How to support newcomers working in Cafe Europe

HAND GUIDE FOR YOUTH WORKERS: Securing the needs of young people by working with experts

Cafe Europe

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Learning aims and objectives

This chapter of the Hand Guide is designed with the aim to provide youth workers practical tools regarding following topics:

- Definition and types of expert work
- Meeting the needs of youth – communication tools
- Areas of external expertise
- Organisation of expert work
- Appendices (table of experts, example of a questionnaire)

Youth workers are aware of the role of experts, type of expert work and the way expert work is organised with the final goal to meet the needs of youth.

Introduction

When running the meeting places for youngsters, youth workers may find out that they cannot support young people in their primary needs. This is the reason why it is important for youth workers to start cooperating with third-parties to navigate young people to professional workers or institutions.

Expert work

Meeting the youngster's needs is important for a successful operation of the project. However, it is crucial to underline that expert help cannot be provided by youth workers as it is out of their scope of competences. Therefore, help is provided by experts. An expert is a person who possesses required education, training, knowledge and qualifications which are needed for a specific job position (Germain's scale 2006). Apart from experts, additional help to young people can be provided by mentors and coaches.

What is mentoring?
A broad definition of mentoring is "the act or process of helping and giving advice to a younger or less experienced person, especially in a job or at school".

In the workplace mentors are senior professionals in their field and their role is to help younger employees to reach success through sharing know-how and best practices. Mentoring is a long-term partnership (mentor-mentee) with the focus on the overall development of the personality, not only in the professional sphere. In relation to youth's needs, mentors can become role models for youth and help them to succeed in work and life. Mentoring meetings are usually provided during working hours of mentors or during their leisure-time on a voluntary basis, so they are free of charge for mentees.

In addition, young people can use the assistance of a coach during coaching sessions. Coaching is defined as "partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential." Unlike mentoring meetings, coaching sessions are usually paid. Please have a look at Chapter 5 of this Hand Guide, in case you want to get more information regarding mentoring.

Youth communication tools

Open dialogue
Open dialogue is a form of communication with an individual or a group of people. The goal is to get other people's thoughts or opinions. When conducting a dialogue, it is crucial to have enough time to listen and ask questions, which means that under time pressure you might prefer using another communication technique (e. g. questionnaire).

Focus groups
Focus groups are applied when working with a small group of up to 10 people. Focus group is a useful technique when you need to get an opinion regarding the predetermined topic. For a successful execution, it is important to choose the right participants according to predetermined common criteria. Make a list of questions, define time, place, duration and choose a moderator. The purpose of moderators is to listen carefully and encourage people to share their ideas and opinions. While people are responding to the questions, the moderator takes notes. At the end, the results of the participants' answers are evaluated. Please have a look at Step 1 of ''How to set up a Cafe Europe" for further information about setting up focus groups.

Questionnaire
Questionnaires represent a set of standardized questions with the aim to collect information from people (participants). Questionnaires are an inexpensive and quick way to gather information, this technique can be used even without the participation of a leader (youth worker).

Areas of external expertise

Primary needs of youngsters are related to the challenges they are facing, such as insufficient education, unemployment, poverty or psychological issues. One more important aspect is related to financial literacy. This includes different financial skills with the final goal to be self- sufficient in the long-term perspective (ability to create a budget, track expenses, strategies to pay off debt, planning for retirement etc.)

Moreover, there are specific problems related to the group of migrant youth: socio-cultural disorientation, social exclusion, problems with residence permits, barriers to entry to the public healthcare system, barriers to entry to the local labour market (discrimination, insufficient knowledge of local language, recognition of education etc.)

Organisation of expert work

When starting to work with experts you need to take the below-mentioned aspects into consideration.

Selection criteria

- Recognized experiences and accomplishments in the relevant field which can be proved by CV and motivation letter.
- Reference from the previous employer(s).
- Type of cooperation: voluntary/paid

Please note that as the Cafe Europe project is operating on a voluntary basis, your primary goal is to find experts who can provide expertise free of charge. Otherwise, you should take into account the need for multi-source financing.

Addressing the experts

The way you address experts differ depending on the needs of the specific area of expertise. You can use word-of-mouth communication to find experts among your friends, project supporters or members; you can write posts in social networks to find appropriate people via thematic leisure or work groups (for example via Facebook, LinkedIn etc.); you can address professionals – employees of multinational corporations or international organizations who can provide their services in the form of expert volunteering or under the umbrella of CSR strategy (Corporate Social Responsibility); for legal services you can address lawyers or attorneys who can provide some part of their services "pro bono".

Forms of cooperation
The type of work which is provided by experts is divided into individual (psychological help, social, legal, work counselling) or group form: workshops and seminars (language courses, financial literacy) etc.

Reference of expert work

For efficient and successful cooperation with experts you need to define the terms of reference of expert work (this means the scope and limitations of its activity).

General context of work
There is a need to define a general context of the expert's tasks by preparing answers to the following questions and presenting them to the expert, as a result the expert will be well-orientated in your project (of what you do).

- What is the overall purpose of the project/activity?
- What is the current stage of its development?

Recommended approach
After a general context is presented, you can tell the expert detailed information about the methods of work and other partners involved in the project.

- Which working methods do you expect to use?
- Which other parties need to be involved (partners/organisations)?

Objectives of the expert's tasks
Presenting the objectives to the expert ensures that you keep your work expectations in line with each other and you reach the expected results.

- What are the expected outcomes?
- What contribution will the expert make to the overall project?

Budget, timetable and report

- Budget and duration of the activity
- Starting and finishing dates incl. intermediate milestones;
- Type of reports and outputs expected (content, format etc.);

Table of experts

Table of experts represents an example of management and evidence of expert work. This is only an illustrative example which can be modified and used depending on needs. The following topics can be part of a table of experts:

- Name and surname
- Contact info
- Voluntary/ paid cooperation
- Expert area
- Starting and finishing dates
- Intermediate milestones
- Expected outputs

Questionnaire for youths

Areas to focus on while asking questions that represent individual and group support. Individual support includes questions related to meeting basic needs and additional support. Group support is provided according to the needs of the group.

Meeting of individual primary needs

- Mapping the current financial, health and housing situation
- Social, psychosocial and legal counselling
- Education/requalification courses
- Language courses (migrant youth)

Additional individual support

- Mentoring: meaningful leisure time, holistic development, mentors as role models
- Coaching: personal and professional growth

Group support

- Thematic meetings, workshops, training, supervisions etc.

Example of a questionnaire

- Do you have enough money to cover your daily needs (food, housing, healthcare, public transport)?
- Are any of your needs urgent? If so, please specify which ones (for example, I do not have a place to sleep tonight).
- Do you have someone to revert to if you need help while dealing with daily issues, such as communication with local authorities and public institutions?
- Are your language skills good enough for your studies, current or desired job position? If not, do you know ways to improve it?
- Do you know someone to revert to if you need advice regarding your study or professional orientation? Do you have someone to talk to about your difficulties or anxieties?
- Do you have someone who is a positive role model for you?
- What knowledge and skills would you like to gain for your personal growth / employability on the labour market? What kind of training / seminars / meetings would you like to have in this regard?

Sources

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