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ABOUT THE SUPER PSIHOLOG PROJECT²

Project Starting Points

Supervised Practice as Assurance of High Quality Psychological Services

The aim of psychological services is to aid in the development of users' potential and the strengthening of their mental health, as well as providing support for the well-being of society as a whole. In Slovenia there are currently around 2,000 psychologists, although the exact number is unknown because there are no records of all the individuals who provide psychological services. Such individuals work in different fields of practice: health care, education, social welfare, public institutions, army and the police, civil protection, penal institutions and justice services, private businesses, state administration bodies, non-governmental organizations, and so on. They deal with various groups, such as children, young people, adults, and the vulnerable. They participate in the elimination and prevention of mental disorders and minor psychological disturbances, and in the creation of an environment that will enable the optimal development of individuals, groups, and organizations. Due to the fact that psychological services are embedded into various fields of practice, and that the related professionals work with almost all sectors of the population, it is important that efforts are made to ensure the provision of high quality psychological services.

This can be achieved if psychologists' develop all the competences required for successful work performance. Although the acquisition of these competences starts during a psychologist's years of academic study, it is not expected, or possible, that all these

2 A part of this chapter was presented at the 2nd Academic Economic Congress (Podlesek, 2015).

abilities will be developed to the desired level on starting practice. This holds true for both general and specialized study programmes which educate and train individuals for practice in a specific domain of psychology. The Universities of Ljubljana and Maribor have decided, due to the small labour market in Slovenia, to offer non-differentiated BA and MA psychology study programmes which will enable graduates to obtain employment in different areas of work. However, such programmes cannot develop all the competences which are required for performance in a specific domain of work. Moreover, during the study period, whether non-differentiated or differentiated, students have few opportunities to enter health, education and other institutions, for a number of reasons. First, students have to acquire the required theoretical basis which can then be integrated into their later practice, as practice without the proper theoretical foundation and fundamental knowledge of the field will lead to low quality outcomes. Second, the study programmes in Slovenia do not receive sufficient resources to provide adequate financial reimbursement to any cooperating external institutions. Organizational and financial connections between faculties and external institutions (learning centres) are thus difficult (if not impossible) to establish and maintain. Instead of organized and well-planned training in learning centres, students must thus find and arrange for their own study internships³. Moreover, external institutions accept students for short-term internships and do not provide any financial support, due to limited human and financial resources. Students' performance in such cases is adjusted to the needs of the institutions, and not to their own needs as learners. The study internships that do occur rarely follow a programme that has been planned in advance, and the mentors who take part in such projects have usually not been properly trained for mentoring. As such, the internships generally do not succeed in systematically developing all the required competences, and the results to a large degree depend on the mentor's competences and his/her motivation with regard to mentoring.

For the protection of clients it is essential that the performance of psychology students is adequately monitored and guided at all times. Students who have not had enough experience in working with clients, cannot and should not carry out psychological treatment on their own. Competences are gradually developed, first within the study programme practicum and self-work, work with colleagues, other healthy individuals, and later on during internships when students work in a real setting and meet real groups of clients. When they enter into relationships with their clients, students need constant individual supervision, as offered by faculty members or staff working at the external institutions where the internship takes place, in order to ensure proper treatment for clients without causing harm.

3 The internship is students' practical training during their academic studies, and its duration is rather short. Different psychology study programs assign different credits to internship (from 3 to 15 ECTS points and more). One ECTS point stands for 25–30 hours of study obligations. At the University of Ljubljana, one ECTS point in the internship can stand for 20 hours of student workload in the work organization outside of the university, and the remaining hours are devoted to home assignments (literature study, reflective practice, diary writing, and internship reports).

Constant individual supervision in the workplace, at least at the beginning of internship, is either impossible or possible for only a short period of time, due to limited human and financial resources in faculties and external institutions. While individual supervision is feasible within the framework of practicum carried out at a university, it is less so in external institutions where supervisors need to do their own work while offering mentoring and supervision to students. Students can thus be offered the chance to monitor a supervisor's work, but it is rare that supervisors can provide supervision of the students' own work in this context. As a result, after graduation most psychology students enter the labour market with inadequately developed competences, something that holds true in many countries around the world. There is thus a need for guided and gradual inclusion of novice psychologists as they enter a particular field of practice, and for such assistance to be provided by experienced colleagues.

It is only when the individual enters the workplace and faces real problems, clients, and ethical dilemmas, that he/she starts integrating theoretical knowledge and practical skills, developing self-awareness, reflectivity, personal integrity, and ethical competence. Such developments cannot occur with study programmes, because these do not take place in a real work setting. A young psychologist should thus be helped in the workplace in order to develop his/her professional competences more quickly, in an appropriate manner, and to the expected level. This can be achieved by provision of mentoring or supervision in the early phases of a psychologist's career.

An effective method of ensuring the provision of high quality psychological services is the implementation of one-year supervised practice⁴ for novice psychologists or those early in their careers. In Slovenia, however, such supervised practice is not required in all fields of psychological services. Although individuals working in the fields of health care, social welfare and education need to pass a professional work assessment exam after a 9-month to 1-year traineeship, and this process is clearly defined (see the chapter *The Situation in the Field of the Traineeship for Psychologists in Slovenia*), there are no regulations with regard to offering psychological services in other fields of practice, and the contents and modalities of the training that is offered are not clearly defined. Slovenian psychologists are thus unanimous in their opinion that the current inequality of standards for psychologist training in different workplaces, and lack of regulation of the profession, which allows low quality services to be delivered, is not acceptable. This is why Slovenian psychologists as a group have been calling for the endorsement of the Psychological Practice Act. However, for various reasons this call has so far been unsuccessful. The regulation of certain fields of psychology, e.g., in health care, is a consequence of measures approved by the competent authorities who introduced the regulation of all employees in the

4 Supervised practice is implemented after leaving university. Before entering supervised practice, the psychologist must complete five years of academic studies in psychology (equivalent to 300 ECTS points) and obtain an MA in psychology.

related field, including psychologists. As such, those fields for which the authorities have not recognized the need for regulation remain unregulated. Therefore, it is understandable that Slovenian psychologists have recognized and approved the standards of psychological education and practice developed by the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations – EFPA, as a type of (self-)regulation in the profession, which can help increase the quality of work in the area of psychology, regardless of the lack of legislation in this regard. The Slovenian Psychologists' Association, in collaboration with various departments of psychology, has been striving towards the implementation of these standards, which were proposed by the European Certificate in Psychology – *EuroPsy*.

***EuroPsy* – European Certificate in Psychology**

EuroPsy sets a unique standard for the education and training of psychologists in Europe (Lunt, Peiró, Poortinga, & Roe, 2015), helping to ensure quality services for clients. There are two types of certificate: basic and specialist. The *EuroPsy* Basic Certificate demonstrates that the holder possesses the basic qualifications needed for psychological work. In contrast, the *EuroPsy* Specialist Certificate demonstrates that the holder is qualified for the performance of more demanding, specialist tasks.

The standards for obtaining the *EuroPsy* Basic Certificate are as follows (EFPA, 2015): successful completion of five years (300 ECTS) of study in psychology, one year of supervised practice and a positive assessment of the related competences by a supervisor, certifying that the psychologist is competent for the provision of individual psychological services, as well as a pledge made by the psychologist to engage in ethical conduct.

EuroPsy enables comparability between the academic education offered in different states and universities in Europe, and so ensures equal standards of psychologist qualification. The *EuroPsy* regulations do not require all study programmes to be the same, but instead allow a diversity of content and various orientations of bachelors' and masters' programmes in psychology. The fundamental competences which have to be developed by all study programmes, and which provide the basis for obtaining the *EuroPsy* Certificate, are (EFPA, 2015): orientation in psychology (overview of specialities and fields in psychology, methods and history of psychology); knowledge of different domains of psychology (general psychology, neuro- and biopsychology, cognitive, differential, social, developmental psychology, personality psychology, work and organizational psychology, clinical and health psychology, educational psychology, and psychopathology); knowledge of working with data, tests, questionnaires, knowledge of evaluation, skills of assessment and interview conduct; construction of tests and questionnaires; knowledge and skills of conducting experimental work; methodological and statistical skills; skills for working with qualitative data; knowledge of ethical principles; skills of professional and research ethics;

library and bibliographic skills; abilities of reading and writing articles; and knowledge of theories from outside psychology (e.g., epistemology, philosophy, sociology, anthropology). The study programme contents have to cover aspects related to the individual, groups and society as a whole. The second cycle of study programmes includes a more thorough study of content, in which the students participate in internships for the minimum of 15 ECTS (a quarter of an academic year) and prepare their master's thesis. The *EuroPsy* Basic Certificate can be awarded to an individual who has completed a study programme which, according to the *EuroPsy* National Awarding Committee, is in compliance with the *EuroPsy* standards.

Not only does the *EuroPsy* Certificate ensure that psychologists have the appropriate theoretical knowledge and primary skills, but it also shows that during the obligatory one-year supervised practice the psychologist has been able to integrate theoretical and fundamental knowledge and develop his/her competences to a degree which enables independent practice at a basic level in a particular domain. All holders of the Certificate adhere to ethical conduct in their practice, and the ethical principles stated in the EFPA MetaCode of Ethics and the national code of professional ethics. This adherence to ethical and legal standards is a step towards protecting clients' rights and well-being, and a better awareness of a psychologist's tasks and responsibilities.

The *EuroPsy* Certificate ensures that a psychologist is qualified for independent psychological practice in the field where he/she has successfully completed the supervised practice. These fields are defined as three wide domains (EFPA, 2015): (i) psychology of education, (ii) psychology of work and organizations, and (iii) clinical and health psychology. If another field of psychology were strongly represented in a certain state, then psychologists could also be awarded the Certificate for this field. However, to date the EFPA members have not agreed on the identification of additional fields of practice. This could lead to a scattering of the various domains of psychological services, and because the work of a psychologist often expands to different fields, the definition of the fourth field of practice could be too narrow. The prevalent opinion is thus that it is possible to categorize these narrow domains within the three broader ones. For instance, army psychologist services can be classified as psychology of work and organizations if such aspects are prevalent in the services provided in this context. The services offered by a psychologist who operates in the field of public health in psychological prevention, or by a psychologist in social welfare who mostly applies therapeutic methods, can be classified as clinical and health psychology. However, this does not mean that such a psychologist who holds the Certificate can perform specialist clinical psychological services. The pledge to ethical conduct requires that the psychologist considers his/her duties and provides services which are in the scope of his/her competence, while refusing to provide those which are outside this.

The Certificate has to be revalidated every seven years. In order to do this, the psychologist has to maintain his/her competences with regular psychological practice

and continuing professional development, such as participation in various workshops, courses and other forms of professional training, acquiring new knowledge with practice in the workplace, collaboration in supervision and intervision sessions, supervising other colleagues, participation in professional and scientific conferences, professional or scientific publications, presentations for professional audiences, editorial work, supervising a psychologist as part of supervised practice, active membership in professional work groups, and so on (EFPA, 2015).

The *EuroPsy* Specialist Certificate can be obtained after the psychologist has been awarded the *EuroPsy* Basic Certificate and completed additional multi-year specialization in a particular domain of practice. In order to be awarded the Specialist Certificate the psychologist has to fulfil the following requirements: 400 hours (16 ECTS) of post-graduate education; three years of work experience after he/she has obtained the *EuroPsy* Basic Certificate (of which a minimum of 500 hours should be acquired as part of supervised practice); a minimum of 150 hours of supervision (approximately 50 hours per year); 100 hours of personal therapy; and evidence that specialist competences have been developed with the use of certain psychotherapeutic model(s). The specialist certificate in psychotherapy is currently awarded in six states. The specialist certificate in psychology of work and organizations is awarded in three states to psychologists who fulfil the following requirements: 2,400 hours (90 ECTS) of further study with the defined content, of which 1,600 hours (60 ECTS) is focused on organized professional training (if an individual has completed a master's study programme in the field of work and organizations, the number of ECTS in the specialist training can be reduced by no more than 30 credits), and 800 hours (30 ECTS) of applied research, assessment and interventions. An individual has to have a minimum of three years of practice after the completion of academic study, with a minimum of 400 hours per year (and 1,200 hours altogether) of supervised practice, and at least 150 hours of supervision (an average of 50 hours per year), and has to demonstrate competences in compliance with the *EuroPsy* competence model (EFPA, 2015).

EuroPsy certified psychologists are listed in the European Register of *EuroPsy* Psychologists. Users of psychological services can check the Register, which is accessible on the EFPA website (<http://www.europsy-efpa.eu/search>), to obtain information regarding the domain of a psychologist's qualifications, regardless of the state of education and training, and whether or not he/she has completed specialist study in a particular area. The Certificate thus protects the public against unqualified service providers. Another aim of EFPA is to ensure that the Certificate serves as a European Professional Card in the future and helps the competent authorities in an individual state to recognize the qualifications of psychologists, thus enhancing their mobility.

EFPA started the development of the *EuroPsy* Certificate in 2001 within the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci project, initially with the aim of unifying the standards of psychologist education, which was referred to at the time as the *EuroPsy Diploma*,

and later with the aim of developing unified standards of professional training. The idea of the *EuroPsy* Basic Certificate and the criteria for its provision were approved by the General Assembly of EFPA in 2009. Since then, the *EuroPsy* Basic Certificate has been awarded by 21 EFPA member states. However, it has to be emphasized that the *EuroPsy* Certificate does not aim to replace national licenses for the implementation of psychological services. In states where psychological practice is regulated by legislation, the national law on psychological practice is superior to the *EuroPsy* Certificate standards. However, in most states the requirements for obtaining the national license are in accordance with those of the *EuroPsy* Certificate, or the criteria are very similar. The need for the *EuroPsy* Certificate is thus lower in states where psychological practice is regulated by legislation, as compared to those such as Slovenia where the Certificate is the only way for psychologists to prove their qualifications and commitment to the profession.

In Slovenia, permission to award the *EuroPsy* Certificate was obtained from the EFPA in 2012. Following a short trial period, around 200 psychologists have been awarded the Certificate since 2013, according to the transition procedure. These were all qualified psychologists who had completed the previous four-year pre-graduate study programme and gained the title of university-degree psychologist, and practiced independently as psychologists for more than three years, demonstrating a spectrum of continuing professional development activities. Since before the Bologna reform the various states had different systems for the education of psychologists, the EFPA stated that in the transition period it was possible to obtain the *EuroPsy* Certificate under different conditions than in the regular period, provided the EFPA member states defined the exact criteria for awarding the Certificate and obtained an agreement from the *EuroPsy* European Awarding Committee stating that these were adequate. Since the end of the transition period the Certificate has been awarded to psychologists provided they have completed a one-year period supervised practice following the five-year study programme.

Supervised Practice as Defined by the *EuroPsy* Regulations

Supervised practice stands for the performance of psychologists in real workplaces, as supervised by more experienced colleagues. Within the *EuroPsy* framework, supervised practice represents a form of practical and theoretical training which lasts at least one year with full-time employment (or encompasses a minimum of 1,500 hours). During the year of supervised practice the psychologist does not practice independently, but is introduced into their work under the supervision of an experienced supervisor. In this way the psychologist gradually becomes qualified for independent practice in a particular domain of psychology.

Supervision takes place one to two hours per week at an assigned time. During this period the supervisee and supervisor work together and discuss the former's

performance so that he/she can process his/her work on both cognitive and emotional levels. The supervisor can thus observe the beginner at work and vice versa, and then both parties engage in detailed discussion and critical reflection on what has been observed. Audio and video recordings can be of great help in this analysis, as they enable the examination of different aspects of the observed performance. In addition to observation, supervising includes giving instructions, role modelling, mutual problem solving, reflective practice, discussion, evaluation, and giving feedback. Supervision is important, as it helps develop the participant's awareness of their own competences, and enhances real self-assessment. (EFPA, 2015)

At the beginning of the supervised practice, the supervisor and the supervisee have to agree on the implementation of supervision and its content coverage (such as which field of professional work and which groups of clients will be covered), the psychologist's roles, and the development of competences.

During the supervised practice the novice psychologist develops his/her competences while working with clients in the real workplace. He/she thus gradually develops the competences which could not be developed during academic studies. For example, the supervisee develops his/her professional role during evidence-based psychological practice, integrates practical and theoretical knowledge and skills and applies them in the work context, becomes qualified for working with specific client groups, develops professional responsiveness, self-awareness and self-reflection. The novice psychologist deals with real ethical dilemmas, and with the help of discussion and supervision develops the ethical competence, personal integrity and robustness which are required to practice competently and responsibly as a psychologist (EFPA, 2015).

The supervisee can apply the *EuroPsy* competence model when defining and recognizing his/her competences. Based on this, the supervisor and supervisee thus work together to evaluate the development of competences and identify the possibilities for further growth. The supervisee keeps a portfolio in which he/she documents his/her work, competency development and need for professional development, and so monitors his/her own professional growth.

The supervisor works to support the novice psychologist in the development of competences and professional self-confidence. As such, the supervisor aims to enable a safe environment for learning and establishes a collaborative relationship with the supervisee. Besides this supportive function, and the provision of encouragement for competence development, supervision also has an evaluative role. Upon the completion of the supervised practice, the supervisor has to assess whether or not the supervisee has developed the competences needed for independent psychological practice. The supervisor thus acts as a gatekeeper who ensures that an unqualified individual is not allowed to practice independently

before he/she has mastered all the required competences. In this way, the maximum degree of client protection is achieved.

Upon the completion of supervised practice, the novice psychologist provides evidence which demonstrates the scope of his/her competences with regard to the *EuroPsy* model, and has to conduct a systematic self-evaluation and plan his/her further professional development. The supervisor approves the evaluation and assesses the level of each primary and enabling competence of the supervisee, which is done by means of a four-level assessment scale.

There are several different forms of supervised practice, as follows (EFPA, 2015): (i) the psychologist is a university student and the supervised practice constitutes a component of the university education and training; (ii) the psychologist is employed and the supervised practice is a component of traineeship (supervision being officially regulated within the work position); (iii) the psychologist is employed and the supervised practice is non-officially regulated (supervision being implemented by a psychologist who is employed elsewhere); and (iv) the psychologist has a registered private practice and organizes his/her own supervision.

Regardless of the form of supervision, it is essential that the sessions between the novice psychologist and supervisor are regular. These should be scheduled at least once every two weeks, with the supervisory dyad meeting for an average of two hours each time. Moreover, the supervisee is able to have more than one supervisor, although in such cases the leading supervisor should be identified.

In Slovenia, it is not possible for supervised practice to be performed within the framework of a psychology study programme. This is because the state provides enough financial resources for only five years of study in non-regulated professions, and thus the study programmes cannot be prolonged for another year in order to provide supervised practice for all students. Neither can all students be included in supervised practice in the supervisor's workplace, as there is typically only one work position intended for a psychologist. For this reason, the SUPER PSIHOLOG project focused on the provision of supervised practice in a workplace where the supervisor is not employed in the same organization as the novice psychologist, because it was assumed that this approach would enable the highest number of supervisory dyads. There are three options here with regard to the financial support provided for such training: the supervised practice can be financed by the novice psychologist, or his/her employer, or with public resources, e.g. through various state-funded projects. The system developed within the framework of the SUPER PSIHOLOG project can easily be adjusted for cases in which the supervisor is employed in the same organization as the novice psychologist, and is, for instance, appointed as the supervisor during the novice's traineeship. In such cases the supervisor needs to be properly trained in order to lead the supervised practice, although the conditions for the implementation of supervision sessions in this case are probably less demanding than in other contexts.

Mentoring or Supervision?

It can be observed that the professional literature communicates more about supervision than about mentoring when it comes to professions involving intense relations with individuals, such as psychology. Supervision is “[...] a distinct professional activity in which education and training aimed at developing science-informed practice are facilitated through a collaborative interpersonal process. It involves observation, evaluation, feedback, facilitation of supervisee self-assessment, and acquisition of knowledge and skills by instruction, modelling, and mutual problem-solving [...] supervision ensures it is conducted in a competent manner in which ethical standards, legal prescriptions, and professional practices are used to promote and protect the welfare of the client, the profession, and society at large” (Falender & Shafranske, 2004, p. 3). Although supervision is most important early in a psychologist’s career, it is recommended that psychologists receive supervision through their working lives.

A key difference between supervision and mentoring is seen in the roles of mentor and supervisor. As opposed to a mentor, a supervisor is responsible for the adequate professional performance of the supervisee in compliance with professional standards, and thus needs to evaluate the supervisee’s performance. The supervisor thus acts as a gatekeeper (Bernard & Goodyear, 2013, p. 9), and has to assess whether or not the supervisee’s competences have been adequately developed upon the completion of the supervised practice. An early career psychologist can start performing independently only when he/she has obtained a positive evaluation by the supervisor (EFPA, 2015, p. 11). For this reason, the supervisor operates from a position of considerable power. On the other hand, the mentor’s role is to: “[...] guide, suggest, coach, but does not use power to direct actions” (The Growth Connection, 2012, paragraph 4), i.e., the mentor does not act as a gatekeeper with regard to the mentee’s professional direction and conduct, and does not have the power to evaluate his/her performance. Moreover, supervision deals to a large extent with the feelings and experiences of a professional working with people, and with resolving the difficulties that arise in relation with clients. However, despite these differences supervision and mentoring share a number of important characteristics, such as the process of relationship development and support for the mentee’s professional growth.

As part of the SUPER PSIHOLOG project, we introduced a system of supervised practice in which the early career psychologist works under the supervision of a more experienced psychologist. We built on the characteristics of successful mentoring programmes, and the specific experiences of mentoring psychologists, because supervision is not widely used in Slovenia, but only applied in a few psychology domains and with individual psychologists, such as during psychotherapeutic education. This is why in the SUPER PSIHOLOG project we often used the terms *mentor* (mentor of the supervised practice) and *mentoring*, and in this book we use the term *mentor of the supervised practice* with the same meaning as the term *supervisor*.

Mentor of the Supervised Practice/Supervisor

Psychologists need assistance, support and guidance early in their career development, and this can be provided by an experienced psychologist who is qualified to carry out mentoring and supervision, and who knows which competences need to be developed and how.

In compliance with the *EuroPsy* Regulations (EFPA, 2015), a supervisor is a psychologist who has in the last three years independently practiced psychology for at least two years of full-time work or its equivalent. The supervisor is accountable for the development of the novice psychologist's competences and for the evaluation of these. The supervisor encourages the supervisee to perform as independently as possible with regard to the level of his/her competence. The supervisor has to be confirmed by the *EuroPsy* National Awarding Committee, or an equivalent national association, with regard to being qualified to adopt this role. The *EuroPsy* Regulations define different levels of supervisor qualification. A supervisor at the highest level meets all the *EuroPsy* criteria; has been practicing for a minimum of five years; has completed a five-year specialization; has received supervision for two years within a specific domain; has completed a two-year supervision training which included the supervised practice of supervision (e.g., with the presentation of video or audio recordings of his/her supervision), presentations of supervised cases, study of the professional literature and research on supervision. While states differ in their regulation of supervision, criteria for supervisors and supervisor education, the aim of the EFPA is to gradually develop systems in all European states which will require supervisors to meet all the defined standards.

Supervisors are supposed to be experienced psychologists who have the time, motivation and competence for the implementation of supervision. It is not enough for such individuals to simply have sound knowledge of the area of mentoring and supervision, as the supervisor has to be able to transfer his/her knowledge, skills and professional attitude to the supervisee. The supervisor thus has to demonstrate competences for mentoring, supervision and teaching in order to be seen as adequately qualified to fulfil the demands of this role. The supervisor has to be aware of what is expected from him/her, and which supervisee competences should be developed and how. The skills of mentoring and supervision include the following: skills of active listening, openness and respect for the supervisee, the ability to reflect on the supervisee's and his/her own work, and so giving effective feedback, managing boundaries in relation to the supervisee, understanding and managing the power imbalances in the relationship between the supervisor and supervisee, resolving any conflicts that occur in the supervisory relationship, dealing with difficult issues and feelings, recognizing, sharing and discussing ethical dilemmas, evaluating and assessing the beginner's performance and competences (EFPA, 2015). It is essential that the supervisor has developed an appropriate attitude towards supervision, is aware of its importance and is motivated to carry out supervision and transfer

knowledge, and is aware of supportive and evaluative functions of supervision. In order to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to carry out supervision with the appropriate attitude, supervisors have to undergo professional training which, in accordance with the *EuroPsy* Regulations, lasts for two years and includes practicing supervision (EFPA, 2015).

Training of Supervisors: Activities in Slovenia Thus Far

The project "Establishing a Network of Mentors and Training for the Supervised Practice of Psychologists" was carried out in Slovenia from 2009 to 2010. The project was co-financed by the European Social Fund and Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology in the framework of the Operational Programme for Human Resources Development for the Period 2007–2013. The leader of the project and training of mentors was Vlasta Zabukovec. As part of this, the first training of mentors for supervised practice was carried out with the help of José Maria Peiró (see Zabukovec & Podlesek, 2010), who worked to transfer the related knowledge from EAWOP to Slovenia. The training programme consisted of five parts, in which the participants were initially acquainted with the *EuroPsy* standards and a competence model, and learned how to define and recognize competences and how to evaluate them. In the second part of the programme the participants learned about updated psychology study programmes and the competences they aim to develop. They talked about the situation in the field of traineeship, and became familiar with the formal requirements for the implementation of internship (an agreement between the university and work organization) and how to motivate their organizations to accept students for such internships. They also discussed different work tasks which would enhance the development of individual competences. In the third part of the training the mentors were trained to evaluate the competences of the mentee and discussed the evaluation of the mentor. They thus became familiar with the methods of reflection and evaluation used with the supervised practice. Next, they practiced mentoring, and working with the mentees planned the supervised practice and implemented a one-week pilot supervised practice (internship). They then worked together with the mentee (i.e., a psychology student joined the mentor in the mentor's workplace). In the fourth part of the training of mentors, which followed the supervised practice, the mentors examined the related documentation, reflected on the process of the supervised practice, and evaluated it. In the last part of the training they discussed what they had gained with the training. Overall, the results showed that the 40-hour training programme with one-week of mentoring practice was not enough for the mentors to be properly qualified for the supervised practice (Podlesek & Zabukovec, 2012).

In 2013, Vlasta Zabukovec and Anja Podlesek organised a new cycle for the training of mentors which included the previously developed training programme and additional contents related to mentoring. In this, the mentors learned about the importance, forms and functions of mentoring; the importance of the roles, tasks

and competences of the mentor; the mentoring relationship and its evolution; and the effects of mentoring and different models of mentoring (mentoring, coaching, instructing). The mentors were presented with instruments which can be used for monitoring the process of internship, while ethical dilemmas which can occur during internship were also addressed. The one-week internship was then prolonged to the period of one month. The mentor's and mentee's tasks were structured, and the mentoring dyads were given exact instructions about the process of their work, from internship planning, reflection on performance, analysis, evaluation and documentation, to the final reflection on their understanding of the competence model and planning of their own professional development in the field of mentoring.

A total of 32 mentors of supervised practice were trained in both programmes. After evaluating the training it was concluded that using the *EuroPsy* competence model in mentoring can be very effective, and lead to more structured and systematic mentoring of the supervised practice, and better monitoring of the mentor's qualifications. The results also showed that more emphasis has to be given to the process of mentoring, development of the qualities of a good mentor, methods for developing effective mentoring relationships, and the encouragement of reflection and giving feedback. The mentors also asked for more contents related to supervision. They also stated that it was necessary to develop a holistic, comprehensive training programme for mentors of the supervised practice, which would enable them not only to learn about the basic structure of mentoring in this context, and to master the competence-based approach, but also to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for supervision. The mentors concluded that the one-month study internship was too short for them to feel qualified with regard to mentoring a supervised practice programme that should run for one year following the completion of academic study. It was also confirmed that the mentors needed collegial support and feedback regarding the quality of their mentoring. All these findings provided starting points for further development of the programme for the training of supervisors within the framework of the SUPER PSIHOLOG project.

Requirements for Supervised Practice and Qualified Supervisors/Mentors of Supervised Practice in Slovenia

In the future, the second cycle of psychology study programmes in Slovenia are predicted to be completed by approximately 100 individuals per year. At present, there are few psychologists among graduates and masters of psychology who start their professional careers under the guidance of a qualified mentor. If novice psychologists are to be employed in health care, education, social welfare or public administration, they need to have concluded the traineeship and professional work assessment exam regulated by the state. However, often the traineeship such individuals take part in is not systematic and does not develop defined competences, and sometimes the mentor is not a psychologist, or is not properly qualified for mentoring. In

other fields of practice, e.g. work and organizational psychology, a traineeship and a professional work assessment exam are not required. It is thus of paramount importance to introduce supervised practice for all psychologists, set standards for it, train supervisors, and carry out supervision of this supervisory process.

Most mentors in Slovenia now achieve only a low level on the scale of supervisor development. They meet the standards of the *EuroPsy* Certificate, and may or may not have been awarded it, and have had several years of work experience in the field of practice in which they provide mentorship. However, they have not completed specialization in a specific field of practice, and they themselves have not participated in supervision, nor do they meet the *EuroPsy* standards for the implementation of supervision (i.e. they have not completed two years' training in supervision). Inclusion in the supervision organized by institutions is typical only for some psychologists who are employed in the field of social welfare, and those who are being trained in one of the psychotherapeutic orientations. In the framework of a four-year specialization in clinical psychology, which is the only specialization presently carried out in Slovenia, and accessible only for psychologists employed in the field of health care, the specialists in clinical psychology have mentors covering specific areas of work as well as a leading mentor, and the processes of specialization and mentoring are carried out in compliance with the regulations related to the programme.

A project was thus initiated within the framework of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009–2014 in order to establish a wide enough network of supervisors who could cover the needs of young psychologists who are entering the labour market, called “The Supervised Practice of Psychologists: Development of a Training Programme of Mentors and a Model of the Supervised Practice – SUPER PSIHOLOG⁵” (SUPER PSIHOLOG, 2015). The project was approved in December, 2014, and was implemented in the period from 5 February 2015 to 31 October 2016 based on collaboration among the following partners: the Faculty of Arts at the University of Ljubljana, the Slovenian Psychologists' Association, the Norwegian Psychological Association (Norsk Psykologforening), the Andrej Marušič Institute at the University of Primorska, and the Institute for Psychological Counselling and Educational Developmental Projects – ISA Institute. This project was co-financed by Norway Grants 2009–2014 and the Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy of the Republic of Slovenia.

Project Activities

The project carried out a comprehensive programme for the training of supervisors/mentors of supervised practice, and a total of 24 supervisors were trained. Their training included participation in workshops organized in three thematic scopes

5 The project's acronym is from the project title: “The SUPERvised practice of PSYCHOLOGISTS” (the Slovene word for a psychologist is *psiholog*).

(modules). Moreover, the training included practical work with the supervisees. Each supervisor was mentoring one psychology student taking part in an internship in such a way that he/she accepted the student into the workplace, and led the one-year supervised practice of two novice psychologists who, after they graduated from their masters' studies, started acquiring their first experiences in a real work setting.

To date, the model of supervised practice that has been used in Slovenia has been based on the supervisor's workplace (see Zabukovec & Podlesek, 2010). Such a model is usually considered a traineeship or internship, in which the supervisor and supervisee can be in regular and close contact, collaborate in performing tasks at work, observe each other's work, and reflect on their work. In a direct collaboration, the supervisor can easily direct the supervisee, assign tasks suitable for the supervisee's level of development in agreement with the employer, demonstrate the performance of a particular task in the workplace, and regularly offer suggestions that can help improve the supervisee's performance. The supervisee is given support with regard to his/her career development and establishment of professional relationships within the work organization. In contrast, a different model of supervision was tested in the SUPER PSIHOLOG project, and this is one that appears to be more realistic and sustainable given the current labour market conditions. A system of supervised practice for psychologists was thus introduced using a model of mentoring which closely resembles supervision. During the project a model of supervision was tried in which the supervisor and supervisee work in separate organizations and meet regularly during scheduled out-of-work time, once every two weeks for a minimum of two hours. The meetings are intended to enable the parties to discuss the supervisee's performance and analyse and reflect on his/her experience. Within the framework of these meetings, which have to be focused and well-prepared due to the limited time that is available, the supervisor works to help the supervisee process professional problems on mental and emotional levels, and offers support in the development of professional competences and self-confidence. While this model of supervised practice is often applied in other states, in Slovenia it has rarely been used until recently. The establishment of supervised practice for all psychologists requires the use of this particular model, because organizations that have supervisors available are less and less likely to announce traineeship positions, or provide only one position for the employment of a psychologist. The establishment of supervision with the help of an external professional thus enables the expansion of supervised practice and sustainable inclusion of this into psychologists' career development process. It has been estimated that this form of supervised practice can continue after the project has been concluded, and that it can be provided to all psychologists.

An online platform was created in order to document and monitor the supervised practice, and this offers a modern approach to the collaboration that occurs between supervisors and supervisees. It was tested whether or not this form of communication makes the supervision process and monitoring of the implementation

of supervised practice easier, and thus provides help in expanding the provision of supervised practice in Slovenia. We also tested the use of distance supervision through video conferencing. Such tools are relatively novel in the implementation of supervised practice, both in Slovenian and European psychology in general, which is still more inclined towards “live” supervisory sessions.

The supervisors participated in regular supervision during the project. The individuals working in a supervisory group (which consisted of three to five supervisors and the supervisor-of-supervisors) analysed and reflected on the supervisory experiences they acquired. Two Norwegian professionals, Mona Duckert and Bjarte Kyte, trained six supervisors-of-supervisors who will continue to carry out the supervision of already qualified supervisors after the project’s conclusion, and also do so for those who will join the supervisors’ training programme at a later date.

Various instruments were developed to establish and monitor the supervisory relationship, and evaluate the supervisor’s mentoring and supervision skills. The documents which were prepared during the project, such as the Supervision Agreement which is concluded between the supervisor and supervisee after their initial negotiations, or a form for reflection on the supervision session, can be used in future by supervisors and supervisors-of-supervisors in their work of mentoring and supervising.

Based on the experiences gained in this project, a set of guidelines for the implementation of supervised practice in Slovenia, the training of supervisors, and supervision of the supervisory process itself, have been created. These guidelines are to be used in the implementation of supervised practice in Slovenia, but they can also be of use to psychologists in other European states, and even beyond this. Similar guidelines for supervision already exist, e.g. the APA Guidelines for Clinical Supervision in Health Service Psychology (APA, 2014) or the Australian Guidelines for Supervising Allied Health Professionals (HETI, 2012). However, to the best of our knowledge the guidelines created during the SUPER PSIHOLOG project are the first of their kind in Europe. Moreover, other professions might also find them useful in the establishment of their own programmes for the development of early career practitioners.

An important part of the project was also providing information about the project’s activities. For example, the *EuroPsy* Certificate and the SUPER PSIHOLOG project were introduced to the professional public, and a promotional stand and leaflets about the project were created and used at various events (hosted by project partners and others), and so presented to the wider public. Details of the *EuroPsy* Certificate, supervised practice and the project itself were presented to the students of the three Slovenian universities where psychology courses are taught. The project was also introduced to staff at the departments of psychology in these three universities, and at various educational events and conferences. The wider public was informed through the websites of project partners, media announcements at the time of project events, and the Facebook pages of project partners. Many

professional presentations were carried out at different psychology meetings, conferences and congresses. Three larger public events were organized, including a breakfast with journalists, interim conference about the project, and closing conference. At the breakfast with journalists the importance of the supervised practice and the goals of the SUPER PSIHOLOG project were presented. The interim conference, titled "What Kind of Mentoring Do We Need? – Experiences and Transfer of Good Practices of Mentoring Psychologists," was devoted to discussions on the mentoring/supervision of psychologists. In addition to the early results of the project, the participants were provided with information regarding traineeship in the field of psychology in Slovenia, and the similarities and differences between mentoring and supervision. The modern paradigm of mentoring was also presented, with an emphasis on the mentoring process and the development of the mentor-mentee relationship; the concept of a developmental educational model of supervision and its distinctions from other forms of leadership; the route from a graduate to a professional supervisor; intervision and the need for meta-supervision were explained; and experiences with mentoring and supervision in the fields of social welfare, health care and education were communicated. In workshops the participants discussed the benefits of a competence-based approach to mentoring and supervision, and became familiar with the methods of a developmental educational model of supervision. A closing conference, entitled "SUPER PSIHOLOG – Quality First Steps in Psychological Work," introduced two cases of best practice in the transition from education to practice: clinical training in the field of health care in the Jesenice Faculty of Health, Slovenia, and experiences of supervision by the Norwegian Psychological Association. The evaluation results of the SUPER PSIHOLOG project were presented (including general results of the project, modules of training, the supervised practice system developed by the project, and supervision of supervisors), as well as the ideas for the future of supervised practice and development of supervision. Workshop participants became familiar with factors related to the effective communication of psychologists, and methods of developing professional competences in supervision.

The SUPER PSIHOLOG project enabled the development of the comprehensive training of supervisors/mentors of supervised practice, thus developing supervisory competences, and the implementation of a specific model of one-year supervised practice. The results of the project can be transferred to the lifelong supervision of psychological services. A long-term goal of including novice psychologists in regular supervision in the first year of their careers is to establish a culture that would encourage psychologists to accept supervision as a prerequisite for quality work, and so they would be more willing to participate in further supervision after the supervised practice has been concluded. Moreover, due to the demands of their work, supervision which enhances self-reflection on professional performance and competences would be beneficial for all psychologists, including more experienced ones.