



Funded by the European Union
Տնօրոգում է Եվրոպական Միությունը



Erasmus Student Network
Yerevan

GUIDE FOR MENTORS

OF INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS

This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union under its Eastern Partnership Civil Society Fellowship Programme. Its contents are the sole responsibility of its author and does not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Introduction	3
	○ Purpose of the guidebook	3
	○ Potential benefits of the guidebook	3
	○ Research approach	4
	• <i>Literature review</i>	4
	• <i>Stakeholders interview</i>	4
2	Who is a mentor	4
3	Who is a mentee	4
4	European Solidarity Corps	5
5	Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility	5
6	How to be a mentor	6
7	Testimonials	9
8	Acknowledgement	10

ATTRIBUTIONS

Author: Nensi Mkrtchyan

Designer: Marine Davtyan

Adviser: Anna Yeghoyan

Proofreader: Amila Alidzanovic

INTRODUCTION

1.1. PURPOSE OF THE GUIDEBOOK

The purpose of the “Guide for Mentors of International Volunteers and Students” is to collect best practices and assist mentors in their mentoring experience while hosting international volunteers and students in their local university, organisation and community in general. Moreover, there is a lack of such materials, especially in Armenian. Although the Guide contains generic advice, it should be noted that it was developed in the context of experience in Armenia and the countries of Eastern Partnership.

The above-mentioned stakeholders should be interested in attracting the returning beneficiaries of the programmes (Erasmus+ or European Solidarity Corps) as potential mentors, and on the other hand the mentors will be given an opportunity to bridge their experiences gained during the EU-funded programmes with the potential mentees. Thus, this will be a win-win between not only the mentors and mentees, but also the stakeholders and them.

1.2. POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF THE GUIDEBOOK

The guidebook can be helpful for the stakeholders to correctly match the mentors and mentees. Moreover, this guidebook targets directly soon-to-be mentors who do not have the experience but only the relevant background to be the best mentor for the mentees. With the help of this guide, the mentors can learn about:

Who is actually the mentor?

What are the main activities of the mentor?

Who are the mentees, what are their needs?

And there are many more questions that can be raised and the answers should be found in the guidebook.



1.3. RESEARCH APPROACH

1.3.1. Literature review

Relevant information on mentorship opportunities, access to the programs and the data of the incoming international volunteers or students could have been collected due to the [Erasmus Student Network Yerevan](#) and its partners, such as non-governmental organisations and universities.

1.3.2. Stakeholder interviews

Thanks to the interviews with the member organisations of the Erasmus Student Network, the main best practices of the mentors, who are actually called buddies in the network, have been found out.

WHO IS A MENTOR?

Mentors play an essential role in supporting international volunteers or students in the hosting country. A mentor should support and follow and the mentee like a shadow: always there when needed, helping to put various pictures together and see larger perspectives.^① Mentees can benefit from a personalised welcome thanks to their local mentor.

① UNCRPC,
"ESC Mentor",
The Youth For
Hope Blog

WHO IS A MENTEE?

The mentor is not a mentor without a mentee. They are mainly the participants of the two EU-supported programs:

European Solidarity Corps (ESC)

The **European Solidarity Corps** portal offers a place for those young people and organisations, holding a quality label and receiving a grant, to implement activities and to find each other.

The ESC Programme provides young people aged 18-30 a real life experience with an opportunity to express personal commitment through full-time voluntary activities in a foreign country. The ESC framework enables the volunteers to be exposed and involved in an inter-cultural learning experience within a non-formal education environment by developing an individual learner's plan recognised through a Youthpass form certified Europe-wide.

Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility (Erasmus+ ICM)

- The **Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility** programme provides opportunities for students of higher education institutions (HEI) situated in Partner countries to undertake a learning and/or professional experience in another country. The HEI located in Armenia, which is a Partner Country, can send its students to a Programme Country HEI, and vice versa.



HOW TO BE A MENTOR?

At the beginning, the mentors apply for or are assigned by the hosting institutions (university or organisation), most of the time on a voluntary basis, to support the integration and informal learning of their mentees. Once having the first contact with the mentee, the mentor will need to develop a safe and protected environment and be a supporter, protector, and guide. But as the mentee develops confidence and becomes less dependent and more autonomous, the mentor will need to develop a more analytical, reflective, and critical role.

It is not an easy task to be a mentor for a local student or anyone, let alone for the internationals in your local community. There are some tips of interventions a mentor can employ to perform his or her role. The specific roles of the mentors consist of the general steps mentioned below:





1 Be ready to volunteer!

Mentoring should be based on the principles of volunteering and intercultural dialogue. “The primary goal of the “service” is to provide assistance to new international incoming students for a smooth transition in the host country by helping them with things such as adapting to the new country, culture and environment, and creating a more relaxing and hospitable atmosphere.” Even before the arrival of the international student or volunteer in the host country, it would be perfect to volunteer at organisations such as the **Erasmus Student Network**, join their buddy system and make connections with the future-to-be mentees.

2 Establish a positive, personal relationship with the mentee

The person taking on this responsibility to mentor the newcomer should maintain regular interaction and consistent support despite the forms of communication, whether online or offline. On the other hand, mentor and mentee should also set boundaries for the relationship: they should have clearly articulated mutual expectations and cannot be “on duty” 24/7. By doing so, the mentors establish mutual trust and respect. This journey should be enjoyable and fun for both sides during the stay as well as after the departure of the mentee.

② Adessa Zadia,
“The Buddy
System”, ESN
France,
2017-2020,7





3 Help the mentee to develop or begin to develop life skills

Each mentee requires an individual approach to structure the right “type” of mentorship. When a newcomer (whether a student or a volunteer) first arrives in the host country, they could be facing some challenges, and the mentor might work with them to accomplish technicality-related tasks (finding accommodation, setting up a bank account) and community-related tasks (making new friends, adapting to a new culture). The mentoring to the incoming Erasmus+ student may differ from the ESC volunteers as the latter is more structured due to the host organisation and the mentor is there to help with the learning process. And we can agree that this mentoring is more community-related. What refers to mentoring to the incoming students, there are many responsibilities on the student, and the buddy is assisting to adapt in the new environment.

4 Increase the mentee ability to self-orientate and interact with new people

Overall, the mentor is helping and guiding the mentee to brainstorm to the right direction by actually making decisions, offering suggestions first, and doing most of the talking. Depending on the relationship between the mentor and the mentee, they should invest time not only in the practical assistance mentioned above but also in attending social and cultural activities, which is in fact key to their success. For instance, if the mentors and mentees from the same university and/or organisation conduct a joint meeting or event, it can contribute to more connections, hence the mentees will be more excited about meeting new people, being in a new place, and trying new experiences.

3 Michael Kimmig,
“Meant to be a
Mentor.
Workbook for
EVS mentors”,
Warsaw, 2015, 43



TESTIMONIALS

Mane Tsaturyan

- “It was an amazing experience to be someone’s mentor. It’s also an opportunity to get to know your own country and culture better while showing and presenting them to your mentee. You also learn something new about other countries and about the culture that the exchange students bring with them. This obviously creates challenges, but I am very grateful for all the cultural, social, and political exchanges that I had with Marco.”



Marco Hunziker

- “It is very nice to have someone who is willing and able to help you during an exchange semester abroad. Although I had the opportunity to visit Armenia a few years ago for a short period of time, I did not know the country very well. When I was starting to learn Armenian, Mane was a big help and helped me practice it. We also had a great time traveling and exploring the beautiful Armenian landscape.”





Funded by the European Union
Բնօրինակված է Եվրոպական միության կողմից



Erasmus Student Network
Yerevan

Build Your future with Us!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As an author, I would like to extend my gratitude to the Erasmus Students Network and its member organisations for sharing their expertise in this field, as well as to the EU-funded Eastern Partnership Civil Society Fellowship programme for the support.

My special thanks to my mentor, Anna Yeghoyan, for the professional guidance, to graphic designers, Marine Davtyan and Venera Arakelyan, for making the visual appearance of this guidebook, as well as Eleonora Sargsyan for the translation from English to Armenian.



Contact



@esnyerevan



esn.yerevan



esnyerevan@gmail.com