



The first recorded modern usage of the term 'mentor' can be traced back to 1699 when the book "Les Aventures de Telemaque" by the French writer François Fénelon was published. In the book the lead character is that of mentor. This is the source of the modern use of the word **mentor**: a trusted friend, counselor or teacher, usually a more experienced person.

EUMA Sweden's first mentorship programme is around 300 years younger and was carried out during the second half of the 1990's. Today, EUMA Sweden is half-way through its fourth mentorship project. Project leader is former EUMA Sweden chairman Brittmarie Urve, who has been involved in previous mentorship projects, both as a mentor and project leader.

This time five mentors and five mentees from different parts of Sweden showed interest in participating in the programme which has been running since the beginning of this year. Some of the couples live and work close to each other and have been able to meet on a regular basis. Some have longer distances between them (up to 200 km) and can therefore not meet so often. Instead they communicate over the phone or via e-mail and meet more irregularly. Traditionally, the mentor should be older and more experienced than the mentee, but it could also be that you come from different work environments or are in a new phase of your work life and therefore feel you need guidance.

As part of the mentorship programme, EUMA Sweden arranged seminars on the topic "Knowledge/ understanding and communication develops" during October on three different locations around Sweden, with in total close to 100 participants. The well-known Swedish rhetoric expert Barbro Fällman opened the evenings by giving an inspiring speech about how to succeed in private and professional communication. The participants got some very useful tips on how to be persuasive in your daily work, when needed, and

how to hold absorbing speeches in your private life. During the evening, mentors and mentees participating in the present mentorship project were also invited to share their experiences, together with project leader Brittmarie Urve. They all agreed that being part of a mentorship programme is inspiring and an important part of your personal and career development. It means mutual learning and gives you new prospects and insight, whether you are a mentor or a mentee. The mentees meant that being able to reflect upon situations in your own reality together with an outsider is a good way to develop and to get support in coming to the right decisions that guide you in your future career development.

In a mentorship relation, the mentee is the one who is to be the driving person. He/she should set up the goals, plan the agenda for the meetings and summarize. The mentor's role is to listen, guide and help the mentee to find the solutions him-/herself – not to serve the ready solutions. It is also important that you are open and honest towards each other and that your participation in the programme is supported by your manager in order to get understanding. These three seminars showed that there is a big interest in mentorship programmes amongst EUMA members and their guests, and when this mentorship project is closed in connection with the EUMA Sweden AGM in March 2010, there will, hopefully, be a basis for new mentorship projects also in the future. And those who are part of the present mentorship project have all got friends for life, also after the project is finished!

**Eva Borg**  
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Ulla Riis, mentor, and Neide Montanari, mentee. (To the right in the background, project leader Brittmarie Urve)