



BasicEDU - Development of Model for Strengthening Competences of Disadvantaged Women Through Basic Education

MENTORING AND EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME Overall Report



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



BASICEDU

Project number: 2020-1-TR01-KA204-093850

Funded by the Erasmus+ Program of the European Union. However, European Commission and Turkish National Agency cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



BASICEDU

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Graphic design

Compass GmbH, www.compass4you.at

Pictures

Designed by Freepik

Publisher

The „BasicEDU“ Project:

www.basicedudwe.com

Coordination: OMÜ Sağlık Kültür ve Spor
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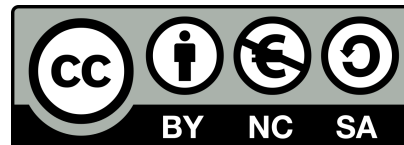
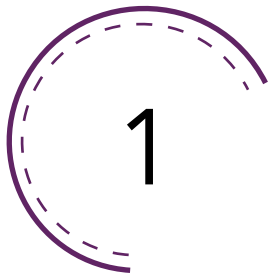




Table of Contents

1. Introduction to the BasicEdu Project and Mentoring and Empowerment Programme	4
2. Key findings from the project partners about Mentoring and Empowerment Programme	5
a. Recruitment strategies and preparation process in the project countries	5
b. Target profile (Mentors & Mentees) & participants' feedback	7
c. Implementation Process	10
3. Conclusion and Recommendations for the future practices	12



Introduction to the BasicEDU Project and Mentoring and Empowerment Programme

The BasicEDU is a 2-year project (31 December 2020 - 30 December 2022) funded by the European Commission. The project consortium consists of 5 project partners from 4 countries.

- Ondokuz Mayıs University (Turkey) - Project Coordinator
- Compass (Austria)
- ZIB-Zentrum Für Interkulturelle Bildung und Arbeit e. V. (Germany)
- Oaza Sigurnosti (Serbia)
- Canik Halk Eğitim Merkezi (Turkey)

The main project activities can be summarized as below.

- To develop BasicEDU Mentoring and Empowerment Programme
- To select the most powerful and impactful activities and practices from the Mentoring and Empowerment programme and to transfer them into BasicEDU Empowerment Activity Book
- To elaborate the Mentoring and Empowerment Programme and transfer the learning content into the Online Platform.

BasicEDU Mentoring and Empowerment Programme is one of the main project milestones that is aimed at developing most powerful and impactful activities and practices to enhance women's self-awareness and self-confidence for a smoother social and labour market integration of disadvantaged women.

The aim of the Mentoring and Empowerment Programme training sessions are to raise awareness about the topics of Mentoring and Empowerment Programme and ensure of increased competences and skills of women with disadvantaged background for better career pathways. These trainings played a crucial role in advancing the skills of the mentees who have the desire to pursue further educational / professional development in Samsun, who need to receive basic knowledge about literacy numeracy and digital competence for mentees. The trainings carried out by the mentors and project coordinators. A focus was set on supporting participants to develop their own position and opinion and to plan which specific steps they can individually take in adopting BasicEDU practices.



Key findings from the project partners about Mentoring and Empowerment Programme

2

a. Recruitment strategies and preparation process in the project countries

Turkish partner, OMÜ contacted to its associate partners including labour market services, integration of disadvantaged women and women's associations. These partners were Samsun Turkish Employment Agency, Samsun Chamber of Commerce and Industry Women Entrepreneurship Council, Samsun Provincial Directorate of Family, Labor and Social Services, Samsun Counselling and Research Centre, Canik Public Education Centre, Samsun İş Kadınları Derneği and Türk Üniversiteli Kadınlar Derneği. Before piloting process, they exchanged their ideas about how to search and find the participants. The other members of this board consist of NGOs, associations, representatives of public institutions and municipalities, etc. After the negotiations with these institutions, OMÜ sent them a digital flyer on which the features of the mentors and mentees are written (women aged between 18-55, women with rural areas and living in the cities who have experienced difficult personal situations, and who are proud to could overcome difficulties they have faced during their career path, women mentors pursued higher education and/or are in a stable professional situation, are willing to devote regular time to the mentee, provide guidance through passing on their own experience during the piloting of the project for mentors). In three days, they outreached to number of mentors and mentees (minimum 10 mentors and 20 mentees). While selecting these women during the interviews with candidates, there seemed to be 14 mentors and 21 mentees who were really willing to participate to the program and were

suitable for the features we were looking for. So, OMÜ started the program with 14 mentors and 21 mentees. While matching them, they considered their specific fields of interest, considering their professional or educational background and personal characteristics such as e.g., age, family status, rural area background etc.

Other Turkish partner of the project, Canik started with an in-house briefing on the programme, which started in May-2022 in five basic modules. As a result of the meetings held with various organizations that are stakeholders of Canik, and especially with master trainers who take on the task of trainer in our institution, the applications of people who were volunteer for mentorship. The fact that the trainers working as Master Trainers in our institution belong to a wide range of professions, and their professional and life experiences are at a very high level, especially in areas such as handicrafts, fashion design, digital marketing, entrepreneurship, provided a great advantage in determining the people to be mentors at this point. In the first phase of the announcement, there were 24 mentor applications, 10 of them were selected, and then mentor applications were received again, and 22 mentors were selected out of 42 mentors in total.



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Austrian partner, Compass has implemented with 39 mentees and 27 mentors who have finalized BasicEDU mentor training that they could receive specific guidelines and tried project tools for mentoring. Compass cooperated with Alevi Derneği and ATIB Kufstein to reach participants. These organisations are working with people from different cultural, social, and educational fields. They reached participant that could be integrated in the programme, those women with low skills and ones who were searching opportunities to get entrepreneurship skills and new vocational competences to be involved in the labour market. Compass implemented meeting with candidates for hearing their motivation to join in the programme. 39 mentees were selected, and they were informed about the programme. Before implementation process, Compass implemented a meeting with mentors to talk about their roles and responsibility. In this meeting, there were very interesting discussions during the workshop on building relationship during mentorship in the realistic situations at the programme.

German partner, ZIB they used their networks to reach the participants. As being a member of welfare networks, migration networks and have a cooperation with the migration office in Ahrensburg, they asked in their networks and found the needed number of participants. After that they implemented an interview with them about their expectations and the contents which they would like to achieve by participating in the training. For the preparation of the trainings, the materials which we developed in the BasicEDU project were used. On this point, they stated that the training in Innsbruck was also very useful for the trainers in the work with the target group. The target group needed very specific tactics and methods to make the lessons interesting for all participants and keep them inside the training. They gave the trainers the knowledge to involve them as much as possible and to avoid frontal teaching, with



which some had bad experience in school. They tested the activities before the training to be able to get good results and be able to make the teaching interesting by giving interesting hint.

Serbian partner, Oaza gathered the number of women for training on the project defined in the project application, they used the database of the beneficiaries in their association's projects when they implemented economic empowerment programs. We also used the contacts we have with institutions, such as the Center for Social Work in Kragujevac, because they are in constant contact with women from vulnerable groups and know which women might be interested in participating in our training program. They coordinated the associations that deal with the same target groups, explained the goals of the project and why we want them to inform their members and beneficiaries about the trainings we plan to organize. Oaza used the experiences gained at the training and Innsbruck, as well as experiences from our earlier projects. The program was designed by selection lectures specifically for these beneficiaries according to their needs, capacities, and potentials. The training was implemented in close cooperation with member of Oaza in a supportive manner which ensures maximum retention and effect for each beneficiary. The beneficiaries were trained to have capacity to find occupation which identified through findings and our insights into their knowledge, skills, and experience.

b. Target Profile (Mentees and Mentors) and Participants' feedback

OMÜ aimed to give the programme to two target groups; a primary target group -disadvantaged women through specially designed 5 training modules improving their key competences, and: There were 21 mentees whose ages changed between 18 and 55. They were eager to continue to educational / professional development in Samsun, who were from rural origin and/or still living at rural; and all were unemployed. They were all literate, and their average educational background was being the graduates of secondary schools; which means that they need basic level of education. A secondary target group - women mentors through specific guidelines for mentoring and empowerment of disadvantaged women: There were 14 mentors, three of whom went to Austria for mentor trainings in March, 2022. The other 13 mentors were specifically chosen for their qualifications that are suitable for being mentors in this project. They were all disadvantaged, but stemming from different roots: Some of them came from rural areas (migrants in Turkey or still living in the rural), some of them had chronic diseases, and some of them faced with difficult financial problems. In spite of all these bad situations,



they achieved to find and/or found a job for themselves as entrepreneurs. They were eager to help others as they had walked on the same roads as their mentees. Their jobs were butcher, most of them had handicraft ateliers selling on the Internet, one was the local authority (mukhtar), some of them were the trainers on the courses doing handicrafts. In line with the above mentioned program and target groups, The Mentoring and Empowerment Training Program of OMU, which lasted for three weeks totally, were implemented to two target groups. According to the written and oral feedback gotten from the participants, it is clear that all of the women were so satisfied with the programme that they want to continue to our further training programmes if it is available. So that OMÜ made a cooperation with Atakum Public Education Centre and after the programme was finished, they started a new course, Digital Marketing and got their certificates. As to the level of the participants, the both the feedback from the participants and the trainers were positive, only one of the durations of the activities needed to be lengthened.

Canik's participant profile consisted of people and professional groups who have achieved life success by experiencing various difficulties in this field due to the fact that we are in a rural area. Most of the educational situations consisted of people who had been involved in the educational system through open education and had achieved this. The participants were interested in the role they assumed after the mentor trainings and the feedback was positive. The fact that the modules are clear and simple, the mentors have a certain background, the strong presentation of the educational content by the presenters has largely eliminated the level of difficulty. Participants in the program reported a high level of satisfaction. The trainings have had a very positive impact on all mentors. In this way, serious opportunities were created both in the professional sense and in terms of sharing life experience.

ZIB used the participants of the training in Innsbruck. Our trainers also had migration background and had their own experience to get into the German labour market and know which skills and methods are needed. The trainers also have a long experience in the work with the target group of social disadvantaged people. They need how to motivate and empower women to get more self-confident and to keep them in the learning groups. Especially this is very important, because sometimes the participants leave or don't show up anymore. The people were long term unemployed, but also migrants who would like to stay in Germany and get knowledge and skills to get into the German labour market as employee or self-employed. Depending of the interviews we slightly modified the materials to make them fit to the target group and compiled the materials according to the needs of the



participants. For their target group the language and communication skills and the strategies to access the labour market were especially interesting for the participants. Also, the empowerment of the participants was very useful, because many had problems in their life so far and needed to get new power to get more self-confident again to get ready for the labour market. The target group was very diverse, long term unemployed women from Germany, refugees from Afghanistan, refugees from the Ukraine, migrants from different other countries and also included the migrants from the Ukraine, although they are not long term unemployed per definition, because they wanted to give them the possibility to access the labour market fast. Many of them have a good education and only need to learn German and know more about the labour market instruments and strategies to find a job and which documents are needed. Most of the participants wanted to become employed, two thought about becoming entrepreneurs. Most of them were interested to work in the service sector or in the administration. The communication part was especially interesting, because the discussion with the employer is always a special situation, it was good to train that and to get to know how to be more relaxed. Additionally, many of their participants are going through a lack of self-confidence due to their situations in their home countries or personal difficulties. This training could strength this self-confidence and all the other qualities and skills that they have.

Oaza, their target group is women from rural areas who need empowerment in order to achieve economic independence. According to the data of the National Employment Service, Kragujevac branch, these are mostly women with a lower educational level, or educational profiles for which there is no need on the market, which makes their employment much more difficult. All this has the effect of degrading a woman's personal self-confidence and creating an impression of personal inferiority and incompetence, i.e. the inability to take the initiative for any changes in lifestyle. That's why rural women have a real need for empowerment in a double sense: to strengthen their competences for taking on new life roles in the public sphere and to acquire specific professional skills that would enable them to find employment.

Due to the limitations of the target group, they very carefully chose the mentors who will be included in the training program. These were members of our organization but also associates/experts with whom we collaborated when we organized trainings on some other projects. Then there were also female volunteers from the rural area, who have amazing experiences in animating the target group to get involved in the activities organized by our association. It was important to establish good cooperation



between the mentors and the training participants for the best possible acquisition of skills in the program.

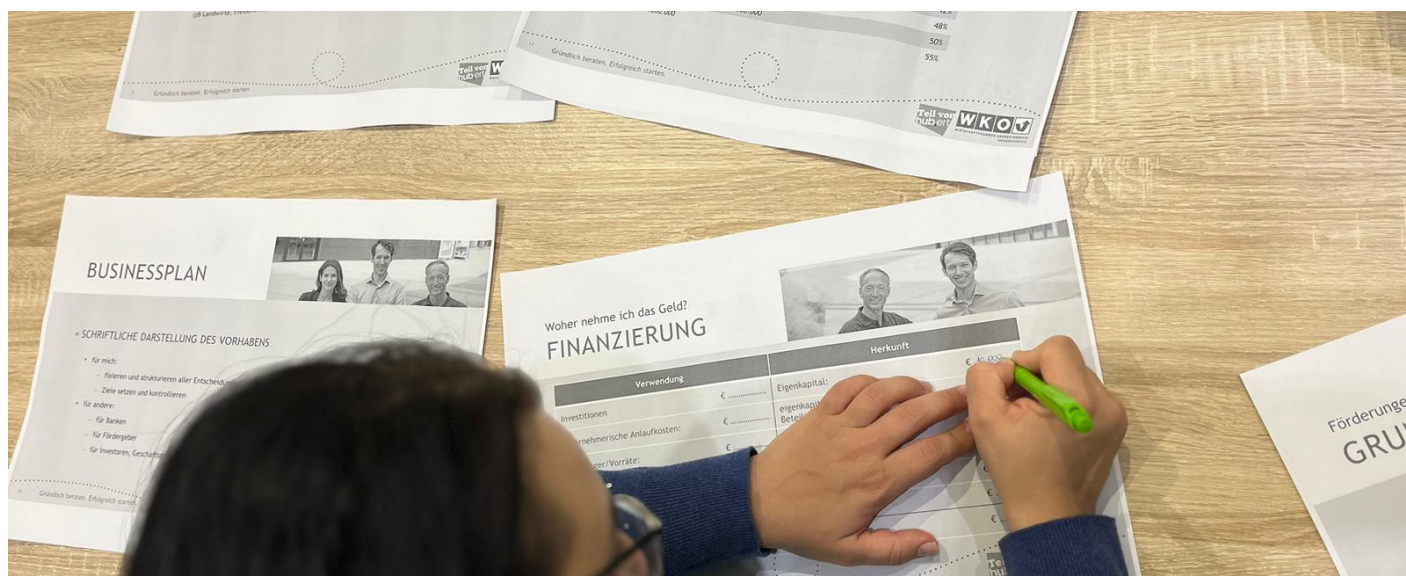
Most of the participants of the training program for women from vulnerable groups had not participated in similar activities before and it was important to explain the methodology to them at the beginning. Developing mutual trust and respect, appreciating the knowledge that the trainees already have, as well as encouraging them to upgrade their already existing knowledge, contributed to the trainees feeling comfortable during the training.

Compass although all mentors were trained and they were purposely selected because they're directly involved with mentoring trainings, it was recommended to mentors to review the BasicEDU tools again just before the piloting process with mentees that enable them to have a deeper understanding of the mentorship and to use them as tools to support their work of mentoring students. Mentors consisted of the ones with skills such as developing meeting plans, information and materials, improved facilitation skills, analysis, and planning skills. The mentees profile consists of the women who are eager to get communication and language skills, vocational skills, and familiarity with new methods and approaches on entrepreneurship and employability. Most of the mentees' original background were Serbian and Turkish who are motivated towards self-development, basic skills, and vocational skills.

c. Implementation process

The project partners implemented activities and practices that have been developed in these five modules.

- Module 1: Learning to learn competence
- Module 2: Language & communication skills
- Module 3: Mathematical skills
- Module 4: Digital skills
- Module 5: Labour market orientation, job searching tools and strategies



OMÜ has finalised the training programme within 2 weeks.

- The first week was implemented between the dates of 12-16 September 2022, 14 mentors (3 of whom went to Austria for training) totally it took 5 days, 30 Sessions (40 minutes each). Every working day of the week, from Monday to Friday; between 09:10-14:20, 6 sessions every day 30 Sessions (40 minutes each).
- The second week was carried out on the dates of 19-30 September 2022. Totally 21 mentees, 14 mentors were involved in 10 days, 45 Sessions (40 minutes each)

Every working day of the week, from Monday to Friday; between 09:10 to 13:30-5 sessions everyday first week; between 09:10-12:50- 4 sessions everyday second week. 45 Sessions (40 minutes each). All the sessions were face to face.

ZiB implemented in Ahrensburg, Germany between the dated of 10.10.22-22.10.22, in totally 60 hours with 10 sessions, 6 hours each. They did blended learning, online and offline with a 50/50 ratio.

Canik Halk Eğitim Merkezi finalized the training programme in 5 days, 20 hours, 4 hours face-to-face.

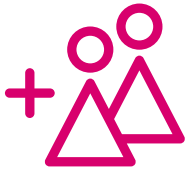
Oaza implemented the programme in Kragujevac, Serbia, between the dates of 24.10.2022. - 9.11.2022, 50 hours (5 sessions, 10 hours each), off-line training.

The piloting process was carried out Compass. Totally it took 5 weeks, because the mentees were more suitable, it was implemented at the weekends. In every session, the participants were asked to share their own experiences with reference to the module topics at hand. In general, the programme covered aspects of Mentoring and Empowerment Programme modules. Participants were trained on the module topics; learning to learn competence, language & communication skills, mathematical skills, digital skills and Labour market orientation, job searching tools and strategies in different case scenarios. Additional tools, including templates for training agendas and evaluation forms were prepared by mentors and project team to implement a smooth and effective training process. Compass ended the programme evaluating the process with mentees and mentors.

Conclusion and Recommendations for the future practices

The mentorship training is one of the essential activities planned in the BasicEDU project, considering feedback that were collected by the project partners, it served the project consortium to reach the project objectives. However, we have collected some useful recommendations for those who are eager to implement the Mentoring and Empowerment Programme in their organisations and countries.

- Continue to support staff to attend the BasicEDU mentor training programme.
- Establish goals for both mentor and mentee with recognition for achievements.
- Keep the program flexible, but structured and accessible to all mentees at any level of experience regardless of their background.
- Add an evaluation component to the program that encourages dialogue about what they did well and what needs to be improved.
- Overall, positive feelings were expressed about programme. However, structure is necessary to maximize retention and motivate new mentees to keep progressing.
- Enriching the modules and making them permanent can be seen as an improvement work.
- Plan and communicate in advance the time schedule for the training programme modules.
- Improve the communication about the self-guided learning
- Continue to consider the most effective providers, with particular attention to ensure that smaller private and voluntary and community sector providers can network with organisations having similar experience.
- Continue to offer differentiated training based on experience and ensure that recruitment allows for accurate filtering of mentees onto the most suitable programme for their skill and experience level.



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