

# NEWSLETTER

## of the project **MENTORING** OPENS THE DOORS



**MENTORING OPENS THE DOORS - ATHENA** – Association for Education and Development of Women, the NGO in Ostrava, Czech Republic, called one of its projects with this name and carried it out together with Centre of Mentoring, another NGO.

The project, financed by the European Social Fund and by the state budget of the Czech Republic, helps unemployed women to enhance their chances at the labour market by using mentoring.

The project started in May 2012 and exploited the topic and experience from the international cooperation with institutions from Lithuania (Social Innovation Fund) and Finland (Sabini Consulting). Practical testing of various types of mentoring for the support of long-term unemployed women, which are disadvantaged at the labour market, under Czech circumstances is the benefit and innovation of this project.

19 women from the target group “Women 50+” took part in the pilot testing. Each of them participated during the project in a group mentoring with topics: Communication, Preparation for the job interview, Development of hidden skills, Stress management, etc., a video-monitoring, individual mentoring and a special IT – training: creation of digital stories.

The work in a group was very interesting for all women because they could find new contacts and friends and could network. They helped each other, shared experience and ideas. Individual mentoring opened afterwards the doors – it was possible to look for concrete ways how to achieve goals in both professional and personal lives or in the education and training.

External evaluators from employment offices in the region Moravia – Silesia monitored and evaluated the project during its whole life span. Evaluators could not only learn project facts and figures but they could try to do practically some activities at two seminars and one conference.

Project activities are now in the final stage. The final conference was held in the hotel Harmony Club in Ostrava – Mariánské Hory on 7th November 2014. Partners from Lithuania and Finland took place, as well.

**MENTORING**  
OPENS THE DOORS



# Mentoring

Many researches indicate that women are still disadvantaged in some ways and have got a worse position at the labour market. Mentoring is a very suitable methodology how to overcome some of those problems.

There is not any definition for mentoring there – it depends on WHY, WHERE and BY WHOM is used. Nevertheless the key point of each mentoring relation is a voluntary support of one person (mentee) by another one (mentor).

Mentoring is an activity enabling a less experienced person (mentee) to gain experiences from activities, dealing, examples, advices and mistakes of a more experienced person (mentor) who knows the area of a problem and is able to transfer further her/his experience. Mentor provides a mentee with a support and advice, concerning her/his career development, outside of a frame of common relations between subordinates and superiors. Mentoring – it is for a mentee especially an active exchange of opinions with a mentor. The aim is to find a way for the achievement of a defined goal. The main pillars of mentoring are a support of activities, guidance, an orientation to the personal development and an increasing of efficiency when accomplishing of both personal and professional goals.

Both parts of the relation are enriched: mentoring has got many benefits for mentees (new information, knowledge, pieces of experience and the ability to use them practically). Mentor has got an opportunity to gain a new experience which can be further transferred. Mentor and mentee reveal together new solutions of problems helping step outside a common routine. Mentor develops her / his own personality and the ability to help both others and herself / himself to find a new way to the goal.



## Mentoring in the project

Project Mentoring Opens the Doors focused on the employability of women 50+ at the Czech labour market and on possibilities how to help this disadvantaged group and how to increase its chances at the labour market. The combination of several typed of mentoring was used, because the probability of a successful work can be increased. Foreign partners shared their experience how to use mentoring when working with unemployed women and Czech partners transferred this know-how to Czechia and adapted it for the conditions at the Czech labour market.

Program of mentoring was piloted with a group of 19 women 50+. Its process is demonstrated below:

entry  
consulting

individual  
mentoring

group  
mentoring

total 15 hours

1. personal
  - video-monitoring
  - to empathize with the situation of a client
  - to keep impartial
  - can both praise and constructively criticize
2. professional
  - motivation of a woman to reveal her skills (incl. hidden ones)
  - new fields of suitable professions
  - guidance to a change of thinking and dealing

min. 45 hours divided into topics:

1. memory training
2. self-confidence for me (mastery of communication)
3. methods how to overcome difficult situations
4. preparation for a job interview
5. how to let know about me
6. employment versus entrepreneurship
7. stress management
8. how to organize time and reconcile family and working life
9. effective tools for job search
10. how to present myself (elaboration of a CV)
11. the use of life experience and change management
12. self-confidence, personal encouragement
13. development of hidden skills
14. digital stories - an original self-presentation

meeting women of similar age and problems  
networking, new contacts  
development of soft skills





# Complex Mentoring Program Methodology

The main outcome of the project is Complex Mentoring Program Methodology. It has got several parts. The way how to study this guidebook is described in the Introduction. The guidebook is prepared for an independent study for each person who might be interested in it and evaluate immediately if s/he understood the particular part. The purpose and the reason of using of mentoring for the target group, the reasons of the work and relations of 3M actors are explained. The key part is represented by the analysis of types and process of mentoring, management and tools for monitoring of the mentoring process. The creation of digital stories and the Change management follow. Finally, it includes the chapter Methodology of the identification of personal sources for the solving of difficult situations. Examples of "Learning by experience" are put into the whole guidebook so that its practical usage is as efficient as possible.



## PROJECT OUTCOMES

The outcomes are available and downloadable at the project website

[www.mentoringoteviradvere.cz](http://www.mentoringoteviradvere.cz)

### Active Employment Policy Tools in Lithuania and Finland

The Study analysis and describes Active Employment Policy Tools which are used in Lithuania and Finland. On the basis of this analysis brings the Study recommendations and experience, which could be brought to bear in Czechia for the increasing of older people, especially women. The Study was exploited for the development of tools in the project and for the work with women 50+.

**„I was very satisfied with the project, because it showed me new possibilities how to be successful at the labour market. It helped me as a person, as well. I could overcome a difficult period in my life when I looked for a new job.“** ,  
It was one of many positive responses from the side of participating women.



### Almanach from the conference

The Almanach contains contributions which were presented during the final international conference on 7th November 2014 in Ostrava. Foreign partners took part in the conference, too: Social Innovation Fund (Lithuania) and Sabini Consulting (Finland). The topic of the conference was the presentation of outcomes, results and benefits of the project, which are incorporated in a transparent way in this almanach.



# Final conference and its conclusions

Project outcomes were presented at the final conference on 7th November 2014.

The conference brought a scarce opportunity to have a look at the employability of women 50+ from various points of view because representatives of this target group met here clerks from employment offices, foreign partners with specific experience from their countries and Czech project partners who carried out the project.

There were very positive responses during the conferences as well as during seminars for people from employment offices organized during the project. It was obvious from the discussion at the conference that the methodology is a very efficient but a human-friendly tool enabling women from the pilot testing to learn their own personality and to work actively on the improvement of their competences useful for the labour market.

A more complicated question is if mentoring can be used and if there is any complex approach of employment office in the work with disadvantaged groups in the common practice at all. The present situation, when agents of employment offices have got only a minimum of time for one unemployed person, is not good for the implementation of such an approach.

Fortunately, how it was expressed during the discussion, there is a possibility here to exploit the outcomes of the project in Job clubs and by specialised advisors of employment offices. One of possibilities could be a cooperation with NGOs, which could offer such services and which closely collaborate with employment offices in the ideal case.

Our foreign partners are in this point further ahead us. Another way is presented by projects, financed by European Social Fund. They could be just the imaginary door which helps disadvantaged people enter the labour market.

The best solution could be, however, the development of conditions both for employment offices and NGOs enabling the long-term collaboration on the complex help for disadvantaged people at the labour market and the ongoing implementation of such approach in a large way.

It could enable to have always many types of methodologies for the work with people, who want to work, and tools, how to achieve such a work. Mentoring is one of them.



## Project partners and contacts

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