Organising the Job Shadowing and Mentoring Programme

HANDBOOK   **ARISE ROMA**

**Organising the Job Shadowing
and Mentoring Programme**

novi pogled na svijet
nova iskustva i vještine
osobni rast – emancipacija
financijska neovisnost
dobivanje glasa u društvu
upoznavanje novih ljudi
"široki" pogledi

Acknowledgements

Preparing the Job Shadowing and Mentoring Programme

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Introduction

The handbook you are reading right now came about after the Centre for Peace Studies (CMS) and the Roma youth organisation of Croatia (ROM HR) identified a need to describe all their experiences in one place. For this reason, we have put together this guide to organising a Job Shadowing and Mentoring Programme for members of marginalised social groups. This handbook is therefore intended for all groups (civil society organisations, institutions, etc.) that are planning or implementing similar programmes.

During 2020, we implemented the Job Shadowing and Mentoring Programme, conceived as a form of professional development and activist empowerment. Throughout the programme, ten trainees – young members of the Roma national minority – first observed and followed the work of their mentors and collaborators from associations (udruge), foundations (zaklade), and cooperatives (zadruge) for three months. These were organisations actively pursuing a variety of socially relevant topics such as environmental protection, the protection of human rights, improving minority rights, media, culture, social services etc. In the second three-month period, the trainees returned to their local communities and organisations, where they worked on building their own initiatives and/or applying what they had previously learnt to their own organisations or initiatives. In this way, the trainees were able to research, first-hand, everyday jobs crucial to their further development and their work in developing their local communities, organisations, and/or initiatives. Also, thanks to the structured mentoring offered by the programme in the host organisations, the participants had an opportunity to

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1 In line with the recommendations of the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality on the use of gender-sensitive language, and striving for full gender equality, in the Croatian version of this handbook words and concepts used with a gendered meaning (e.g. radnica), apply equally to all genders. In the English version, gender-sensitive forms have been used throughout, and the singular "they" has been used as a gender-inclusive form of address. For more information see: Ombudsperson for Gender Equality (2015): Introducing the official use of gender sensitive language URL: http://www.prs.hr/index.php/odluke-prs/prema-osnovi-diskriminacije/spol/1821-uvodenje-rodno-osjetljivog-jezika-u-sluzbenu-uporabu

develop their knowledge of methods and working practices in a safe environment. They were also able to gain direct experience of best practices that they would be able to use later in their own work. In addition, the programme included a series of training sessions, workshops, webinars, and various other kinds of meetings. The main goal of the programme was to work towards achieving real social equality among young members of the Roma national minority – a social group in a disadvantaged position. It achieved this by their gaining work experience and new contacts in a safe environment. The programme also aimed to strengthen the Roma civic sector, and network with other Roma and pro-Roma actors in civil society and beyond – all with the mentors' support.

The programme was implemented as part of the project ARISE ROMA, financially supported by the programme "European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Programme 2014 – 2020", co-financed by the Office for Cooperation with NGOs of the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the City of Zagreb, and implemented by the Centrefor Peace Studies, the Roma youth organisation of Croatia, and Arterarij. Securing the funds in advance was an especially important element to the programme, because programme participation was organised through an employment contract, and the trainees were paid for their work. Designing such programmes often entails planning them well before they are implemented, and finding adequate funds for them to be done well. Besides gaining experience, knowledge, and skills, paid work also helps participants gain a certain amount of economic stability. This is why we consider this element to be one of our programme's key advantages.

On this occasion, a pilot programme was implemented and we anticipated it being carried out under regular circumstances. Although we foresaw many possible risks and external factors, there was one that we certainly did not foresee – the outbreak of a pandemic that would seep into all spheres of our lives. We began the programme in February 2020, immediately before the outbreak of the Covid-19 epidemic in Croatia, and we completed it in August. The epidemic crisis disrupted many plans and forced us to make numerous adaptations to the project implementation. Yet, despite all this, we believe we managed to implement a decent, quality programme that our train-

ees used and will continue to use – and they will testify to this. We therefore believe that our experience can also be applied to regular circumstances and conditions of work.

The programme we created was based on our own experiences of work with the Roma national minority and of work in civil society, combined with our assumptions and ideas about what kind of programme would be a good fit for the goals that we had set for ourselves. While preparing the programme and during its implementation, we drew on the relevant literature and consulted with our colleagues from the civic sector and beyond. However, we learnt the most through our continued reflection on our experiences in implementing the programme. This, in particular, was the main motivation for producing this guide – we wanted to gather in one place all the lessons that we had learnt, as well as those that our programme participants – the trainees and their mentors – had alerted us to. We thus wanted to offer inspiration to others when they are making choices about how to implement similar programmes, and offer ideas and insights to those who had already decided to organise similar kinds of programmes.

Our programme was intended for young members of the Roma national minority, but we think that certain programme features are also applicable to programmes intended for other groups. Our idea here is not to offer a formula on how to put together such a programme. This handbook is rather more of a list or check list of the mentoring programme's various features, alerting the reader to possible ways of strengthening it.

We hope that the text that follows will be inspirational, informative, and useful, and that you will use it as a template when organising similar programmes. Of course, the team at the Centre for Peace Studies and the Roma youth organisation of Croatia are available for all your queries – feel free to contact us!

The theory of empowerment and of work with marginalised groups – the example of working with young Roma

One of the goals of the Job Shadowing and Mentoring Programme – focused in our case on young Roma activists – was to empower young members of marginalised social groups by helping them develop their professional skills and acquire knowledge necessary for their personal and professional development. Making available the knowledge that can serve as a tool in reaching that goal is therefore important.

Statistics, research, the expert literature, and the experience of direct work with young members of marginalised social groups show that they encounter racism, stereotypes, prejudices, and/or various forms of discrimination in the majority society from a young age. This discrimination is often multiple or intersectional.[2] These experiences shape them in various ways and influence their perceptions of the world in which they live to varying degrees. They also shape their behaviour, reactions, and their interaction with the majority society. In summary, the experience of racism, stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination shapes each of them, including their defence mechanisms and defensive resources[3].

As mentoring is one of the main programme components, we recommend becoming acquainted with the mentoring role, mode of operating, and associated tasks in more detail. This is especially important for both the organisers, who take on a "meta-mentor" role, and the mentors in the host organisations. In our case, we identified mentoring to be a way of offering support to young people in developing their professional, but also personal, competences and knowledge. This

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2 For more information see the report on intersectional discrimination in Europe, ENAR network (European Network Against Racism): https://www.enar-eu.org/IMG/pdf/intersectionality-report-final-3.pdf

3 For more on stress and everyday coping with discrimination and stigmatisation, see the article by Sophie Berjot and Nicolas Gillet: https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2011.00033/full

process also encompasses the relationship that we create in order to empower and offer support to trainees when they are taking steps towards their further development and engagements. Therefore, we do not understand mentoring in the narrow sense as training or instruction, but instead as work leading to the mentor taking an active role and being able to observe, practice active listening, and ask questions that may encourage the trainee to practice self-reflection and identify areas for development and actions focused on their development.

In doing this, it is important to bear in mind cognitive and affective processes, such as sincerely confronting one's own needs or self-reflections. These require lots of practice as they often do not feature as a subject on school curricula, not even in extra-curricular activities. In a mentoring role, knowledge of the theory of empowerment may be useful to us. This theory focuses on the resources of the individual or target group with whom we are working. The theory of empowerment is focused on disenfranchisement, social inequality, injustice, and the diversity of individuals, groups, or whole communities. This theory "includes the initiative and actions of persons in gaining power, gaining control over their own life and better access to social resources in order to attain personal and collective goals."[4] This theoretical basis can be a resource for us as mentors when trying to figure out how to approach the trainees with whom we are collaborating individually, but also the group of trainees as a collective.

Although the theory of empowerment emerged from the field of social work, it also offers us useful material when working with young members of marginalised groups – especially if our aim is to empower them and we begin at the personal or individual level. However, the most important element to theory-based practices of empowerment is its focus on individual and/or group resilience and existing resources. This is gained by offering support to the "disenfranchised, marginalised, oppressed in order to recognise their weight and power, with the aim of their inclusion in activities to improve their personal life, but also for social justice".[5]

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4 Kletečki Radović, Marijana (2008): Teorija osnaživanja u socijalnom radu. URL: https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/46184, p. 215
5 Ibid., p. 217

Whichever approach and theory you choose as a basis for implementing your programme, you must bear in mind that for professional empowerment and developing professional abilities and competences, work on the personal empowerment of the groups with which we work is necessary. In addition, the participants' attention should be drawn towards their existing resources, power, and knowledge. You should show in practice what a collaboration based on mutual respect and appreciation looks like. The goal is that they emerge from the training feeling empowered and more confident in themselves and their abilities.

Designing the Job Shadowing and Mentoring Programme

As with many other processes, the Job Shadowing and Mentoring Programme was organised in three parts, each of equal importance in ensuring the programme's quality and success. Thus, in this section we will describe our experiences in preparing, implementing, and completing such a programme. We will state the lessons we learnt, of use to all who decide to organise similar programmes. On the following pages we will share with you in more detail the process of preparing for and carrying out the Job Shadowing and Mentoring Programme. This includes our recommendations, remarks, and experiences, as well as those of the trainees and mentors. We will first describe what you need to pay attention to when preparing and organising such a programme. We will then share our experiences and lessons learnt in carrying out the training, and we will end with remarks on completing the programme.

Preparing the Job Shadowing and Mentoring Programme

Designing the Job Shadowing and Mentoring Programme

To meet the programme goals, you need to prepare in a thorough and timely manner. This is crucial for managing the process as best as possible and so that the mentors in the first programme phase will know how much time and energy they have to invest, what their task involves, and what kind of environment they have to provide in order that the trainees can meet their expectations of the programme.

Our first step in preparing the pilot version of the Job Shadowing and Mentoring Programme was to design and prepare the course contents and organisation. We drew up the programme outline during the planning phase of the project that has financed it. The basic idea for the programme is grounded in our previous experience of working with the Roma population and in civil society organisations, as well as in the research and analyses that we had conducted up to that point. The idea underpinning the Job Shadowing and Mentoring Programme is therefore one of our responses to the problems that young Roma face (i) on the labour market, (ii) in being included in the social and political life of the community, and (iii) with respect to the needs of Roma organisations in civil society.

Drawing on the needs that we had mapped out, and on our own experiences, we reached the conclusion that we wished to complete a national-level programme with ten trainees. This programme would last six months and be split into two phases. Job shadowing in host organisations was planned for the first programme phase, and work with communities and the trainees' completion of mini-projects was planned for the second phase, with the organisers offering meta-mentoring. Immediately before the programme began, we planned an orientation meeting for the project implementation, in which the mentors and trainees would be paired up. During the implementation, one-day-long training sessions for trainees were planned, and a three-day-long evaluation workshop after the end of the programme with all participants.

The next section includes key conclusions and lessons learnt on how to prepare and organise the programme.

How can you decide on the type, length, and intensity of the programme?

When thinking through the type, length, and intensity of the programme, and what it will include, the most important issue is to clearly define programme goals based on real experience and analyse the problems of the group for whom the programme is intended. Previous experience with that group is, of course, crucial and necessary for further work. In addition, the length and intensity of the programme depends on the needs of the trainees (that they themselves foresee), but also on the wider social goal that we want to attain and our financial, time, and other capacities. It was also dependent on our own knowledge and previous experiences. The key question that the Job Shadowing and Mentoring Programme must address is: what does the group with which I am working need and what can I offer?

In our case, we concluded that we wanted to work on the activist empowerment of young Roma and help link them up with civil society organisations operating in that field. Based on our previous experience, we concluded that we would need a six-month-long programme, because a shorter programme would not be long enough to attain the planned goals. Of course, in other cases, a longer period can certainly be considered, but we would not recommend a shorter length of programme. Indeed, we believe that a programme shorter than this one would need to have more narrowly defined goals. We also concluded that this programme needs to be intensive, i.e. full-time hours, and that it needs to be paid and organised via employment contracts. This is because (young) Roma are very often discriminated against in the field of work and employment. They rarely have opportunities to gain work experience, and so this kind of programme can help them with this. Furthermore, we knew that unpaid participation in such a programme would not be possible, as most members of this group cannot afford to volunteer or work for free.

Many other ways of organising such a programme are possible, but its main characteristics must be based on prior experience,

the needs of the group participating in the programme, and the capacity of the organising team.

How should the organising team prepare?

In relation to the team hoping to establish this kind of programme, we recommend that an organisation representing the intended social group, or one working in an equal, horizontal collaboration with that group, should work on the programme implementation. An organising team that consists of such people will help gain the trainees' trust and help them feel secure. We believe it must be led by the principle "nothing about us without us", i.e. no decisions should be made without the group in question.

After having identified who will make up the organising team, the next step is to specify and divide up the different roles, responsibilities, and tasks within the team. We advise that you make projections of the expected amount of time required for organising and preparing the programme. The division of responsibilities within the team should be specified in line with this. In our case, the process from starting preparations up to the beginning of the project took five months. During the project implementation, you need to expect an intensive daily workload. Besides the above, in our case we assigned one person from each of the included organisations to carry out the trainee meta-mentoring, based on the amount of time they had available. We used these details within the team, but also told the programme participants, so as to communicate the division of responsibilities. In our case, the organising team consisted of four people, each of whom was responsible for meta-mentoring three to five trainees. Furthermore, we recommend that you agree on which channels and systems of communication you want to use to establish timely communication and the transfer of information between team members. These channels should ensure transparency and make it easier to collaborate. For example, you might consider short weekly meetings using a videoconferencing tool, or something similar.

What do the formal legal preparations entail?

To ensure there is a formal legal and financial framework underpinning the project implementation, you must prepare templates of the necessary contracts in advance. This will also guarantee legal certainty to the trainees, the host organisations, and to yourself as an employer if the organisation assumes an employer role during the programme.

As this programme did not deal with a classic employment situation in reality, we had to produce several contracts regulating the legal relations between organisations and trainees (workers). As our intention was to produce a high-quality contract, we consulted lawyers specialised in labour rights before the programme began, and we also needed funds for this. Furthermore, as implementing such a programme includes a paid form of mentored job shadowing, we advise you produce a financial budget in advance to ensure there are adequate funds.

The following contracts were necessary for our programme:

A fixed-term employment contract is a classic contract signed by both the worker and employer. In our case it contained all the features of a classic contract. We also included in our employment contracts a period for taking annual holidays, because of the programme's specificities. This was allocated as collective annual holiday (i.e. the same dates for everyone) upon completion of the official programme, but as part of the contracted period of employment.

The Contract on the Secondment of Workers for the Purposes of On-the-job Training, is a tripartite contract in which the signing parties are the trainee (worker), the organisation that seconds the worker for the training (employer) and the host organisation in which the worker (trainee) will carry out their on-the-job training. This contract was necessary as the trainee (worker) did not complete work for the employer, but rather completed their work in the first phase at the host organisation.

If you intend to recompense the host organisation for the mentoring, you will also need to draft a Contract on Cooperation between Organisations, which pays the funds and the organisations that receive the funds.

In addition, to ensure the programme is as compliant as possible with the legal frameworks for worker protection, we named one person from the organising team as a designated person for the protection of worker dignity, as envisioned in the Croatian Labour Act. This person was authorised to receive worker complaints and they were not from an organisation that acts as an employer. In this way, we wanted, first and foremost, to signal that we are committed to worker protection by introducing adequate mechanisms.

Preparing the organisational framework

After we had completed the previous steps, we had done the largest part of the work – we had established a framework that would ensure us stability in preparing the tender and the call for participants. However, before circulating the call to the host organisations and programme candidates, we first defined the Croatian counties in which we planned to implement the programme (geographical quota) and the gender balance between the trainees that we planned on employing (gender quota). In addition, we also specified the formal conditions that each candidate must satisfy in terms of level of education (completed at least three years of secondary school) and age limits (18–30 years).

> **Depending on the target group, we recommend that you specify in advance the formal conditions and parameters key to you achieving your goals, as they will be useful in the selection process.**

Following this, the next step was to ensure there was a network of organisations in all Croatian counties interested in mentoring the trainees. We therefore produced a detailed description of the programme and asked interested organisations to give their replies to the following questions:

What is the Job Shadowing and Mentoring Programme and what are its goals?

What is expected of the host organisation and the mentors?

What is offered to the host organisation?

What are we looking for in the programme candidates?

What are the candidates offered?

How will the candidate selection process take place, and how will the trainees be linked up with the organisations?

Creating a network of interested organisations

After we had completed the detailed programme description, we made a list of contact organisations mapped out for the identified counties. We sent them the invitation to participate and the detailed programme description by email. Besides sending the invitation, we also recommend contacting organisations directly, i.e. those you consider to have the knowledge, capacity, interest, and willingness to participate in this kind of programme.

After the deadline had passed, we held meetings with all interested organisations in their spaces. This was done not only to establish the collaboration, but also to gain an insight into the organisations' conditions of work as well as to resolve any open questions and ambiguities linked with the programme and the mentoring role. Afterwards, we sent all the organisations a questionnaire that they had to fill in to confirm their decision to participate in the programme. We then used the questionnaire in order to present the organisations in more detail to the trainees, that is, those organisations working on topics that the trainees had expressed an interest in.

The key details that we gathered through the questionnaire are as follows:

The name and surname of the person who would take on the role of mentor

The mission, vision, and goals of the organisation

The intended activities that the trainees would be able to carry out in the organisation;

The available space and capacity in relation to equipment (desk, computer, etc.)

At every step, up until the linking of the trainees with the host organisation, we communicated by email, responding to further questions from the interested organisations, and informing them of our progress.

The call to participate in the programme

After having established a network of organisations, we wrote the call for applications to participate in the programme. In the call for applications, we recommend that alongside the programme description, you emphasise the formal conditions that candidates must fulfil, how candidates can apply, the deadline for applications, and the documents that must be sent. As organisers, we asked for a CV, motivational letter, and a description of project ideas that they would like to implement during the programme. In addition, we recommend that you pay special attention to all channels of communications that you use during the period of the call for applications, so that you can reply to potential queries from each candidate promptly.

As concerns the distribution of calls, we recommend that you share the call for applications on your website, via social media, but also by email through your established networks. In addition – to ensure maximum visibility – your partner organisations, networks of collaborators, and other stakeholders can distribute your call for applications. In our case, the invitation was published on our Facebook pages and website and we also distributed it by mail. We also used the Croatian Employment Service's channel, which uses a special process to activate the job advertisement. In our case, the programme was intended for members of the Roma national minority. To further motivate our target group, we organised a visit to Roma settlements in selected Croatian counties to further communicate our call, explain

the programme, and inform potential candidates of it. In promoting the call, pay special attention to ensuring that you focus on the target group for whom you are running the programme.

The candidate selection process

After the deadline for applications has passed, we checked whether all the applications have met the formal conditions. We then set up interview appointments with all candidates who had sent us the complete documentation and satisfied the formal conditions. The interviews were conducted face-to-face in the locations where the candidates lived, to get know them better. The decision to travel to each candidate's local area was made in order that we take on the burden and expense of travelling ourselves. It also made the interview process easier, and we did our best to hold the interviews in a pleasant environment. Before carrying out the interview, we recommend that you make a template with questions to help guide you through the interview. This will ultimately make the interview evaluation process easier too. As for the interview location, we chose to use spaces belonging to the interested organisations that had applied to participate in the programme, or quiet cafes. You could also use videoconferencing tools to conduct the interviews, but we recommend that the interviews are carried out face-to-face, as you can create a more pleasant atmosphere. You also pre-empt the possibility of some candidates not being able to participate in the interview because of their not having access to the necessary technologies.

After we had completed interviews with all candidates, we began the selection process. The candidate selection process depends on the rules you set as an organisation, and how you go about the process. In our case, to ensure transparency, as programme organisers we put out a call for experts interested in serving on the candidate selection committee.

When choosing members of the selection committee, we took care to ensure that the experts did not know the candidates, that they had employment experience in the sector in which

we are operating as organisers, and that they were familiar with the target group for whom the programme was intended.

We then sent the applications of all interviewed candidates to the selection committee, along with our evaluations of the completed interviews, the geographical quota, and the required gender balance among the participants.

Based on the documents received and the necessary conditions that we had established, the selection committee made its final decision on which candidates to pick at a group meeting. At the selection meeting, the organisers made themselves available for potential consultations and further questions. This was useful where the documents sent did not offer insights into all aspects necessary to consider when choosing a candidate.

The trainees' initial (pre-placement) training and the detailed identification of their needs

Before the placements in the host organisations begin, and possibly before matching up the organisations and trainees, we recommend that you offer the trainees pre-placement training. During this pre-placement training, which we advise you complete as a group, you can carry out a more detailed evaluation and identify the participants' existing background knowledge. You also have the opportunity to acquaint the participating organisations with the trainees with the aim of matching up the organisation with the trainees in the best possible and most appropriate way... As for the evaluation of background knowledge, the evaluative process should offer insight into the trainees' knowledge of digital literacy, knowledge about the sector in which they want to work, their work experience and work habits, and all other knowledge that you consider necessary for participation

in the programme. Such an evaluation generates a strong foundation for later evaluating the entire programme – both for the programme organisers and for the trainees.

Matching up the trainees and host organisations

After you, as organisers, have agreed on a collaboration with interested organisations and you are sure that they have the necessary capacity, the next step in the selection process takes place collaboratively, alongside the trainees chosen for the programme. Each trainee is given a list of host organisations and information available from a survey that the host organisation had earlier completed. If the trainees are wavering over their choice of host, a visit to the host organisation can be organised. In this phase, the process of linking the trainees with mentors begins. The trainee chooses the host organisation with whom they want to start working on the programme. The programme organisers then contact the host organisation and send them all the information they have gathered about the trainee, necessary for their accepting the trainee onto the placement. The programme organiser can suggest which organisation might be the best choice for a trainee, e.g. based on the aforementioned pre-placement training and their evaluation of the trainee's knowledge and skills. This choice could relate to the issues the organisation works on, or their methods of work.

The matching process is considered complete when the trainee's choice of host organisation coincides with the host organisation accepting that trainee. If several trainees choose the same host organisation, you must further identify whether the organisation has enough capacity and can offer enough opportunities if they accept several trainees. If the host organisation can accept a smaller number of trainees than the number of trainees interested in the organisation concerned, then the host organisation must choose the number of trainees that can be accepted on the placement.

After the matching process has been completed, the host organisation selection process is over, and all other organisations not chosen by the candidates need to be thanked for their cooperation.

Preparing key documents and materials

We advise that before the beginning of the programme, you prepare all important documents and other necessary materials. These may include:

Preparing templates for the mentors' monthly reports;

Preparing templates for the trainees' monthly reports;

Preparing templates for the trainees' project ideas;

Preparing templates for evaluating the first phase of the mentoring programme;

Preparing templates for the trainees' final reports;

Preparing templates for evaluating the completed training sessions, webinars etc.;

Producing a common communication channel exclusively for mentors, to exchange advice, experience, and provide mutual support;

Producing a common communication channel for the organisers and trainees, for the quick exchange of information.

In addition, we advise that you compile a detailed document that includes all the main information about the Job Shadowing and Mentoring Programme. It should include all the organisational details, information about mentoring, information about the rights and commitments of the organisers, mentors, and trainees, the time frame and known deadlines, and all other information about the programme contents that you have specified in advance. You can also describe the compulsory content in the document that all trainees should work through in the first phase of the programme. Depending on your sector, you can consider recommendations for fieldwork. Furthermore, the handbook you are holding can be an additional resource in putting together such a document.

How to prepare and hold training sessions, and how to choose content

The pre-placement training sessions and the evaluation of the train-ees' knowledge and skills is also of use for the individual training sessions and mentoring. These sessions should match up with the assessed needs of the individual trainees. In addition, you can also consider completing further pre-placement training just with the mentors, in order to go through the goals you want to achieve togeth-er during the programme.

We recommend that you carry out the main training face-to-face, but for additional training sessions you could also consider shorter webi-nars. Special attention must definitely be paid to the earlier described process of individual empowerment. This should be structured and carried out by the mentor and yourself. This is because one of the main aims of the programme is to empower young people to believe in themselves more and to build up their self-confidence. Besides that, as we will clarify in somewhat more detail at the end of the handbook, we recommend that you ensure the evaluation meeting is integrated as part of the official programme, rather than holding it after the official programme has ended.

Finally, we recommend that you produce a directory of knowledge available to all trainees. You can do this by making a shareable project map on a cloud service. This directory needs to contain the support-ing literature and information about the training topics that you plan to cover. It should also contain texts that could be used by the train-ees as useful sources for learning more about the work on the chosen topics after completing the programme. In our case, we decided to make a directory of knowledge during the programme, to offer fur-ther support to the trainees and acknowledge the fact that for most programme participants, this would be their first practical experience of work in the civic sector. You can add to the knowledge directory throughout the programme, as can the trainees.

Implementing the Job Shadowing and Mentoring Programme

If you have reached the implementation phase of the Job Shadowing and Mentoring Programme, we congratulate you on the large amount of work you have completed. Now for the nicer, more fun part of the programme – its implementation and work with trainees and organisations included in the process. The next section covers our experiences and also offers recommendations that will make it easier for you to complete the implementation phase as successfully and pleasantly as possible for all concerned.

Establishing and maintaining communication channels with trainees and mentors

During the implementation phase it is important to clearly establish structured ways of communicating from the start. The trainees and the mentors must always know who they can turn to – and how – if they have any questions, suggestions etc. We therefore recommend that you identify for each trainee-mentor pair one or two persons with whom they will communicate at appropriate times, and whom they can reach. This person should check in with them regularly to see if they need further support.

In addition, establishing regular collective communication between the organiser and all the trainees at weekly meetings is a good idea. It is important for team building, learning communication skills, and collaborating. This is also an opportunity for learning specific skills necessary for work, such as organising meetings, note and minute taking, moderating and facilitating meetings etc. In this vein, a good organisational practice is to entrust the trainees with the moderation and minute taking at the weekly team meetings, using a rotation principle.

Besides the weekly meeting, as in all teams, in this kind of team it is useful to make open channels available for the exchange of information. Examples include a mailing list or communication by email for

more formal forms of communication and for important notifications and information sharing. This also helps with the faster exchange of information via social networks and other similar channels, depending on the preferences of the trainees and the various teams leading the programme.

Besides communication among trainees, maintaining regular communication among mentors may also be useful, given that during their work they may encounter similar situations or problems and be able to offer one another peer support.

Training sessions, empowerment, and mentoring

This kind of programme should be primarily focused on empowering the participants, but also on ensuring they gain the specific knowledge and skills that they may need. Besides the placement, it is therefore important to provide training sessions that will help them both during the programme and later on. These training sessions depend on the group and the programme goal – in our case, we judged that the participants would benefit from training sessions that cover a wide range of topics in the fields of human rights, minority rights, and combating discrimination, as well as activism, media literacy, and public policy. It is also important to assess whether the group or participants require training in certain key skills that will open the door to employment in various contexts. This is especially the case if – for all or some of them – this programme is their first, or one of their first, experiences of work. In certain cases, it is therefore useful to include content that deals with organising the working day, use of IT and other tools necessary for work, the rules of written communication etc. How to carry out these training programmes, of course, depends on the participants' needs and the opportunities available to the team – this may include webinars, seminars, several-day-long training sessions, relevant literature sent to the participants to read, or other forms of non-formal and informal learning.

If you plan to implement the programme with a group of young people, we recommend that you organise meetings more often, especially in the first programme phase of the programme. This will help with building trust in the group from the very beginning, including between the programme participants and the members of the organising team. On the other hand, our experience has shown that during the longer training sessions, we had more space to engage in the process of personal empowerment and getting to know one another. This did not occur during the one-day-long, monthly training sessions to the same extent. We therefore believe that both kinds of training sessions offer good quality alternatives, depending on the goal and emphasis of your programme.

> **We believe that it cannot be emphasised enough that a personalised approach to the trainees is especially important when working on such a programme.**

The trainee group may share certain interests and experiences, but no group is homogenous, of course. If we really want each trainee to work on this programme in their own individual way as much as possible, then it must be adapted to their individual needs, motivations, knowledge, skills etc. We therefore need to find a balance between a personalised approach adapted to the needs of each participant on the one hand, and work on building the group and improving knowledge and skills common to the whole group on the other.

The general training sessions designed for the whole group represent the lowest common denominator of what trainees should get out of this programme, and what all of them will most likely use in life, work, and activism. Yet to maximise the benefits to individual participants, you also need to include an opportunity for personalised training sessions that respond directly to their needs. The trainees' requests or needs can define these sessions, as you encounter them when choosing the participants or during the programme itself. Besides this being important for the development and empowerment of individual participants, it is also crucial for the development of the group. It is important to recognise that we don't all have the same interests, skills, or knowledge, and that diverse contributions are not only necessary but also desired. This will help build a solidary and well-functioning group, reduce potential tensions among the train-

ees, and give everyone a sense of learning based on their own needs and opportunities. If the organisers' communicate this way of behaving by setting an example, this can further help with transparency in managing the group process and individual processes, and encourage greater understanding among the programme participants.

Organising the work

As concerns organising the work itself, besides regular communication, it is important to introduce a clear division of tasks with clearly defined deadlines. It is also important to regularly track working hours to ensure that the programme participants are not overburdened, yet that they also have enough tasks for the planned working day.

As concerns the work, you should think of tools that will make the participants' job easier for them, and you should make these tools available to them. Our experience was that cloud-based work was a valuable and important tool, as the participants were working across the full territory of Croatia. It was also important for them in gaining experience in how to self-organise their work, given the technological and other changes in work habits taking place in the contemporary world. However, in so doing, it is important to bear in mind that not all participants have equal levels of support nor the equipment to complete such work, including equal access to the internet. If this is the case, the programme should provide the equipment.

The first programme phase

As we explained in the introduction, our programme was organised in two phases – the first three-month period was focused on the participants' working in specific civil society organisations with mentoring, i.e. job shadowing. We believe that three months was long enough for this part of the programme. In this time, the participants were able to form a connection with the host organisation and its net-

work of collaborators, gain insight into the everyday functioning of the organisation's work, and gain the most important knowledge and experience. In this process, it is important that the host organisation gives the trainees the opportunity to try out a wider range of tasks that include office-based work, work with users, other organisations, (external) associates etc.

A personalised work plan made by the mentor for each trainee (with, if necessary, the organisers' support) is desirable. We believe that it isn't a good idea for the personalised plan to be too rigid because of the need for flexibility and sensitivity to the trainees' individual needs. The host organisation and organisers need to be prepared for the possibility that the trainees' expectations and interests can shift during the placement itself. After the placement, they will have better insight into the topics and work of the host organisation. In addition, the organisers need to factor in a need, in some cases, for further help required of them in this phase. This may include additional support to those trainees who require it, as well as extra tasks for those trainees who want materials that the host organisation cannot provide them with at that moment. Of course, each intervention ought to be established in agreement with the mentors and trainees.

Building up trust and a relationship built on equality and mutual respect between the mentor and trainee is especially important. A two-way openness in communication and the creation of a safe environment for the trainee's work in the organisation is also key.

The second programme phase

In the second programme phase, the trainees return to their local communities and organisations. Upon their arrival, they work on applying the previously learnt knowledge and skills by carrying out mini-projects that they have designed themselves. They will receive help from the organiser, and possible also the (former) host organisations.

In our case, we made various options available to the trainees in the second phase of the programme, for which different approaches were needed. Although offering various options requires more effort from

the organisers when compared with a single model for everyone, we consider listening to the needs of trainees and working with them on finding the most appropriate solution to be crucial. Whatever approach you pick for implementing the second programme phase, it is important to consider this approach well in advance. Depending on your decision, you should start preparing at an appropriate time to ensure the transition from the first to the second phase of the programme is as smooth as possible for all concerned.

Our programme included several different ways of organising work in the second phase:

Two trainees, who had not worked in the existing organisations before, carried out their own campaigns in their local communities, without getting involved in organisation-based work. In these cases, it was especially important to ensure the programme organisers followed their work and mentored them closely;

Three trainees asked to carry on working in the host organisations from the first phase. Besides implementing their mini-projects, they were able to carry on following their mentor's work, with mentoring and support from the organisers;

Two trainees carried out mini-projects in the organisations they had nominated for participation in the programme. Besides mentoring, the organiser made it possible for them to directly contribute to the work of their local organisations;

One trainee found a second host organisation for implementing the mini-project, whose aim was to offer support to Roma pre-schoolers;

Two trainees carried out their mini-projects in one of the two organisations that organised the programme.

As in the first phase, it is important to continue having regular weekly meetings and communicate regularly with the trainees, in order to offer them the greatest possible amount of support in their independent work on implementing the project. Potential difficulties or problems can also be caught and resolved as early as possible too. In this phase, as the host-organisation mentoring has already ended and the second phase has been focused on the trainees' independent work, regular contact with the mentors in the host organisations comes to an end. We also advise that you continue holding short webinars to share additional knowledge with the trainees, for instance on in-

dependent work or on topics in which they have shown an interest during the programme.

You will need to sign or extend a contract on cooperation with all organisations in which the trainees will work in this phase, to ensure continuity as regards the programme's legal compliance with the relevant legislative framework(s). These rules may differ depending on the national legislative framework. We therefore recommend that you become informed of all these details well in advance to ensure all aspects of the programme are legally compliant. This will ensure the continuous protection of all those involved in implementing the programme.

In addition, if the trainees need a space in which to implement the mini-project, e.g. for group work or similar, we recommend that you get in touch with relevant members of local government at the appropriate time, as well as with organisations working in that field.

As concerns the application of knowledge and skills gained through implementing their own mini-projects in the second phase, the main task for the programme organiser is to evaluate the feasibility of project ideas while the project is running, as well as other aspects such as resources, networks of contacts, existing knowledge, and skills etc. It is therefore important to offer support throughout the implementation phase through continual communication with the trainees, as well as through operational and specific suggestions for revising the project plans. For instance, you can complete a practice run of the project implementation process wherein trainees learn to pay attention to details and grasp the framework for implementing the mini-projects. Through such work, participants become aware of the need to make good quality preparations for the mini-project both in general and for specific activities. They gain experience in putting their own ideas into practice, which aids the process of individual empowerment.

In our programme, implementing the mini-projects did not include managing a budget. One option would be to make a smaller budget available to the trainees, so that during the implementation they can gain experience of how to deal with finances responsibly. On the

other hand, the advantage to carrying out a mini-project without funds may be that trainees learn to put their own ideas and activities into practice with the existing human and other resources available. This especially applies to situations in which they are carrying out non-formal initiatives or are working by themselves. You can make a mini-budget available in various ways. One option is that you, the organiser, provide a centralised budget that trainees can access when necessary by making an application. This approach can help participants learn to better explain their choices and write better applications for funding that they need to carry out activities. A second possibility is that, at the beginning of the second phase, each trainee has a mini-budget at their disposal for implementing the mini-project, which they must justify in writing in the project proposal for the second phase of the programme. On the one hand, if the same budget is made available to all trainees, this can make the project implementation easier. It also offers everyone the opportunity to gain knowledge of how to manage a budget. On the other hand, a situation may arise whereby everyone needs a budget to implement their mini-projects. In some cases, this can result in a need for financial and administrative repurposing, which can create problems for certain forms of programme funding. A further option is to allocate a certain amount of the general fee paid to the host organisations for the trainees' implementation of the activities. This can be made available to them from the moment their project plan for the second programme phase is approved. Of course, if you plan to implement the programme using donor funds, in the budget you can include a special line explaining the amount that you consider appropriate for the length of the implementation phase and the number of trainees included in the programme. You can certainly also find (local) sponsors who can provide equipment necessary for work, e.g. equipment for creative workshops with children, or food and drinks for the workshops.

Whatever you decide, we recommend that you include the issue of a budget for trainees in the programme's planning phase. This is especially the case if you wish to include the budget in the second project phase, because then you will need to acquire the necessary funds, particularly if the programme is funded by donors.

Completing the Job Shadowing and Mentoring Programme

Programme evaluation

When you finish the programme, and certainly during the contracted period, you must hold a final evaluation meeting at which all trainees, mentors, and organisers on the programme meet for the first time since the orientation meeting. We recommend that the time and date, length, and location of the meeting be published immediately after the programme begins to ensure maximum participation.

In our case, the final meeting was planned for the period after the completion of the programme, and the meeting was three days long. Despite the advent of the global pandemic, as described in the introduction, we managed to organise a one-day evaluation meeting, which we linked up with the other three-day-long training session. However, as some trainees already had other work commitments and the contracted commitment to participating in meetings and training sessions was no longer in operation, unfortunately not all of us were able to meet up.

We therefore recommend that you avoid holding training and evaluation sessions outside the time frame for implementing the programme. Holding it within the contracted time frame will ensure full participation, because participants cannot always attend after the programme has ended because of work or other circumstances. You should organise the final meeting at the very end of the programme. In addition, we recommend that during the final meeting, all trainees are awarded an individualised confirmation of their participation in the Job Shadowing and Mentoring Programme. This serves as proof of their successful participation in the programme, but also as a demonstration to future employers of the practical experience, knowledge, and skills they have acquired.

Continuing the collaboration

The end of the programme usually also means the end of a collaboration between organiser and trainee.

Yet, as you have collaborated, offered support, and built up relations of mutual trust over a certain period of time, we recommend that you consider setting up a formal or informal system for following trainees' progress. You could also include further forms of collaboration or regular communication – of course, provided that all those involved consent to this.

In our case, one set of trainees became members of one of our organisations and we continue to communicate with them through established channels. We pass useful information on to them, and as organisers, we think about how we can include the trainees in our future activities.

In addition, if you plan on carrying out this kind of programme regularly, the trainees who have completed the programme can be tutors to the next generation of trainees. You can thus ensure an additional mode of support and the possibility of further networking.

Main recommendations and messages

01 For the programme implementation, make sure you include the full amount of time that you will need to adequately invest in the design, preparing, and implementing phases and in the follow-up programme. We therefore recommend that you produce an estimated time frame required for all project phases. You should specify the distribution of tasks and responsibilities within your team in line with this. It will depend on the number of participants, their needs, and your programme goals.

02 We recommend that the organising team tasked with implementing this kind of programme is made up of members of an organisation that represents the social group for which the programme is intended, or which engages in an equal, horizontal collaboration with that group. Ensuring such a team helps gain the trainees' trust and helps them feel secure. We believe it is crucial to be led by the principle "nothing about us without us", i.e. no decisions should be made without the group in question.

03 You can adapt the contents and length of the programme to the conditions and options you have at your disposal. Yet, the key point is that you base the main programme elements on your prior experience, the needs of the group that ought to be participating in the programme, and your capacity and abilities as an organising team.

04 Make sure you begin establishing the formal legal and financial framework for the programme implementation early enough, in order to ensure the legal certainty of all programme participants. This includes you as an employer, but also an adequate budget with which to pay the trainees' wages.

05 Depending on the target group, we recommend that you specify the formal conditions and parameters in the preparation phase. These will be crucial for keeping a record of goals attained, which can also be of use in the selection process.

06 The trainee selection process depends on the rules that you as organisers establish. If you decided to use a selection committee to make decisions, the criteria for choosing the committee members ought to include there being no work-related or personal links with the candidates. They should have employment experience in the sector in which you work or volunteer as organisers and they should be familiar with the target group for whom the programme is intended.

07 We especially emphasise that a personalised approach to the trainees is particularly important in working on such a programme. You should therefore set aside enough time for capacity building, both for yourself and for the mentors in the host organisations, for work on mentoring skills and the individual empowerment of participants, and for the creation of an encouraging atmosphere for building relationships of mutual trust with the individual participants, as well as within the whole group.

08 During the implementation phase it is important to clearly establish structured ways of communicating from the start. The trainees and the mentors must always know who they can turn to – and how – if they have any questions, suggestions etc. We therefore recommend that you identify for each trainee–mentor pair one or two persons with whom they will communicate at appropriate times, and whom they can reach. This person should check in with them regularly to see if they need further support.

09 As concerns organising the work, besides regular communication, it is important to introduce a clear division of tasks with clearly defined deadlines. It is also important to regularly track working hours to ensure that the programme participants are not overburdened, yet that they also have enough tasks to cover the planned working day.

10 In the second phase, you should also make several alternative options for carrying out the programme available. It is crucial to emphasise in this phase that you have to give the trainees the opportunity to carry out their mini-projects independently. At the same time, you must make it clear that, in doing their work, they have your support as organiser.

11 Whatever you decide, we recommend that you include the issue of a budget for trainees in the programme's planning phase. This is especially important if you want to include a budget in the second project phase, because in that case you will need to acquire the necessary funds. This needs to be planned well in advance, particularly if the programme is funded by donors.

12 Plan the final meeting and evaluation session at the end of the programme, yet still within the official and contracted period of the programme. During the meeting, you can set aside a certain amount of time for a group discussion on the opportunities for, and interest in, further forms of collaboration.

13 In summary, as you will have collaborated with the trainees for a certain period, offered them support, and built up relations of mutual trust, we recommend that you consider setting up a formal or informal system for tracking trainees' progress. You could also include further forms of collaboration or regular communication – of course, provided that all those involved consent to this. In addition, if you plan on implementing this kind of programme regularly, the trainees who have completed the programme can tutor the next generation of trainees. In this way, you can ensure an additional mode of support and opportunities for further networking.