

Mentorship Toolkit



“I think a mentor doesn't always have to be somebody superior to you. It is anybody who has a quality that you do not currently have, but which they demonstrate and you admire and they're willing to share the tips and techniques about how to develop it. So it can be that six-year-old girl or a 95-year-old grandparent but you need an open mind and be keen to learn.”

Interview Participant



A mentorship is a relationship between two people where the individual with more experience, knowledge, and connections can pass along what they have learned to a junior individual within a certain field (World Education Services, 2019). This toolkit guides how to structure a mentorship program with some ideas on possible outcomes, objectives, mentorship models and potential topics. It will be useful to institutions or any practitioners intending to run structured mentorship programs for women and girls

1. DESIRED OUTCOMES:

Clarity on anticipated goals

a) Institution:

- Improved flow of formal and informal professional development knowledge
- Increased retention and promotion of women researchers
- More women succeeding in their careers as the number of women role models expands





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b) Mentor:

- Increased leadership skills
- become a more recognized advisor
- improved communication skills
- Gain new perspectives on mentoring
- Knowledge transfer and finding new talent

c) Mentee:

- Accelerated skills development
- Built confidence
- Personal & Professional Growth
- Expanded professional & Collaboration networks with accessible role models

"Mentors should make a conscious effort to create opportunities "

Interview Participant

2. Objectives; *Clarity on the aims of the mentorship program and the target audience*

- To create avenues that encourage female students/researchers to continue pursuing their specific careers and promote workforce diversity.
- Create opportunities to learn directly from experienced mentors and give mentees a successful start.
- Support new talent in navigating the industry, as well as strengthen the industry as a whole through professional relationships
- Provide resources and pathways for career progression
- Share successes and brainstorm solutions to specific challenges
- Provide an opportunity for both mentors and mentees to work on soft skills such as confidence and communication
- Explore the latest industry innovations.
- Build a network within the (STEM) community that promotes increased quality of research undertakings (such as research grants application and implementation) and creates intellectual property



"Mentors [...] help their mentees build confidence because [w]e know what it's like so that we can help them avoid the pitfalls."

Interview Participant

3. Target Audience

Be clear in identifying the beneficiaries

- Women and young girls residing in Africa or of African descent
- Number of expected cohorts and applicants for each cohort
- Where to source potential mentors and or mentees (such as academia, industry, and government)
- How to get people to join the program and establish compatibility



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"Parents have more of a role in shaping the way children interact with online spaces. But we have a situation in society where mothers are less cyber aware and have less access to understanding cybersecurity issues."

Interview Participant

4. Mentorship Model and Cycle

- Choose between a group setting, peer-to-peer, mentor-mentee, reverse mentoring or workshops
- Procedure or Criteria for matching mentors with mentees
- Duration: 6 months, 9 months or 1 year with specific components such as monthly webinars, etc.
- Establish an appropriate mode of communication and engagement
- Establish mechanisms for tracking progress
- Communicate any tools or resources to be provided during the program



5. Potential topics

- Opportunities for growth and progress available to mentees in the specific field
- Explore various career options including cross-cutting areas and non-technical areas (such as legal, policy, media and training) as additional opportunities
- Explore the benefits of expanded professional networks that women and girls gain
- Explore growth in outcome skills such as public speaking, and team leadership, that will become available to the mentees
- Shift mentality and tackle barriers that prevent women's inclusion in the specific field
- Explore the known and perceived barriers that disincentives women
- Challenge the perceptions and stereotyping
- Show case successful role models in the field who are in positions of influence and with some known impact
- Cultivate skills leading to interests in the fields such as festivals, fairs, exhibitions, career talks
- Explore & brainstorm ways to empower women to drive social culture changes to support the funneling of more young girls into the specific career fields.
- Explore ways to attract & retain girls' interest in STEM topics in school, to youths researching and writing newsletters to talk to others in schools
- Explore various stages and pathways to building a focused career including certification, training , research and publishing, personal development
- Explore ways to influence decision-makers, policymakers and interventionists to provide more opportunities to women
- Provide women & girls with the skills needed to connect to people, resources, tools and networks so as to be able to tap and benefit from the available career opportunities
- Explore ways to access skills & digital safety training for all actors including children
- To support systems: equip them with the right knowledge & attitudes to identify, and nurture budding interests in young women/girls; explore ways to promote conversation at the family & community level (social group gatherings, etc) to amplify the opportunities for women & girls



“[...]in this space where women are a minority, mentoring cannot only be gendered [...] we should also have a place for coaching, [...] not everyone wants to be mentored, sometimes they just want a coach which is a different type of relationship (...)consider the fact that soft skills are needed across fields they are just as important as the hard skills.”

Interview Participant



6. Potential Activities

Promotion

*determine when to start;
Launch registration, create an
awareness campaign for the
program*

Orientation

*Training for both mentors and
mentees on the basics of the
relationship; offer guidelines
for managing the mentoring
relationship*

Engagement

*build rapport and trust; work
out action plans for goals; get
to know each other*

Matching

*Establish pairing criteria; find
relevant matches*

Growth

*building skills; overcoming
barriers to growth; develop
growth mindset;
accountability; training*

Supporting Relationship

*sharing session agendas and
checking in with the pairs;
program maintenance;
involving those in hiring and
recruitment.*

Reporting

*monitoring progress;
collecting feedback and follow-
up during and beyond the
program*

Completion

*Evaluation of the program;
reflection; building confidence
to continue growing; pay it
forward (encourage mentees to
become mentors*

Disclaimer: The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent those of IDRC or its Board of Governors.

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