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 **RURAL PLUS**

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Introduction

1. Scope

Every day we are faced with the theme of skills, soft skills, and several other factors that underpin the definition of mentors. In a rural context, this activity has economic and sociocultural specificities that imply the use of language and tools adapted to the local context by the so called "rural mentors".

Mentoring has emerged as a fundamental pillar that facilitates the transmission and acquisition of new knowledge and skills, providing learning and growth advantages.

Currently around 29% of the total EU population lives in rural areas (Source: United Nations), which are facing relevant challenges such as falling and ageing of population, scarcity of employment opportunities, and decline of basic services. This may lead to the risk of missing the technological boat, with consequent socio-economic and political marginalisation. Based on these needs, the Rural plus project decided to create a training programme for rural mentors that will allow the acquisition of relevant skills, namely those skills relevant to increase opportunities in key rural economic activities.

Introduction

2. Objective

Mentoring implies mastering specific and generic skills that decompose into talents, knowledge and attitudes towards a mentoring project.

This document focuses on creating a specific mentor profile for the Rural Plus Programme. The main objective is to outline the various skills (personal, interpersonal and others) that can constitute a descriptive role for a mentor, and consequently develop training actions to frame the mentor's activities.

Defining a mentor profile can contribute to improving the training programme, as it can improve the process of selecting and developing mentors by providing a set of key competencies for the well-pursuing programme. That is, the profile allows contextualization and awareness of certain aspects of mentoring, and at the same time, the development of a set of training actions targeting the skills that prove to be more relevant and necessary.

Mentor Characterization and Profile

The mentor is considered someone with experience, reliable, able to balance functions, stimulating, encouraging and supporting evolution of other people.

There are six dimensions of knowledge that, articulated with each other, allow to outline a profile of skills required for mentoring.

These dimensions are:

1. Didactic knowledge, which consists of having knowledge and being due to current themes.
2. Problem solving, where there is a need to be proactive in identifying, preventing, and solving problems and revealing availability in the development of mechanisms for continuous improvement and elimination of inefficiencies.
3. Development of a plan, which includes challenge actions to support the mentor adjusted to mentored audience.
4. Ability to communicate, i.e. able to convey information and ideas in different contexts.
5. Emotional mastery, in the sense of being able to guide the mentoring to the emotional state necessary for a certain action they are addressing.
6. Willingness for continuous learning and collaboration with learning from others. The mentor should be able to guide learning in practice to another professional and know knowledge building processes.

Personal Skills



Adaptability

Ability to maintain efficiency in changing environments – tasks, responsibilities and people. Ability to adapt to abnormal situations, find and apply agile and effective responses to situations, people, responses and tasks in a positive and constructive way.



Self-control (Emotional management)

Ability to stay calm and objective when faced with situations of personal provocation. Ability to identify, analyze and control the feelings and emotions generated in situations of different nature. Master oneself.



Flexibility

Ability to modify and adapt the style and type of approach in new and different contexts.



Proactivity

Detect opportunities and act on them quickly and effectively. Anticipate situations, opportunities, and obstacles. Ability to create several strategies oriented to enhance results.

Interpersonal Skills



Problem analysis

Ability to identify problems, collect relevant data and recognize essential information.

Ability to identify and diagnose problems.



Empathy

Ability to feel and put in the other person's shoes, as if living the same situation.



Communication

Communicate, orally and in writing, with clarity, fluency, and accuracy. Adapt the language used to the characteristics of the interlocutors and worry about understanding the message.

Ability to express and make themselves understood, verbally and in writing in a clear and objective way, through a good management of sociolinguistic norms and adaptation to different functions and contexts.

Management Skills



Coordination capacity

Ability to coordinate the various resources available in the execution of previously defined or planned tasks. Forward to the expected objectives.



Creativity

Do something different, making the best use of the available resources.
Imagine different ways to solve problems.



Critical spirit

Analyze the various alternatives and choose the one that best suits the situation. Do not conform to a solution that is not ideal.



Innovation

Reveal orientation for change and predisposition to innovation, through new approaches and process optimization, starting in ways that were not previously thought out.

Ability to diagnose change needs, visualize new ideas and strategies that add value and support the implementation of those same ideas.

Management Skills



Networking

Establish and maintain professional and social contacts that allow one to constantly update in relation to the market.



Helicopter View

Ability and predisposition to analyze problems as a globally, while paying attention to relevant details. Position facts and problems within a broader context, immediately noting relevant interrelationships with more general systems. Ability to have the vision of the whole and make partial and total analyses for decision making and success strategies



People development

Ability to develop the skills and abilities of the mentoring ones. Perception of people's development needs. Proactively promote the transmission of knowledge. Contribute to intellectual and moral improvement of others.

Management Skills



Risk Management

Ability to anticipate risks and solutions through context monitoring, evaluating, and adopting strategies.



Time Management

Ability to prioritize and organize work to optimize time in performing each task.

Conclusion

By defining the profile of the rural mentor based on a set of essential skills and functions it allows us to create a descriptive of functions for the elaboration of a training plan.

THANK YOU!!

