



European Network  
for Educational Support Projects



# European Network for Educational Support Projects

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# Mentoring

## an introduction

**Jens Schneider & Maurice Crul**

The term “mentoring” can be found today in many different areas, not least because the basic principle is almost universally applicable. An older and/or more experienced person takes care of a younger person and accompanies her/him for some time or through a particular phase of life. This can be first year students in university, children in difficult family situations or women on the way into a career as a politician or a leading manager. Moreover, next to “mentoring”, there are terms like “coaching” or “guidance” or “tutoring” that describe similar activities. Mentoring can be focussed on a particular topic like preventing school drop-out or support with study choices or it can more generally be used to support youngsters in vulnerable positions to move ahead in life. Especially in the latter case mentoring often involves also social activities and the aim to expose the children to the world outside their own milieu.

An important additional difference between different mentoring concepts is the type of mentor that coaches the mentee. Sometimes it is a just a few years older peer, sometimes it is a higher education student and in some projects it is an experienced adult. The type of interaction resulting from these different combinations is constitutive. Similarities or differences in gender and ethnicity further add to the mix of constitutive factors in the type of relation that will be built between mentor and mentee. Especially in projects with an idea of the mentor as a role model identification based on ethnicity and/or gender can be important. In these cases the mentors become a sort of older brother or sister, thus the age difference should not be too big.

These distinctions have consequences for almost all relevant fields of project conceptu-

alisation and organisation. It begins with the choice of the kind of recruited mentors and it ends with the demands for the preparation and support of mentor-mentee tandems.

A main success factor for mentoring is the critical assessment of the actual goals of the mentor project, the type of mentoring that best suits that goal and the type of tandem that offers the best dynamic or “click” for that purpose. This implies answers to an even more general question: is one-to-one mentoring really the best strategy for these goals? Sometimes, group mentoring or other kinds of support projects are more efficient and better suited than projects with individual coaching.

This brochure presents a certain range of different kinds of projects making use in one way or the other of the mentoring methodology. But most of all, these projects do not focus primarily on the disadvantages but on the talents of these children. The mentors in these projects – who often even have the same ethnic and social background as their mentees – act as role models, showing that it is possible to be successful even when you come from a disadvantaged family or neighbourhood position. The mentor projects in this brochure make use of the rapidly growing group of highly educated second generation youth in Europe. Their expertise of the school system, stemming from their own experiences in it, in combination with their knowledge of the general situation of their mentees, makes them very well equipped to fulfil the role of mentors.

## Does mentoring work?

Mentoring can mean so many different things, and it is similarly difficult to scientifically evaluate the effectiveness of mentor-projects. In the USA which have the longest tradition of mentoring we can find the largest number of studies. However, since many of these studies were funded by the projects themselves or by private foundations and organisations (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine & Cooper, 2002) they sometimes demonstrate little critical distance towards their clients.

In 2002 a meta-analysis of 55 evaluation studies of mentoring projects in the U.S. was undertaken by David DuBois and colleagues at the University of Missouri, pooling together the statistical data of these studies. The authors conclude that mentoring programmes work for youth and manage to “rebuild” the positive effects of so-called “natural” mentorship relations, e.g. in the family or neighbourhood (DuBois et al., 2002: 186f.). Mentoring has a particularly large effect on youth from low socio-economic status and when there are specific attributes of an environmental disadvantage. The effectiveness rises when mentor projects have been designed for specific situations and needs of children who lack positive role models or supportive adults in their daily lives. And also the project organisation can positively contribute to the effectiveness of mentoring: training for the mentors, structured joint activities for mentors and mentees, the intensity of the contact, the involvement of parents and a good accompaniment when introducing the program (ibid.: 189).

Another study from the same year 2002 worked with a sort of experimental research design to measure the effectiveness of mentoring. Lisa Keating and colleagues compared “youth at risk” in the age group 10 to 17, one group participating in a mentoring programme and a control group still being on the waiting list. Both groups completed psychological “before-after”-tests after six months. The results show significant positive effects of the participation in the mentoring programme, as much as regards to “externalising” (e.g. aggressive) and to “internalising” behaviour (e.g. self-esteem, depressive tendencies). However, the researchers also found that the effects were “culturally sensible”: this particular programme worked better for kids from a White-Anglo and Hispanic background than for African-American kids. Another positive effect apparently derived from the mere fact that parents and teacher knew that the youngster were part of the programme and thus paid more attention to them (Keating, Tomishima, Foster & Alessandri, 2002).

A recent quantitative study (Vos et al. 2013) about the effects of mentoring in the Netherlands more specifically looked at soft skills like self-esteem, self-efficacy and social skills next to cognitive and social network outcomes. The study measured these skills before the beginning and at the end of the mentoring period (the duration was one year). As regards self-efficacy, self-esteem, social skills and cognitive abilities all outcomes showed significant better results after a year of mentoring. An interesting outcome was that the number of network contacts on which the mentees could rely had also grown significantly. This was mostly because the mentoring stimulated the

mentees to mobilise already existing network contacts upon facing difficulties in school to a much greater extent than they did before.

Similarly, an evaluation study of three mentor projects in the Netherlands for the Dutch Ministries of Education and Justice found a series of positive effects of mentoring (Crul & Kraal 2004). In this study, the evaluation was based more on a qualitative approach, working with questionnaires and interviews, even though also some “hard facts”, such as the repetition rates or the school grades, were taken into account. According to the authors, mentoring showed its effect particularly in the “soft criteria”: progress in the overall learning attitude, increased self-esteem and learning motivation, and clearer perspectives for where to go. The study underlined that the main difference between mentoring and more “classical” forms of tutoring lies in the socio-emotional accompaniment of the mentees. At the same time, it is this factor which most strongly works in favour of more long-lasting effects of the support measure, going beyond the actual duration of the mentorship itself.

The evaluation also analysed the conditions and factors in the project organisation which contribute to making a project successful. Here, the following points are emphasised:

- ✦ professional organisation and coordination (requiring corresponding funds);
- ✦ training and accompaniment of the mentors;
- ✦ avoiding excessive demands towards the mentors by addressing a “too difficult” clientele;
- ✦ orientation along the actual needs of the

schools; only if they formulate their own needs, an introduction of the project is likely to succeed.

## Perspectives

Mentoring is an extremely versatile instrument for intervention and support. The active agents for setting-up a mentoring programme can be all the different actors in education: the schools themselves, the parents, the students or the school authorities, but also NGOs or migrant self-organisations. There are mentor projects with maybe not even a dozen mentoring-tandems, in other projects it is several hundreds of them.

The most interesting aspect of bottom-up mentoring projects is that they generally respond or react to failures in the educational system and the specific educational institutions to be fully inclusive to all groups of pupils. In that sense, mentor projects offer a certain way of "diagnostics". At the same time, a well-working mentorship programme provides plenty of good practice experience for how to do it better, it also brings the "therapy". Educational authorities and policy makers could thus learn a lot from a dialogue "on par" with this kind of projects. Unfortunately, this dialogue is rather an exception than the norm.

Apart from offering a tailor-suited support mechanism for each individual pupil and student, the mentor projects in this brochure offer a series of assets:

- ✦ Mentoring is culturally sensible; the frequently perceived similarity between mentors and mentees demonstrates a clearly positive effect on the identification between both.
- ✦ The projects dispose over well-functioning cooperation and network structures – from good relations with specific schools to bottom-up networks among NGOs and social institutions at the neighbourhood level.
- ✦ All the projects also perceive the mentors as a target group which must receive training and tutoring. At the same time, mentors gain invaluable practical experiences, going far beyond teacher students. Many of the projects are partially or even fully administered and directed by young leaders from immigrant communities.
- ✦ Mentoring programmes allow combining volunteer work (and working with volunteers) with high professionalism in the project organisation and the accompaniment of the mentors. Experienced mentors can move from volunteer work into the professional project administration.

The portraits in this brochure show that there is a high potential in this kind of mentoring: these projects are not only tackling specific problems, they also offer a complementary element to formal education and learning in the institutional context of schools. Mentoring allows incorporating other forms of learning and becoming the agent of one's own educational trajectory. Mentoring and other educational support projects could – and should – thus be conceived also as an integral part of the "educational landscapes" through which children move in the course of their educational pathways.

# The projects

**Our mentoring consists of tutoring, social-emotional support as well as educational and vocational orientation for pupils from secondary schools in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods.**

# Junge Vorbilder



## Target group(s) and project size

Founded in: 2004

Target group: Pupils of grades 8 to 11

Mentors qualified: approx. 300

Current tandems: approx. 50

Regional scope: Hamburg

Number of employed staff: 4

Our mentors, the junge Vorbilder (young role models/young examples), are university students who come from immigrant families. They often share a similar cultural background as their mentees or even the same language, but especially they are experiential experts for the kind of school and youth experiences that are dominant among the mentees.

Our mentoring is usually held at the homes of the mentees. This allows the mentors to get to know the family environment of the mentees and to build a good relationship with their parents. Our mentors receive an intensive "basic training" at the beginning, but they are regularly offered additional trainings

which allow intensifying certain aspects, such as learning techniques and the didactics of the main subjects. Monthly "mentor-meetings" offer a platform for mutual exchange and creating team-spirit among the mentors of a certain region.

## Mission statement

Children from migrant families who have older siblings perform statistically better in school than those being the only or the first-born child. Older siblings frequently fulfil the role that the parents often cannot because they are not familiar with the school system. Our mentoring sort of "imitates" this sibling

relationship; many mentors even share their experience with pupils in districts where they grew up themselves. For the mentors it means a valuable first-hand professional experience and a possibility to assume responsibility in society.

## The organisation

verikom is an independent organisation for intercultural social and educational work. It offers capacitation, counselling, and coaching for immigrants, especially women and girls. It was founded in 2001 as an association of several intercultural community centres in several parts of Hamburg. The aim of verikom

is to improve the social, political and educational participation of migrants and their offspring in Hamburg and its neighbourhoods by promoting the individual and collective ability to act.

## Contact information



**verikom | Junge Vorbilder**  
mentoring@verikom.de  
www.verikom.de

This mentoring program is for students with migration background aiming for higher education. In a one-to-one mentoring for one year students from years 10-13 (i.e. higher secondary education) are encouraged to develop an academic perspective.

# SABA

## Sista-Abla – Brotha-Abi

The mentor-mentee-tandems exchange their experiences, involve the family of the mentee and intensify the knowledge of the system of higher education (universities / universities of applied sciences). The mentees benefit from the experience and role models of their mentors, but also for the latter this is a learning experience.

The mentors become active after a special training which introduces them to their role and duties as a mentor, the chances and limits of mentoring and the necessary basic skills for mentoring, like active listening and feedback. The pairs are matched on the basis of interviews conducted individually with each mentor and mentee. Additionally, mentors

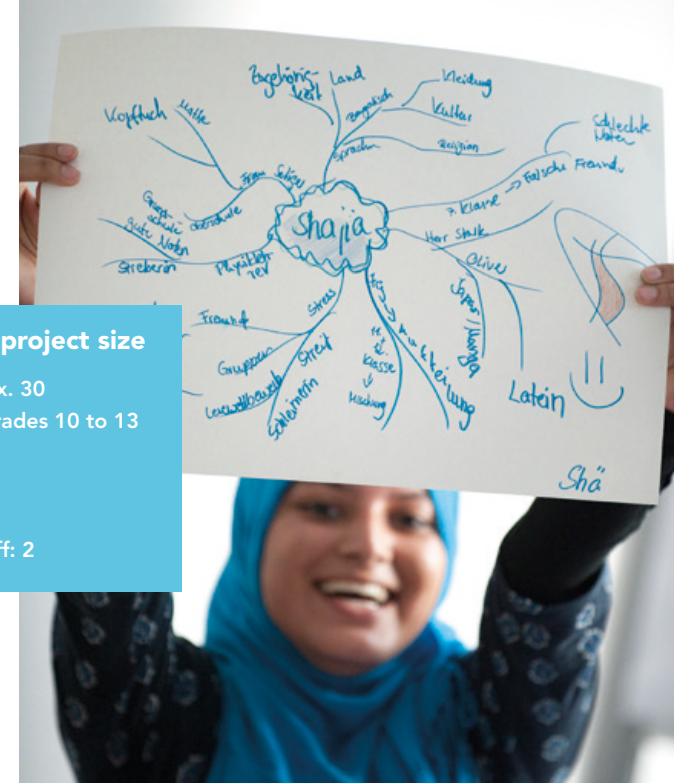
regularly meet for mutual exchange and feedback from the staff members. The impulse to establish a network for mentors is also given by these meetings. Competence-workshops and information events for mentors and mentees complete the program.

### Mission statement

The mentoring project aims to empower and strengthen young students with a migration background on their way to higher education. The focus is on identity, gender and diversity, and on knowledge, skills and educational information. The project supports and encourages the students at an important, but frequently also precarious crossroad in the educational system.

### Target group(s) and project size

Mentors qualified: approx. 30  
 Target group: Pupils of grades 10 to 13  
 Current tandems: 20  
 Founded in: 2009  
 Regional scope: Berlin  
 Number of employed staff: 2



### The organisation

LIFE e.V. is a non-profit organization registered since 1988. Since then, LIFE e.V. has offered services in the field of education and training, consulting and networking. LIFE e.V. is working at the local, regional, national and European levels. The main areas of activity are:

- ♦ Promotion of sustainable development and equal opportunities for women and men in skilled trades, science and technology.
- ♦ Vocational training and career counselling specialized on potential assessment centre methods for girls, young women, and disadvantaged youth.
- ♦ Development of new educational concepts, learning methods and e-learning contents.

- ♦ Advice in integrating gender issues in environmental policy measures.
- ♦ Organization of networks to promote equality of opportunity in the educational and environmental sector, and in the labour market.

### Contact information



Life e.V. | SABA  
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In February 2009, the German-Turkish Forum Stuttgart e.V. (DTF) started a program for grammar school pupils and university students with Turkish roots in the region of Stuttgart, facilitated by the Robert Bosch Foundation: the Program for Scholarships and Mentoring Ağabey-Abla (Turkish for “big brother-big sister”).

# Ağabey-Abla

## Stipendien- und Mentorenprogramm

The mentors of the program engage voluntarily to support younger pupils which have a Turkish background as well. As a sort of compensation they receive financial support for their own university career and different trainings, and they become part of a steadily growing network. The 80 mentors each take care of one or two pupils aged between seven and thirteen years from four elementary and secondary schools and one grammar school in Stuttgart. According to the individual needs the mentors teach the general subjects German, Mathematics and English and keep regularly contact with the teachers to adjust the educational goals. Furthermore, they also connect frequently to the pupil's parents to give advice on different concerns related to

school or other difficulties, e.g. in the family or with friends. At least once a month, the tandems do some out-of-school activities together like visiting a library, a museum or a theatre play. Seminars for the parents in their native language and a wide range of activities in cooperation with diverse cultural institutions in Stuttgart complete the concept.

### Mission statement

The aim of the program is to help the young pupils overcome specific cultural challenges and develop their personal skills inside and outside school. In this context, mentors with similar experiences and backgrounds act as role models. In addition, the mentors themselves are also supported by different



### Target group(s) and project size

Mentors: approx. 80  
 Target group: pupils of grades 1 to 7  
 Current tandems: approx. 80  
 Founded in: February 2009  
 Regional scope: Stuttgart  
 Number of employed staff: 3 plus 1 intern

trainings (pedagogy, didactics, personal and professional skills), consulting and the access to a network which involves other mentors and the different kind of people being engaged in the DTF, such as, for example, politicians, entrepreneurs or artists.

### The organisation

The German-Turkish Forum Stuttgart e.V. (DTF) is a cultural association which was founded in 1999 by German and Turkish citizens under presidency of the former city mayor Prof. Dr. Manfred Rommel and with the support of the Robert Bosch Foundation. The aim of the Forum is to encourage cultural encounters and understanding between people of German and Turkish backgrounds living

in Germany, especially through cooperations in training and education as well as arts and culture. The association thrives on the civic involvement of its members and volunteers. It is nonpartisan and has no particular religious orientation.

### Contact information



Deutsch-Türkisches Forum Stuttgart e.V.  
 info@agabey-abla.de  
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**“From disadvantage to ambition” – this is the philosophy behind NPOINT’s weekend school and JASTIN projects (Junior Academy of Science, Technology and Innovation).**

# NPOINT

## Dutch Platform for Education, Innovation and Talent Development


Many of the students who participate are from an intercultural or socially disadvantaged background. The weekend school focuses on language training and arithmetic, and it offers training for the so-called CITO-test, which plays a big role in the advice pupils receive from schools for their educational future.

But catching up to the curriculum is only the basis: from there, pupils discover and develop their talents in JASTIN. At age 10-14 they are exposed to the exact sciences, to culture, art and media, and to politics. They choose an “academy” on the topic that excites them the most and earn a degree by taking courses, doing projects, and participating in activities.

Frequently, this includes learning an additional foreign language. Pupils can discover what their talents and interests are, and they gain valuable experience before their higher education starts. They start with an advantage, rather than a disadvantage.

### Encouraging personal development

Our mission is to assist disadvantaged pupils in their studies, and to prevent them from falling behind. We help them to explore their interests and to find a course that suits their talents. Rather than measuring their abilities only in coursework and by the outcomes we



**Target group and project size**

Teachers: 400 tutors and volunteers  
Pupils: age 10-14, approximately 1.350 per year  
Region: 20 locations across the Netherlands

encourage their personal development and contentment.

### The organisation

NPOINT, the Dutch Platform for Education Innovation and Talent Development, is the binding factor between 20 educational centres in the Netherlands. These centres assist disadvantaged pupils and offer extracurricular activities aimed at encouraging the pupils’ interests and talents. Additionally, NPOINT contributes to large educational events such as science festivals, the robot football competition RoboCup and the International Environment Scientific Project Olympiad (INESPO).

Aside from the educational programs, NPOINT stimulates the debate about education by organising conferences, meetings and debate events. NPOINT conducts research into the effectiveness of its programs, and assists in the supervision of the educational centres’ teachers.

### Contact information



**NPOINT**  
m.dewild@npoint.nl  
www.npoint.nl



The Foundation for Knowledge and Social Cohesion (SKC) is located in Amsterdam and achieves its main goal, the social cohesion among the city's inhabitants, through the development of educational programs.

# Stichting voor Kennis en Sociale Cohesie

One of its largest programs is the Mentor-project. This program was founded in 1998 and it grew out to a well recognized centre of knowledge and expertise, especially as regards youth in social disadvantage. SKC was established in 2005 in order to ensure the continuity of this program and to start up new initiatives. The SKC reckons that full participation in a given society is a process involving all segments of the population on the basis of mutual understanding and respect. By sharing knowledge and taking note of each other, new knowledge can be created which, in turn, leads to social cohesion. The foundation is not tied to any specific ethnic, political or religious group. The board, the employees and the volunteers are persons with very different backgrounds.

## Main tasks

- ♦ Analyzing social problems in order to develop recommendations and to propose and implement solutions to these problems
- ♦ Developing new initiatives to solve social problems
- ♦ Creating opportunities for people of diverse backgrounds to meet and work together

## Company mission

Mutual recognition and full participation of all inhabitants of Amsterdam. The goal is to encourage active participation in the society in the fields of education, welfare, employment, art, and culture, in order to increase social cohesion. SKC seeks to fulfill this goal by working on the following aspects:

## Target group and project size

Number of participants: 1.500  
Age: 10-14 years  
Founded in: 1998  
Regional scope: Amsterdam  
Number of employed staff: 12  
Number of volunteers and interns: 300



- ♦ Eliminating educational and social disadvantages
- ♦ Enhancing the cognitive, social, emotional and cultural capital of the inhabitants
- ♦ Encouraging involvement and mutual recognition at neighborhood level
- ♦ Improving start opportunities at the employment market
- ♦ Encouraging a positive perspective on society

## The Mentorproject

The aim of this program is to encourage young children to pay the maximal attention to the transition they have to make from primary to secondary school. High school and university students support these youngsters during the last two grades of the primary

school. These so-called Mentors are acting as role models in order to encourage their children to aspire a successful educational career. The main content of this program are learning skills and those social skills which are crucial to transfer to secondary school without problems. Specifically the Mentorproject tries to avoid early school leaving by providing the possibility to support these children also in the first two years of the secondary school.

## Contact information



SKC | Mentorproject  
info@skcnet.nl  
www.skcnet.nl

**Payoke is one of three centres in Belgium authorized by the government to provide assistance and mentoring to victims of Human Trafficking.**

# Payoke

## Our organization

Payoke is one of three centres in Belgium authorized by the government to provide assistance and mentoring to victims of human trafficking. Payoke's mission is to reintegrate the victims into society through legal, psychological, social, and administrative assistance, either in Belgium or in their country of origin. Founded in the 1980s, Payoke has been a pioneer in the fight against trafficking in human beings in Belgium, providing victims with the support needed to regain their rights, freedom, and dignity, but also "waking up" stakeholders to the realities of human trafficking and assisting in the development of a proper legal framework, and providing guidelines and best practices to other players in the field – not only in Belgium, but also around the world. Payoke acts as an intermediary between the victims and governing authorities. The NGO facilitates access to

shelter, education, medical care and other facets of psycho-social support, while helping them with their residency applications and criminal proceedings. Our professional team is formed by psychologists, social workers and a criminologist.

## Mission Statement

Payoke sees its mission as follows:

- ♦ reception, shelter and specialised assistance for victims of trafficking in human beings;
- ♦ support in psychological and social, legal and administrative matters;
- ♦ victims' emancipation and self-reliance so that they may potentially be (re)integrated into society;
- ♦ assessing the situation of human trafficking and formulating recommendations for governmental authorities.

## Mentoring

The victims that come to Payoke receive an individualized trajectory and professional counseling throughout their process of either integration in Belgium or the safe and voluntary return to the country of origin. The primary goal of the mentorship process is to help the mentees in reaching full autonomy and self-dependence. The mentorship process includes the following aspects:

- ♦ Residential Care: an individualised support for developing social skills, helping to cope with traumatic experiences, and for becoming familiarised with specific norms and values in Belgian society;
- ♦ Psycho-Social Support: mentors pay special attention here to the cultural aspects of the traumatic experience; other elements are language learning and developing a positive future perspective through the realisation of the mentees' personal projects;

- ♦ Legal Assistance, in particular mediation between mentees and the police, justice and legal professions;
- ♦ Administrative Support: providing assistance for the mentee in applying for residence and work permits as well as arrangements with health insurance and other social service providers.

## Contact information



**Payoke vzw**

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[www.payoke.be](http://www.payoke.be)

## Target group and project size

Mentors qualified: 6

Target groups: Men, women and children who are the victims of trafficking in human beings and have been exposed to various types of exploitation, including prostitution, economic exploitation, begging, forced criminal activities or organ removal.

Current tandems: Each mentor handles around 30 cases.

Prisma Education and Youth Centre was founded in 1998 by students in Brussels who wanted to help children study after school.

# Prisma

## Education Centre



### Target group and project size

Mentors qualified: 30  
Registered pupils: 230  
Target group: Pupils between 9-18 years  
Offices: 2  
Partner schools: 35  
Founded in: 1998  
Regional scope: Brussels  
Number of employed staff: 6

Since then, it has served students in Brussels and it has contributed to the success of thousands of primary, secondary and high school student's through providing additional lessons and helping them with their homework.

Prisma's more than 280 students come from 82 different schools in Brussels. It is building a bridge between students, parents and teachers. We work with skilled and motivated volunteers who guide the students by quality education and a number of language-oriented projects.

In the Theme Clubs the curiosity of our students for the different characteristics of our society is sparked in a playful way. They meet peers with similar interests and in an educa-

tional and relaxing way they look for their personal interests, abilities and talents. We understand socio-cultural activities as part of a broader perspective on education, including more general children's skills and abilities and learning outside the typical school context.

Prisma organises Dutch language courses during the school holidays for children between 9 and 12 years old. They come together for a few days of intensive language training in a fun and relaxed way. We offer a range of activities, including thematic lessons and excursions which make them come into a more intensified, yet playful contact with the Dutch language.

### Mission statement

Prisma's central goal is to offer quality education – believing that education is an important lever for social development and that good education is necessary for creating equal educational opportunities. In small groups and supervised by motivated teachers, children can improve their knowledge of certain subjects, but also their motivation, structure and concentration.

We take into account the specific and educational problems of each individual pupil. For this, and in order to strengthen the parent-school-student relationship Prisma maintains close contact with the teachers of

the day schools. Our individual tutoring has a very positive effect on the behaviour and academic performance of the children.

### Contact information



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## Colophon

**Sirius** is a European Policy Network on the education of children and young people with a migrant background. This project is funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission.

### WP3 – Educational Support Projects

This work package identifies best practice on projects with out of school partners, mainly immigrant (student) organisations.

**ENESP** is an EU-network of practitioners within the SIRIUS process.



This project is co-funded by the European Union

**Production:** Mona Taghavi & Frans Lelie  
**Design:** Studio Annelies Vlasblom  
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