



**European Approaches
to Inter-Generational
Lifelong Learning**

**The Newly Qualified Teacher
Induction Project: In-service
Mentoring in Education:
ASMERO/Med**

**ROMANIA
Case Study Identity Card
2007**



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EAGLE CASE STUDY

ROMANIA

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

The project aims to assist the newly qualified teachers in their professional development by providing an intergenerational learning framework that can

- Help them reflect on their past professional experience and project their future
- Organise their professional development through practical activities organised incrementally and covering a wide range of types of learning (through observation, reflection, by doing things, through formal courses, etc)
- Socialise them into the profession and support their integration in professional networks
- Make them aware of the current professional debates in the profession

The project is constructed around a type of intergenerational practice based on mentoring and on the interaction and communication between novice teachers in their first two years of teaching and mentors who have been professionally trained in a wide area (including methodology of teaching, counselling, styles of mentoring, giving feedback professionally, etc). The professionalisation of mentors and the resources of the National Association of Romanian Mentors are success factors that led to the positive impact of the learning activities on the professional and social life of the younger teachers.

Intergenerational learning is instantiated through a number of activity types, both receptive ones (observation, modelling, participation in presentations and workshops) and productive ones (teaching, reflection, documenting practices).

The framework in which the intergenerational practice takes place and the rich resources, instruments and tools used as a support for intergenerational learning are examples of good practice and can be transferred in other contexts.



2 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

<i>Title</i>	The Newly Qualified Teacher Induction Project: in-service mentoring in education: AsMeRo/MEd
<i>Country</i>	Romania <u>Comments:</u> The project has been initiated in 2001 by British Council Romania and the National Association of Romanian Mentors (AsMeRo) as a pilot in Western and North Western Romania and after 2003 it was extended nationally, although the distribution has not been even in all regions.
<i>Duration</i>	Starting Year: 2001 End Year: n/a
<i>Status</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Running <u>Comments:</u> Between 2001 and 2003 the project was designed, developed and implemented as a pilot; during this period the instruments, tools and resources for the project have been developed and it was piloted in two university towns, Cluj and Timisoara; after 2003 the project entered the consolidation phase.
<i>Managing institution</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public organisation/Ministry ▪ Voluntary/social sector/foundations <u>Comments:</u> The project has been initiated by the British Council and the National Association of Romanian Mentors who developed and implemented the project in its pilot phase; after 2003 its ownership changed and now AsMeRo works with the Ministry of Education in implementing and further developing the project. AsMeRo is a professional organisation (NGO) created in 1999 by representatives of mentors in education from 19 university towns in Romania who aim to develop the quality of mentoring in Romania and to promote the formal/official recognition of the occupation nationwide.
<i>Contact details</i>	Last Name: FLEANȚĂ First Name: Doina Title: Ms Position/Role: Chairman Institution: National Association of Romanian Mentors (AsMeRo) Street: Town: Brasov E-Mail: doina.fleanta@gmail.com URL: http://asmero.ro
<i>Funding</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Private ▪ Public (from public authorities, national) <u>Comments/Description:</u> In its pilot phase the project was funded by the British Council (registered as charity in UK), now the Ministry of Education funds it.
<i>Partnership arrangement/organisational form</i>	Top-down programme/project
<i>Scale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regional ▪ National <u>Comments:</u> The project started as a regional one: in its pilot phase mentors and newly qualified teachers from Western (around university town of Timisoara) and North Western (around university town of Cluj) Romania participated. After 2003 the project has been extended nationally and now mentors and newly qualified teachers from other regions and towns of Romania are part of the project.

3 DESCRIPTION OF COLLABORATING GROUPS

<i>Collaborating Group I</i>	<p>The mentors are experienced teachers (having at least their 2nd degree, which means at least 5 years teaching experience) and who have been trained through non-formal education (mentor training courses cover 180 hours of theoretical and practical training, including a portfolio and mentor practice). AsMeRo has initiated action for formally accrediting mentor training with the Romanian educational authorities, but at the moment no agreement or legislation is in place for that.</p> <p>At the moment there are 38 trained mentor trainers in Romania (trained at the University of Leeds, UK) who have been initially trained as teachers of English. Over ten years they have trained 1,400 mentors (teachers of all subjects) in all the regions of Romania.</p> <p>The mentors are trained in a course covering a number of areas: learning and teaching, counselling techniques, mentoring styles, activities and procedures for mentoring in pre and in-service, managing relationships, assessment and evaluation criteria. As part of their course the mentors have to practice what they have learnt by mentoring teachers for one school semester and documenting this activity through a portfolio.</p>
<i>Total number of Collaborating Group I</i>	<p>N/A</p> <p><u>Comments:</u> The project runs in each university town and region of Romania and thus the number of mentors actively involved in intergenerational practice at one point in time is not fixed (or known, since no national authority collects and processes such data).</p>
<i>Age group(s) of Collaborating Group I</i>	<p><u>Minimum Age:</u> 27 <u>Maximum Age:</u> 58/60</p> <p><u>Description:</u> To act as mentors, teachers have to pass the examinations for their 2nd degree (that can be taken after 2+3 years after graduation), i.e. they are have the minimum age of 22+5. Teacher can act as mentors while they are active (the exit age in Romania is 58/60 years old).</p>
<i>Collaborating Group II</i>	<p>The Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) are defined (in the project) as the university graduates who are in their first two years of teaching, between the graduation and the certification exam that can be taken two years after the graduation, as long as the professional has been active in teaching in those two years.</p> <p>The NQTs have studied (4 years in University) all the subjects that are taught in the state system of education.</p>
<i>Total number of Collaborating Group II</i>	<p>N/A</p> <p><u>Comments:</u> The project runs in each university town and region of Romania and thus the number of mentors actively involved in intergenerational practice at one point in time is not fixed (or known, since no national authority collects and processes such data).</p>
<i>Age group(s) of Collaborating Group II</i>	<p><u>Minimum Age:</u> 22-23 <u>Maximum Age:</u> N/A</p> <p><u>Description:</u> The Newly Qualified Teachers have graduated a university (minimum 21 years old) and are in their first two years of teaching, before taking their certification exam (21+ 2). If the individuals attend the university as mature students, their age as NQTs cannot be precisely determined.</p>



4 DESCRIPTION OF INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING PRACTICES

Description of Learning Arrangement & Learning Practice

The learning practice aims to assist the NQTs in their personal and professional development in the period of transition between the initial teacher training and the actual teaching career. The learning practice described has three main dimensions: (i) to reflect on past professional experience and on initial teacher training and to make projections about the future development of the mentees, (ii) to organise the professional development of the NQTs based on agreed targets and on success criteria and (iii) to support the NQTs in their professional socialisation and in their participation in different networks.

The learning practice addresses the needs of the young and inexperienced teachers who, in entering professional life, have to match their expectations and training with the requirements of their new workplace. In addition these teachers have not had the opportunity of extensive practice and they need support in identifying the most appropriate ways to apply what they have learnt during initial teacher training in the classroom and school context.

The NQTs are motivated to participate in the project and to experience in the learning practice because the pressure of the certification exam they have to take at the end of the first two years after graduation is extremely high and this is added to the fears and pressure of having to enter the classroom as full time teachers.

The learning practice is structured as a sequence of activities that cover two school years, each type of activity having a defined duration and frequency.

Intergenerational learning takes place through a number of activity types: structured time for reflection in which the mentor and the NQTs focus on the nature and practical aspects of teaching and learning and on other wider socio-professional issues, covering the past, present and future professional life of the mentee; lesson observation in which the two groups interacting are observed and observers in turns, an activity which is followed by feedback focused on the targets the two groups have agreed upon before the activities have started; guidance from mentor in planning, writing up and assessing school documents; interaction and communication around the portfolio the NQTs have to put together to document their training and development. All these very practical and hands on activities are enhanced through workshops and lectures meant to improve the theoretical background the NQTs have.

The learning practice is based on active-participative methods and on mentoring; it has a strong modelling component (the mentor is always a model that the NQTs can explore) and it is structured with the help of a professional portfolio which is a collection of documents and document templates that provide a framework for the practice.

Location of the learning activity

Formal setting i.e. work based and Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)

Comments/Description: As the learning activities are organised on two levels, a theoretical level and a practical one, the learning activities are mostly located in the school where the NQTs are active (work based); in the case of the course the NQTs have to take, the learning activities can be organised on the premises of the Mentors' Association (NGO) or in other hired locations.

<i>Learning activities (related to policy objectives)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Education, training & learning ▪ Mentoring i.e. intergenerational support, services and consultancy ▪ Mediation incl. problem/conflict solving, prevention of violent behaviour ▪ Media education incl. Information and Communication Technologies ▪ Social inclusion/participation, active citizenship; ▪ Employability
<i>Fields of Learning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Individual competence development ▪ Societal/economic exchange and consultancy
<i>Knowledge & Learning Exchange/Flow between the target group(s)</i>	Predominantly 'downstream' i.e. older to younger (mentoring), but there are instances (ICT, research literature) when it can be 'upstream' or bi-directional e.g. shared activities (e.g discussion circles) or offering activities to each other
<i>Interactions between the target group(s)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ one-to-one ▪ one-to-many ▪ physical/offline interaction;
<i>Categories of the learning activity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Non-formal ▪ Informal <p><u>Comments/Description:</u> Most of the activities are set as non formal: they are planned and systematic, they have objectives and a time-line and they mirror the structure of the school year. These are the theoretical activities shaped in the form of a course in which the NQTs are participants, and the practical activities shaped in the form of lesson observation and reflection on lessons. However, there are learning activities in which the mentor and the mentee are involved in social activities (meeting other school staff, meeting parents or pupils, etc) in which learning is done informally.</p>
<i>OECD/DeSeCo Competences</i>	<p>1 = Competence Category 1: Using Tools Interactively</p> <p>1.1 = The ability to use language, symbols and text interactively</p> <p>1.2 = The ability to use knowledge and information interactively</p> <p>1.3 = The ability to use technology interactively</p> <p>2 = Competence Category 2: Interacting in Heterogeneous Groups</p> <p>2.1 = The ability to relate well to others</p> <p>2.2 = The ability to cooperate</p> <p>2.3 = The ability to manage and resolve conflicts</p> <p>3 = Competence Category 3: Acting Autonomously</p> <p>3.1 = The ability to act within the big picture</p> <p>3.2 = The ability to form and conduct life plans and personal projects</p> <p>3.3 = The ability to assert rights, interests, limits and needs</p>
<i>EC Key Competences addressed</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communication in the mother tongue ▪ Communication in a foreign language ▪ Digital literacy and ICT skills ▪ Learning-to-learn ▪ Interpersonal and civic competences

Success factors and barriers

The success factors are strongly connected to the nature of support the NQTs receive: it is permanent, long-term and structured support shaped by the specific needs of these novice teachers. Intergenerational learning is organised as downstream flow from mentors to mentees and the professional training the mentors receive in order to be eligible for this role adds to the success of learning.

The success of the practice is also ensured by the wide range of resources and instruments developed in the pilot phase of the project and which are continuously reviewed and improved at the initiative of the National Association of Romanian Mentors (there is a collection of documents in the format of a Portfolio – a section addressed to the mentee and an additional section to support the mentor, there are evaluation instruments and observation and support materials).

The intergenerational practice described here is very much connected to the formal system of education and to the policies that provide the framework for the professional training of the teachers. Lack of a system of formal accreditation and recognition of the non-formal learning taking place in this mentoring project and lack of co-ordination between policies and practices, including lack of coherence and coordination between the different institutions that act as stakeholders in this learning process (Ministry, local educational authorities, teacher training departments in universities and the school where the NQTs work) are strong barriers that impacts on the intergenerational practice.

The National Association of the Romanian Mentors and the Ministry of Education continue to work together in order to find the best solutions for removing these barriers.

Results

The National Association of the mentors continuously evaluates the intergenerational learning that takes place in the process of implementing this mentoring system for Newly Qualified Teachers and the processes and instruments are continuously reviewed. The Association aims to make this practice more visible at a central and at local level and to continue to put pressure on the Ministry of education for the formal certification of the learning acquired non-formally.

The NQTs that participate in the practice admit that they become more self-confident and that the experience is empowering – they are able to reflect on their practice and to identify ways to improve it. At a social level the NQTs become more employable after the two years of professional developed under the supervision and with the help of the mentors.

Last, but not least the instruments developed and use din the project lead to a systematic and professional approach to intergenerational learning. The wide range of instruments developed for the mentors, for the NQTs or for the learning activities they both participate in can be transferable to other regions, countries or professions.