

## The 'what' and 'how' on (e-)coaching

*Coaching possibilities within the PSO Youth Zone Programme*

You are a young professional working for a Southern partner organisation or will start working for one in the near future. Your assignment takes place within the scope of the PSO Youth Zone programme. The Youth Zone Programme was created to stimulate young professionals to acquire in-depth experience in the work of civil society organisations in developing countries and the -often complex- processes of capacity development.

The success of your assignment depends on many different (f)actors of which you yourself are probably the most important one. It is our experience that it is crucial for young professionals to have sound support mechanisms in place that you can tap into. As each individual and assignment is different, no blueprint can be made. Each time one should look for the best combination of actors for support, being your supervisor at your job, your contact person from the sending organisation, peers, a mentor and/or an external coach.

By an external coach we mean a professional in coaching, either in the country itself or from another country. When the coach is in another country or in another region of the country we are talking about distance coaching or e-coaching. In this memo we will explain what a coach can do for you, what the difference is between face to face coaching and long distance coaching and how to act when you are interested in starting a coaching trajectory.

*I am much stronger now. The positive effects are self confidence, more harmony in the way I work. I am more successful in reaching the goals I set for myself. - coachee (2007) -*

### What can a coach do for you?

As said before, when you start with a new job, professional support is important. However, this is not always possible. Besides that, in another culture people have different ideas about what should be understood by 'professional support'. Professional coaching can be a good option to complement the other support mechanisms mentioned earlier.

Coaching can be described as a process that stimulates you to perform and grow by helping you to

**(i) Explore the current situation**

e.g. How do I end up in a conflict situation each time I am working with Jose?

**(ii) Set goals**

e.g. When working with Jose I will listen to his arguments and explain my own thoughts without disputing – I will look for common ground.

**(iii) Explore new opportunities**

**(iv) Take action and**

**(v) Take away resistance**

Often personal convictions are hindering your performance (e.g. I only want to do things that I already manage).

The basic idea behind coaching is that in potential you yourself have the solutions for a specific problem. In this way, a coach is different from a trainer or an advisor. A coach helps you to formulate a specific learning question. By observing, questioning and confronting you, a coach will help you to find your own solution, strengthen your self-confidence and stimulate personal growth. One could say that a coach strengthens your problem solving capabilities.

*In most cases the actual situation doesn't change. However the coachees view of the situation changes, as does his/ her way to act within the situation. -one of the coaches-*

Coaches with personal experience in working as an advisor or a trainer within a civil society organisation can often also provide assistance on how to deal with content related issues (e.g. how to start an organisation analysis?, how to promote participation of the target group?). However, both coach and coachee should be aware that such advisory tasks are an extra asset and not the core of the coaching relation. Furthermore, it is important that the partner organisation agrees with the coaching sessions. Agreements should be made about what can be discussed about the work situation, especially when it concerns a local coach, working in the NGO-sector. Independency should be guaranteed in such a case.

The content and outcomes of the coaching trajectory are private and stay between you and the coach. A professional coach is not entitled to share information with your organisation, the Dutch sending organisation and/or PSO!

### **What is specific about e-coaching?**

E-coaching is a popular name for long distance coaching. This can be done either by e-mail, phone/skype or msn. Face to face coaching and long distance coaching share some important characteristics, like mutual trust, secrecy, a coaching contract, regular communication moments. However, there are also important differences. The most important characteristics for long-distance coaching are:

- location is no issue;
- e-mails can be stored, this enables reflection in further stages of the coaching;
- often communication moments are short (e-mail);
- coach and coachee can communicate when they feel like it;
- coachee can share his/her experience directly after a specific situation has occurred;
- body language is not observed;
- importance of clear written communication;
- one could choose for a coach from the same cultural background.

### **When to apply for an external coach?**

It is important to note that professional coaching is a possibility, not a necessity. Not every young professional will feel the need to make use of the services of an external coach. In the event of a problem situation, in which the young professional has tried different alternatives and has reflected on the situation, the need for an external coach might arise. In most cases, a clear learning question will be attached to this situation and can be explored and sharpened further with the professional coach.

## **Are you interested?**

All young professionals within the PSO Youth Zone programme have the possibility to make use of a professional coach, either in the country itself or abroad by long distance coaching. The costs of the coaching trajectory will be paid out of your budget for training that is part of the terms and conditions for your posting.<sup>1</sup> It is therefore important that you notify and discuss the plans with both the Dutch sending organisation and your contact person at PSO.

## **Cost and duration of the trajectory**

A coaching trajectory is a goal oriented trajectory based on the learning question of the coachee. This means there is a clear start and end of the relation. The first contact between coach and coachee is used to explore and specify the learning question, as mentioned earlier.

It is PSO's experience that a coaching trajectory takes between 3 to 6 months, with around 6 and a maximum of 10 hours of working time for the coaches. This can be filled in by face to face meetings or by long distance coaching. Long distance coaching can include both phone calls - that can last as long as 1 hour- and e-mail contacts, that can be dealt with in a couple of minutes.

Cost per hour differs significantly per coach. In the coaching contract expected costs are included. The maximum costs per hour can not exceed €150 euros (this also includes telephone costs made). For placements shorter than a year, maximum costs for the E-coaching trajectory are €1000,-. For placements longer than a year, maximum costs for the E-coaching trajectory are €1500,-. The coach will write down the costs made and send a final invoice to the coachee or the contact person from the Dutch sending organisation. The Dutch sending organisation will notify PSO and claim the costs following the procedures for training costs.

## **How to find a professional coach?**

As coaching is such a personal issue, it is important to select your own coach. To guarantee that you work with a professional coach, you should ask for:

- (i) a degree in professional coaching
- (ii) a minimum of 2 years working experience as a professional coach
- (iii) an official registration as a professional coach

PSO is in contact with a couple of professional Dutch coaches that can provide long distance coaching. If you are interested to know more about these professionals, please contact your PSO contact person from the department of Personnel services Overseas.

Other possibilities to find a professional coach in the Netherlands include:

School voor Coaching – [www.schoolvoorcoaching.nl](http://www.schoolvoorcoaching.nl)

Associatie voor Coaching – [www.associatievoorcoaching.nl](http://www.associatievoorcoaching.nl)

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<sup>1</sup> Within the so called Starter modality for Dutch Young professionals no additional budget for training during the posting is provided. They are however also entitled to make use of a professional Coach. The maximum budget is €1000,-.

Nederlandse orde voor beroepscoaches – [www.nobco.nl](http://www.nobco.nl)

Stichting coach – [www.stichtingcoach.nl](http://www.stichtingcoach.nl)

At the moment PSO has no contact with coaches outside of the Netherlands. When you prefer a coach in another country, but experience difficulties in finding one, please contact the Dutch sending organisation or PSO to help you find a solution.

### **How do you evaluate the coaching trajectory?**

PSO is interested to hear how the coaching trajectory has worked out for you and how it influenced your placement. You can integrate this evaluation into your final report at the end of your placement, under paragraph *Other matters*. You can provide information about your request for professional coaching, the attached learning question, the coaching process and the results.

### **References**

Bakhuisen, K (2007) *Evaluatie rapport van het traject 'Begeleiding van junior deskundigen op afstand – een pilot project van PSO, ICCO en VSO'*. Evaluatie uitgevoerd in opdracht van PSO.

Engel, A.J. (2008?) "Inleiding" and "E-coaching", chapters 1 and 16 from *Het Handboek voor Coaching – Deel I*, Life University.