

19.04.2024

# City to City Mentoring

Reflections &  
Recommendations

VVSG





## Representative

The VVSG represents and defends the local governments in numerous policy dossiers.



## Knowledge sharing

The VVSG supports and strengthens local authorities with advice, training, publications and communication.



## Network builder

The VVSG brings together local authorities and their partners and ensures cross-fertilisation of knowledge and good practice.

- What is city to city mentoring?
  - Guidelines mentor guide
- Mentoring between cities: European level
  - Inclucities (AMIF)
- Mentoring between cities: Regional level
  - Plan Samenleven (Regional Fund)
- Mentoring between cities: Regional level & European level
  - Emma Project (European Union's Internal Security Fund — Police)



What is city to city mentoring?

## The peer mentoring relationship

- Powerful method for tailored and informal support
- Creates a protected space to talk about professional challenges (outside the normal work context)
- Enables development
- Goal-oriented, clear objectives
- Oriented towards change (mentee)
- Based on shared experience
- Mutually beneficial
- (Normally) long-term relationship

# City-to-city mentoring: A methodological guide

## What is city to city mentoring?

### What do you do in peer mentoring?

1. Sharing experiences honestly
2. Listening with empathy
3. Building trust
4. Learning from each other
5. Giving and receiving friendly, unbiased feedback
6. Thinking differently about challenges
7. Generating new ideas
8. Encouraging change and development

## What is city to city mentoring?

### What does a mentor do?

1. Listens to understand
2. Clarifies what the mentee wants to do and makes sure he/she has understood it well
3. Shares honestly his/her own experience of success or failure
4. Asks questions about options:
  - What would happen if ...?
  - What could you do differently?
5. Helps the mentee determine next steps

## What is city to city mentoring?

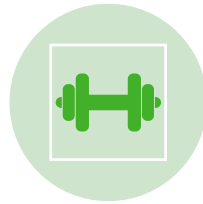
### What does a mentor NOT do (theory)?



Does not give professional or legal advice



Does not give counselling or therapy



Does not give training/formation



Does not try to solve the problems of the mentee immediately



Does not take decisions for the mentee



Does not take any responsibility for the success of the project from the mentee.

# MENTORS PULL, THEY DON'T PUSH

Pull	Push
Listen	Give advice, tell them what to do
Ask questions	Tell
Paraphrasing and summarising	Suggesting what to do
Proposing options	
Give feedback	
Provide guidance	



# Guidelines mentor guide

1. Define common ground & thematic benchmark
2. Prepare mentoring process
3. Mentoring process
4. Transnational vs. National/Regional city to city mentoring

## 1. Define common ground & thematic benchmark

Key factors:

- Motives
- Good practices
- Context factors



## 2. Prepare mentoring process

- Needs analysis
- Matching mentor-mentee
- Training for mentors-mentees
- Engaging stakeholders
- Political commitment





### 3. Mentoring process

- Organise work visits
- Regular contact
- Action plan

Mentoring process is not 'one size fits all'



## 4. Transnational vs. National/Regional city to city mentoring

- Contexts vary considerably from one city and country to another, and demand adaptation
- In order to effectively transfer knowledge, the parties engaging in it have to be conscious of their commonalities and differences in their institutional framework, migratory context and understanding of integration.





ASSOCIAZIONE ITALIANA  
PER IL CONSIGLIO DEI COMUNI  
E DELLE REGIONI D'EUROPA



## Mentoring between cities: European level

### Mentoring in IncluCities (transnational)

Funded by the  
European Union-  
Amif Fund

#### Actionplan:

A. LONG-TERM ACTION PLAN: To start building a vision of a "city for all" by involving various stakeholders in a joint project.

B. ACTION PLAN PROJECT: Reach and engage various communities in Capaci through a pilot project on buddying.

**includities**  
Costruire città inclusive

**Tutti Capaci**  
13 - 14 GIUGNO 2022  
Agenda Terza Study Visit

Co-funded by the European Union



## Importance of context factors, including:

1. National or regional policy framework regarding integration
2. Political support and commitment
3. Electoral cycles
4. National/regional discourse on migration
5. Availability of data (environmental analysis)
6. Carrying capacity (staff, resources, budgetary situation)

## Challenges and lessons learned

- Language barrier
- Difference in organizational culture (vertical versus horizontal)
- National/regional framework as common ground
- Scale of mentor/mentee
- Availability of resources (staff, operating funds)
- Direct contact with the municipality/affected employees/stakeholders
- Importance of proximity
- Digital divide
- Remote working visits due to COVID19
- Importance of on-site visits

*In mentoring at the **national or regional level**, there is usually a solid common ground of similar legal, budgetary and political circumstances, and sometimes even a common history of approach/initiatives.*

*In mentoring at the **transnational level**, however, this common ground is usually less evident, as policy documents at the European or International level are often quite generic and lack technical detail.*

## European (and International) networks

- Urban Agenda: Partnership on Inclusion (UA)
- European Coalition of Cities Against Racism (ECCAR)
- Global Forum on Migration and Development, Mayors Mechanism (GFMD)

## Challenges & Opportunities

- Small municipalities vs large and medium-sized cities
- Role of Associations
- Participation in European projects

# Plan Samenleven

3 key principles:

#local

#foreveryone

#minimalplanburden

7 goals – 24 actions = 24/7 working to improve living together in diversity

147 local governments participate

City to city mentoring

# Plan Samenleven: 7 goals

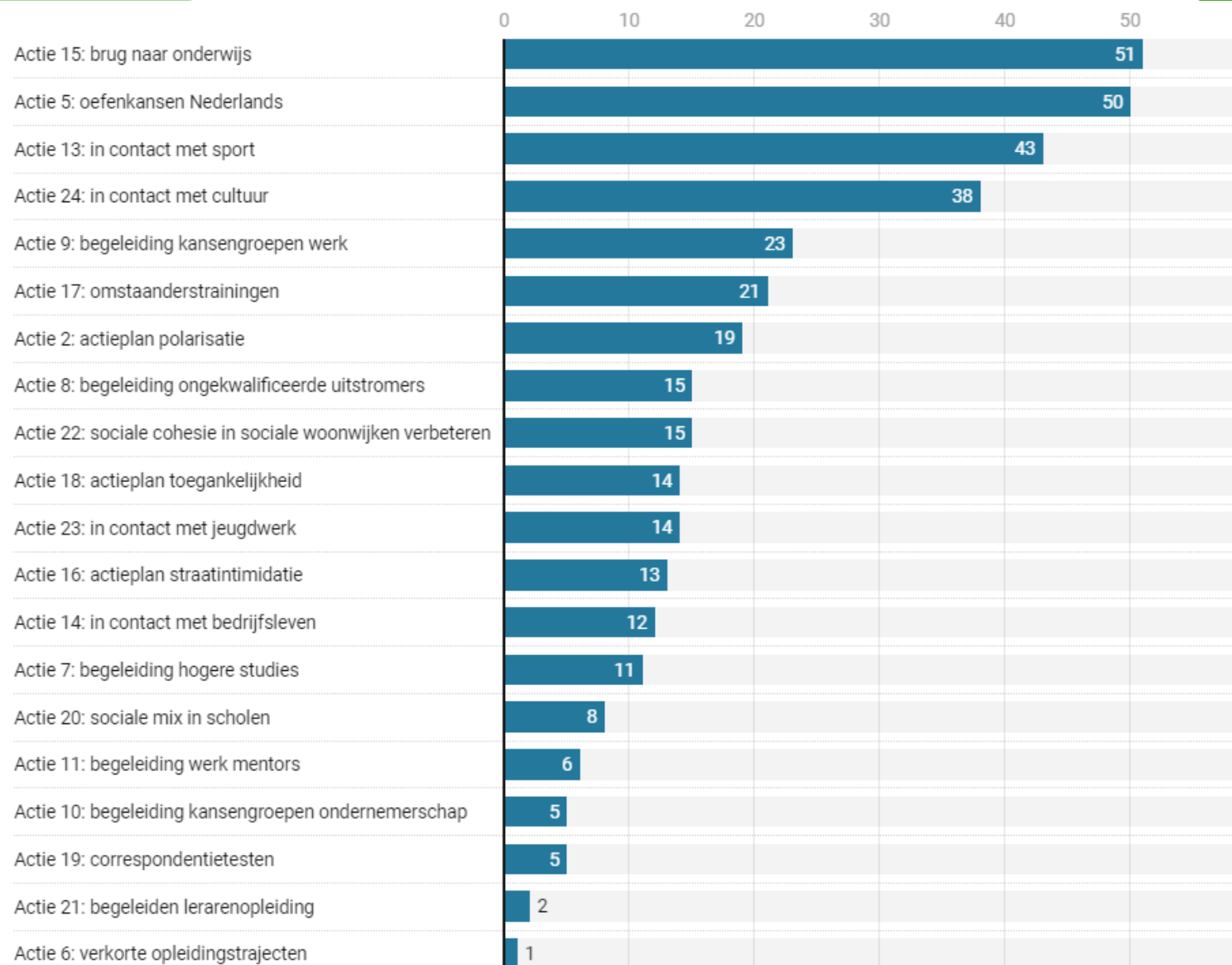
1. Increase safety and liveability
2. Strengthen Dutch
3. Strengthen competences
4. Activate towards labour market
5. Strengthen networks
6. Fight discrimination
7. Strengthen diversity within one community



## Mentoring between cities: Regional level

# Plan Samenleven: 24 actions

4 actions receive financial support from other instruments or calls



## Plan Samenleven: Cities as mentor (11 actions)

Local government	Action
Antwerpen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• practice opportunities in Dutch</li><li>• guidance for unqualified leavers</li><li>• accessibility action plan</li></ul>
Gent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• getting in touch with sport</li><li>• street harassment action plan</li><li>• bystander training</li></ul>
Mechelen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• improving social cohesion in social housing estates (methodology square makers)</li><li>• guidance labour market</li></ul>
Oostende	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• entrepreneurship guidance</li><li>• guidance to employment by mentors</li></ul>
Sint-Niklaas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Actionplan polarisation</li></ul>

## Plan Samenleven: Mentor cities share experience

- Organise minimum 2x learning network
- Bringing local governments together
- Propose and share methodologies and tools
- Accessible for every municipality & city
- Financial incentive

<https://www.vlaanderen.be/plan-samenleven/mentorbesturen-plan-samenleven>

<https://www.vlaanderen.be/plan-samenleven>

## Plan Samenleven: VVSG as mentor (9 actions without mentor city)

VVSG	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Action 6 Guidance towards shortened training pathways</li><li>•Action 7 Guidance towards higher education</li><li>•Action 14 Connecting with business</li><li>•Action 15 Bridging to education</li><li>•Action 19 Anti-discrimination: correspondence testing</li><li>•Action 20 Social mix in schools</li><li>•Action 21 Guidance towards teacher training</li><li>•Action 23 Connecting with youth work (leisure)</li><li>•Action 24 Connecting with culture</li></ul>

## Plan Samenleven: VVSG supports actions without mentor city

- Survey to identify the needs
- Organise initiatives tailored to the needs, for ex. Learning Network, Webinar, Training,...

## Lessons learned from mentor cities

- Take into account different pace between mentees: experienced versus less experienced
- Take into account different scale between mentees: small vs large and medium-sized
- Accessibility
- Reporting



## Lessons learned from VVSG

- Framework for mentoring (cfr. Guidelines)
- Give space to mentors to define form of mentoring themselves
- Better coordination with external (expertise) partners & existing networks
- Keep priority target group (local governments) and objectives (exchange, support, inspiration, sounding board) in mind
- Guard a safe space for exchange (quid presence of external partners)
- Support (point of contact) mentor cities

Action 22: Improving social cohesion in social housing estates  
(methodology square makers)

Mentor City: Mechelen

Mentee City: Ostend

### 3. Mentee City

- Why do you participate to the learning network? Why do you call on the support of a mentor?
- In what way has the mentor support/participation in the LN (positively) influenced your work?
- What changes do you see/experience in your work? Can you give a concrete example of this impact?
- What are the advantages of a city being a mentor (vs. other organisation)?

Mentoring between cities: Regional & European level

# EMMA

Evaluation and Mentoring of the Multi-Agency approach to violent radicalisation in Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium



• City to city mentoring

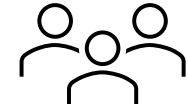


funded by the European Union's Internal Security Fund — Police

## Lessons learned: Formats

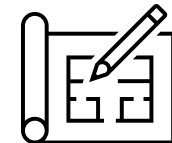
**Different formats for different needs: networking, inspiration, exchange, in-depth advice, topical input**

**Peer-to-Peer Meetings: first-language exchange and network-building**



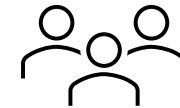
**Mentoring and bilateral exchange: ensuring individual follow-up and in-depth topical exchange**

**International Exchange Platforms: tackling shared topics internationally**



## What to keep in mind: Networking (in times of COVID-19)

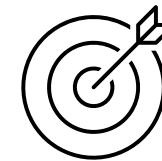
**Importance of continuation and meeting frequency**



**Being mindful of the overall workload**



**Targeting content to closely match current interests and needs**





**The EMMA Project:  
An opportunity to (re)define MAW**



# VVSG

Vereniging van  
Vlaamse Steden  
en Gemeenten

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