor working with aspiring entrepreneurs should have in order to help them develop and succeed as entrepreneurs.**

Please order the topics according to their importance to you from 1 (the most important) to 8 (the least important)

| KNOWLEDGE  | Your rating |
|--|-------------|
| Field or economic sector in which to provide mentoring |             |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Finance (planning, budgeting, accountancy etc.)  |  |
| General business & management (goal setting, organizing, strategic planning, delegating etc.)  |  |
| Human resources management (recruitment/selection, training, compensation etc.)  |  |
| Information & Communication Technology (social media, informational portals, support communities & forums etc.)                                      |  |
| Marketing (marketing planning, strategic positioning, advertising, market research etc.)   |  |
| Processes that can be useful for start-ups and firms engaged in growing fast (Funding opportunities, training programmes, business incubators etc.); |  |
| Sales (planning sales, building rapport, presenting products/services to customers, negotiating contracts, influencing decision makers etc.)         |  |

**14. Below find a list of the core competences that a business mentor working with aspiring entrepreneurs should have in order to help them develop and succeed as entrepreneurs.**

*Please order the topics according to their importance to you from 1 (the most important) to 6 (the least important)*

| COMPETENCES  | Your rating |
|--|-------------|
| <u>Building rapport</u><br>The ability to establish a meaningful dialogue. It includes the skills of active listening, empathizing and giving positive regard; of offering openness and trust to elicit reciprocal behaviour; and of identifying and valuing both common ground and differences. |             |
| <u>Active listening</u><br>It includes the skills of listening; observing as receiver; parallel processing; projecting; observing as projector; exiting  |             |
| <u>Setting direction</u><br>It includes the skills of goal identification, clarification and management; personal project planning; testing the mentee's level of commitment to specific goals; reality testing  |             |
| <u>Progression</u><br>It includes the skills of sustaining commitment; ensuring sufficient challenge in the mentoring dialogue; helping the mentee take increasing responsibility for managing the relationship; being available and understanding in helping the mentee cope with setbacks      |             |
| <u>Action planning and goal setting</u><br>It includes the skills of obtaining information on the mentee's goals; defining and detailing the mentoring goals; planning the achievement of the proposed goals; establishing and applying short-term and medium-term decision-making procedures    |             |
| <u>Professional distancing</u><br>The ability to put some space between mentor and mentee so that neither party becomes too dependent; Ability to set and define limits of what the mentor can help mentee with.   |             |

**15. Below find a list of the characteristics of a successful business mentor.**

Please order the characteristics according to their importance to you from 1 (the most important) to 11 (the least important)

| CHARACTERISTICS          | Your rating |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| Compassion               |             |
| Creativity               |             |
| Honesty                  |             |
| Humor                    |             |
| Imagination              |             |
| Openness                 |             |
| Integrity                |             |
| Responsibility           |             |
| Enthusiasm for the field |             |
| Emotional Intelligence   |             |
| Taking initiative        |             |

**16. Have you ever undertaken a specific training course for mentors to improve your competences as a mentor?**

**17. (If “no” to q.16) Would you be interested in participating in a specific training programme for mentors?**

**18. (If “yes” to q.17) Please provide us with your full name and e-mail address:**

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