Robust Mentoring

A joint initiative of ILS and HR to strengthen mentoring relationships in SIL

Foreword

Dr Michel Kenmogne
Executive Director

I am delighted to commend to you the Robust Mentoring Initiative described in this booklet, a collaborative effort from International Language Services and Human Resources departments. It aims to foster a learning environment wherein everyone can thrive and achieve their full potential in serving, irrespective of their domain of contribution. Several realities urge us to intentionally pursue a culture of sharing knowledge through mentoring.

- Within the fabric of the global society, traditional places of learning, such as the family and educational institutions, have undergone much disruption, and the pace of change is fast. Life-long learning is non-negotiable. Hence robust mentoring must become a key organisational value.

- The sociological composition of our workforce indicates that the bulk of our expertise lies in a generation of pioneering, self-made individuals that will phase out. By committing to an organisational culture of mentoring, we will preserve and transmit expertise across generations, and promote organisational learning, thereby stewarding our valuable resources.

- In today's volatile environment, relationships become shallow. Yet, we were created as relational people who thrive in community. We need to find ways to pursue the pattern of ministry set by Jesus himself, who nurtured key relationships with a few, thereby extending the reach of his impact till today.

I am grateful to our colleagues who have invested time, energy, skill and creativity to produce this precious resource. May it help us all to grow into a thriving community that joyfully pursues our vision to see flourishing communities using the languages they value most.

Michel

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Robust Mentoring Initiative Purpose Statement

Mentoring is an intentional and supportive, personal and professional relationship. Through mentoring people are encouraged to manage their own learning so as to develop their character and skills and maximise their potential.

The Robust Mentoring initiative seeks to strengthen mentoring relationships and programs in SIL, in alignment with our **Transformational Statement 5**:

"*...We are committed to growing, adapting and applying our expertise while pursuing healthy relationships with partners and with each other.*"

We commit ourselves to ensuring that robust mentoring becomes a part of our organisational DNA.

Intentional and ongoing development of our staff at all levels and domains

Sustainable and inclusive mentoring programs strengthened locally

Reciprocal mentoring opportunities with our partners put in place

Why such a booklet?

Mentoring has always been valued in SIL. Coming alongside others and helping them expand their competencies so they can flourish in their work and personal life has been a significant part of our work. Over the decades we have seen the fruit of mentoring relationships that have had transformational impact not just on individuals, but also on organisations and entire communities.

The Robust Mentoring initiative seeks to build on this longstanding value and provide practical, organisational support to make mentoring more intentional and effective in our different contexts.

This document has been prepared for mentors, mentees, supervisors and leaders in SIL to help explain what the Robust Mentoring initiative aims to achieve, and how the running of localised and fruitful mentoring programs can be supported in our various contexts.

With the encouragement of the Consultant Development and Management team (International Language Services), a pilot project was launched in Africa in 2019 building on the experiences of other SIL Areas. As an introduction, you may want to watch this 8-minute long video* about the Robust Mentoring initiative pilot project in SIL Africa. You can also explore the Mentoring Matters website to find more resources, tools and a blog about cross-cultural mentoring for sustainable development.

What is a robust mentoring program?

A mentoring program is a staff development strategy initiated by the leaders of an organisation for the purpose of growing the organisation in healthy and robust ways through building the capacity of their staff.

In this setting, mentoring is designed to provide the mentee with support and guidance towards personal and professional growth.

The mentoring relationship benefits all parties:

✔ The mentor

✔ The mentee

✔ Our organisation

✔ Our partners

The mentee works closely with one or several mentors.	A mentoring agreement clearly defines the goals and expectations for the mentorship.	Mentors and mentees are accountable to accomplish the goals set out in the agreement.	Leaders are responsible for allowing the time and providing the resources needed.

Who can benefit from the robust mentoring program?

Everyone in SIL can benefit from mentoring. It is not a program reserved for a select few. Every member of our community is encouraged to have a plan for personal and professional development, no matter the area of work in which they serve. Robust mentoring should be available to all personnel in the organisation, including academic, financial, HR, learning and development, leadership, management, communications and technical services.

Formal mentoring does not happen only at the consultant-in-training level. It is extended to all levels of responsibility in the organisation. Even the most experienced staff can benefit from being part of a mentoring community or having their own mer

Every member of our community is encouraged to have a mentor and a plan for personal and professional development.

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*I personally might have given up on literacy work had I not had the encouragement of the two mentors I have had. Over the years my mentors have invited me to participate in their consulting work, taken time out of their busy schedules to meet with me face to face and through skype, helped me make decisions about which opportunities in literacy work to pursue and **challenged me by having bigger dreams for me than I would have had**.*

- Jessica Frechette
Literacy Consultant-in-Training

*Focusing more on the mentee than on their work often results in improved work quality. **The most effective way to succeed in multicultural collaboration is to get to know others better and learn from their rich experiences**. In this way, cultural challenges are overcome by the power of love.*

- Joseph Koabike
Translation Consultant

"

An inclusive workplace cannot exist without equity, which means that all individuals have equal access to opportunities. When done right, mentoring is an invaluable tool for creating more inclusive, equitable and culturally competent workplaces.

- L. Z. Fain

How do we mentor?

There are different types of mentoring relationships. The **choice** about which mentoring strategy is best suited **will depend on** the local **context**, the **needs** of the organisation and the **individuals** involved.

Mentoring can take place **face-to-face** or

virtually thanks to online communication tools such as Skype, Zoom, WhatsApp.

Find out more from our website:

Formal Mentoring:

A frequently-used staff development strategy in the workplace where a formal mentoring agreement helps mentor, mentee and supervisor to be intentional about reaching the goals of the mentorship in order to benefit the mentee and the organisation. The mentor and mentee are accountable to the supervisor. The supervisor seeks to ensure that the resources and time necessary are available for the mentorship to work.

Informal Mentoring:

The supervisor is not directly involved in setting this up. It is usually at the initiative of the mentee or the mentor. Informal mentoring can spring up in response to personal situations such as navigating a time of transition.

Types of Mentoring

A mentor comes alongside to help guide the mentee in professional growth.

One-to-one mentoring

A mentor is assigned to a group of mentees who meet regularly to learn from each other and from the mentor.

Group mentoring

A mentor comes alongside an established team to facilitate their learning (from each other, from other experts and from the mentor) and to guide them to reach their goals as a team.

Team mentoring

A primary mentor oversees the mentorship but the mentee benefits from the experience and expertise of a diverse group of secondary mentors.

Mentoring constellation

Peer mentoring

People who are in similar situations come together to learn from each other. It can take place between two people or in a group setting.

Hybrid

An eclectic method using a combination of the above mentioned types to accommodate individual and cultural preferences.

How is a mentoring relationship structured?

In this program, mentoring relationships will usually last between 6 months and 3 years and consists of four phases:

1. Preparation

Explore whether the mentor and mentee can work well together. (personality types, interests, experience, schedules etc.)

2. Negotiation

Define the nature, the time-frame and the goals of the mentorship. Talk explicitly about the process:

- How and when to work towards the goals?

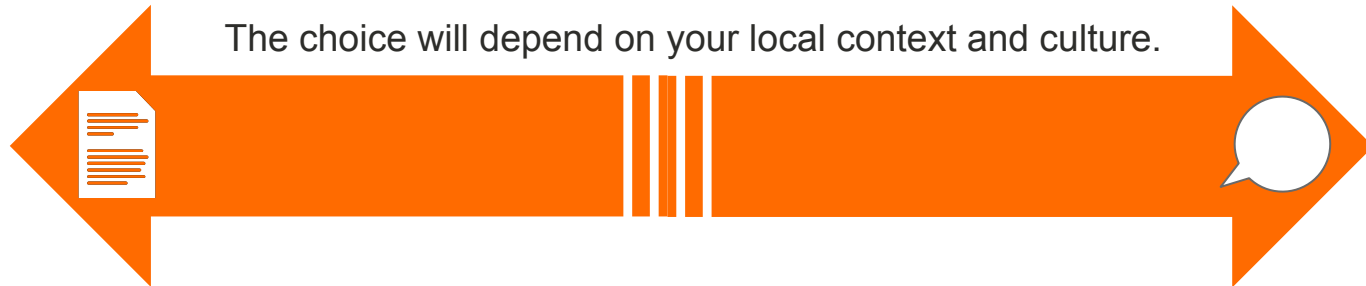- How will progress be measured?

3. Enabling

Have regular interaction to facilitate growth toward agreed goals.

4. Closure

Evaluate and celebrate accomplishments. Discuss how to move on.

Written or oral mentoring agreements?

The choice will depend on your local context and culture.

Written agreement using a form

Using a written mentoring agreement has many advantages because it clearly defines expectations and provides a certain level of transparency and accountability.

Written mentoring agreement <u>templates are available</u> on the website under Resources ☐ Downloadable tools.

Oral agreement through dialogue

In some contexts written mentoring agreements might come across as threatening or as demonstrating a lack of trust. In such situations it is still important for the mentor, mentee and supervisor to talk about the goals and expectations of the mentorship right from the start and find other ways to explicitly commit to working towards those goals.

Cross-cultural mentoring is enriching

Mentoring across cultures is a valuable and enriching experience as well as an important tool in an organisation that values equality and inclusion.

"*The degree to which a culture is individualistic or collectivist will influence mentoring practices. Balancing the paradoxical components is an art to be mastered to bring out the best strengths of both worlds. For this reason, understanding cultural assumptions related to mentoring issues is one of the key factors in cross-cultural mentoring. If the strengths from both cultures can be exercised simultaneously, cross-cultural mentoring could surpass the contributions that mono-cultural mentoring offers.*"

- Sunny Hong
Anthropology Consultant

- In a new mentoring relationship **be open to explore** cultural differences right from the start.

- Share your **cultural autobiographies** with each other to get insight into how cross-cultural experiences have shaped you and your values in the past.

- Share cultural **metaphors for mentoring**. It will help you explore different expectations towards mentoring in your dyad.

- Mentor training should **equip mentors** with vocabulary, themes and tools to be effective in cross-cultural mentoring relationships.

Resources on cross-cultural mentoring

- Dancing Between Cultures: Culturally Intelligent Coaching for Missions and Ministry – an excellent book on cross-cultural coaching and mentoring

- Cross-Cultural Mentoring: A Brief Comparison of Individualistic and Collectivistic Cultures – a very helpful article about cultural differences that influence mentoring relationships

- Leading Cross-Culturally: Covenant Relationships for Effective Christian Leadership – a valuable resource for building inclusive, cross-cultural communities

> "
Mentoring is not directive or authoritarian in its ethos. Rather it is enabling, empowering and releasing. A mentor is not looking to bring people under their own influence, or to reproduce themselves in another. [...]

If a mentoring relationship is to be productive, it needs to have some simple, measurable goals *by which progress can be identified. This is what makes it a dynamic relationship. [...]*

We will need to adopt a flexible approach*, since if we become too structured and hierarchical, we may well strangle the life out of what is meant to be a dynamic and creative relationship.*

- Tony Horsfall, Author and Trainer

When asked about what he would do differently, if he were to start ministry again, Billy Graham said:

I think one of the first things I would do would be to get a small group of eight or ten around me that would meet a few hours a week and pay the price. It would cost them something in time and effort. I would share with them everything I have learned, over a period of years. Then I would actually have twelve who would in turn take eight or ten or twelve more and teach them.

Christ, I think, set the pattern*. He spent most of his time with twelve people. He didn't spend it with a great crowd. In fact, every time he had a great crowd, it seems to me that there weren't too many results.* ***The great results, it seems to me, came in his personal interviews and in the time he spent with the twelve.***
"

- *Billy Graham, Evangelist*

What is the role of the mentor?

Mentoring is a process based on a relationship of mutual trust, respect, honesty and learning, in which the mentor seeks to facilitate the mentee's journey towards desired change and growth. It is a task that needs to be approached from a servant heart. Through regular meetings the mentor comes alongside the mentee to guide the overall learning process in a way that empowers the mentee and helps him/her develop new competencies. The right mix of support and challenge produces growth. Vision gives direction for the journey.

Support

- Encourage your mentee and his/her development

- Provide appropriate structure for learning

- Demonstrate confidence in your mentee's capacity to meet expectations

- Share advice and experience

- Serve as a sounding board

- Be an advocate by looking for opportunities for your mentee to gain experience

- Open up your network of relationships to your mentee

Challenge

- Suggest specific tasks to work on towards the agreed goals

- Engage in discussion

- Expect excellence though not perfection

- Give constructive feedback

- Correct when necessary

Nurture vision

- Model attitudes and standards

- Help your mentee identify his/her "development map" for the way ahead

- Suggest new frames of reference and vocabulary

- Provide a mirror to help your mentee become more self-aware of his/her learning styles, personality, attitudes, behaviours etc.

- Narrate growth and celebrate progress

Who can act as a mentor?

"The mentor of adult learners is not so much interested in fixing the road as in helping the protégé become a competent traveler."

- L. A. Daloz

There are different ways to serve as a mentor.

There is at times a misconception that to be a mentor you need to be experienced in your role as a consultant or leader. This misconception can easily create a bottleneck. We want to encourage all staff to learn mentoring skills by first passing on to others single competencies. As they start to learn hands-on mentoring skills at an early stage, they will be better equipped when they are later asked to take on the role of primary mentors.

A **primary mentor** has comprehensive oversight of the personal and professional development of the mentee.

A **secondary mentor** can certify a mentee in a specified competency or competencies.

In mentoring constellations (see above on page 10), a mentee can have a primary mentor and a number of secondary mentors.

You can find out more about this and suggested activities for continuing professional development for mentors at these links:

Mentoring competencies

Professional Development for Mentors

" My passion is to see multi-cultural teams equipped for their roles, serving the Lord together in open and honest communication, transforming the communities where we live and work. **Mentoring and coaching are key components of an effective learning and development culture as we engage within our organization and with others in partnership**.

I had a leadership mentor that freely shared their knowledge, time and resources with me. I also had a coaching mentor who modeled listening, noticing, asking questions, asking for feedback and challenging with encouragement. These two people, although busy in their work, inspired me to grow and develop. I encourage you to invest your knowledge and skills in others as presented in this mentoring initiative for the building of His Kingdom.

- Stacey Wyse
Director for Coaching and Mentoring
ACC ICF

Mentoring has always been a joyful part of my work as a librarian. It has been especially **rewarding to see those I've mentored take my place** when I've moved on to other library projects.

- Jane Pattison

I have found that passing on skills as a mentor is a very motivating and rewarding experience. **I am convinced that anyone serving as a mentor will enrich their legacy within the organisation and beyond**. "

- Michael Jemphrey
Anthropology and Translation Consultant

What is the role of the mentee?

Mentees are expected to assume increasing responsibility for their learning while the mentor correspondingly releases control. It is an important part of the growth process.

In a mentoring relationship, **the mentee commits to**:

- Being proactive, open, reliable and engaged in the mentorship

- Communicating in a timely manner

- Asking for help, when needed

- Following up on tasks assigned

- Listening well

- Accepting feedback

- Taking on a teachable, learning posture

- Being willing to mentor others.

Mentees demonstrate commitment to learning and are motivated to do the hard work necessary to advance in their competencies.

What is the role of the supervisors?

A successful formal mentorship requires the active support of the mentor's and mentee's supervisors. The mentee's supervisor discusses, discerns and decides which courses of action suggested by the mentor can be realistically fitted into the mentee's program.

The mentee's supervisor is to ensure that:

- The mentee has a personal and professional development plan

- The mentee has one (or more) mentor(s) to help them grow in their competencies

- Mentee and mentor are regularly encouraged and supported in their mentoring relationship

- The mentee has adequate time allocated to the mentorship alongside other work responsibilities

- The mentee has the financial resources needed to complete the agreed courses of action

- The mentee is held responsible for respecting the mentoring agreement

- Where a written, formal mentoring agreement exists, it is signed by all parties

- Appropriate help is found if the mentorship does not work well

- Mentor and mentee evaluate their progress in the mentorship and redefine their relationship as needed.

The mentor's supervisor is to ensure that:

- The mentor has adequate time allocated to the mentorship alongside other work responsibilities.

- The mentor has adequate support and resources for developing his/her mentoring skills.

"

My mentor gave me opportunities to become a mentor myself. It was only a year ago that I started to be involved in a multilingual education project in Asia. My mentor has asked me to be a mentor for one of the teams. I did not have any confidence at that time. 'How can I become a mentor?' - I thought. But in less than a year, I find myself helping a group of people through mentoring! **What a joy and privilege to serve as a mentor! It is possible because my mentor believed in me, supported me and provided me with many resources to grow in my role***.*

- Anna*
Literacy Specialist

It is such a blessing to have someone who accompanies you, guides you, and helps you grow in your competencies in an area, but especially as a person. **A mentor helps you overcome your barriers and reflect on your journey***. Since 2016 I have had a mentor in the field of Adult Education.*

* *Pseudonym*

*Most of the time we meet virtually***.** *This mentoring relationship has enabled me to become a mentor myself to teams of facilitators in the Cursos Fundamentales program throughout Latin America.*

"

- Rosalba Rugamas
Cursos Fundamentales Coordinator

Benefits of formal mentoring

- It encourages our continuous professional and personal development and organisational learning.

- It adds capacity to our organisation that can have a far-reaching ripple effect in our various contexts and partner organisations.

- It is one of the most effective talent development tools.

- It provides on-the-job-training opportunities that are very effective ways of learning.

- It is the oil that ensures the smooth running of our competency-based consultant development and certification program.

- It fosters a strong network, a community where we learn together at all levels.

- It is a strategic response to a significant shortage of consultants and leaders.

- It promotes sustainability and localisation.

- It strengthens our commitment to diversity and inclusion.

- It improves work quality.

- It helps to retain staff, keeping them engaged and motivated.

- It has a transformative impact even beyond our organisation.

Breaking down barriers to formal mentoring

Lack of vision and communication

It is challenging to make a mentoring program work without adequate vision-sharing at all levels in the organisation.

Regular communication about how to participate in the program, how mentoring is structured locally and what fruit it bears is essential. Without this, even programs that start well can quickly run out of steam.

Lack of clarity and training

People need to know about roles, responsibilities, goals, expectations and time-frames.

Mentors and supervisors need to be trained.

Self-awareness and openness are key to avoid the danger of paternalistic attitudes ruining a mentoring relationship.

Long-distance mentoring needs special attention and perhaps some extra training.

Lack of flexibility and support

A formal mentoring program needs to be flexible enough to take into account cultural values for it to be effective in different locations.

Mentor-mentee matching is challenging and delicate. It needs careful, prayerful thought.

Support is needed as early as possible to address any difficulties that arise in the mentorships. Having regular conversations reflecting on the mentoring relationship is crucial.

> *One of the crucial factors in the success of the internships has been the selection of mentors.* *Since mentors are the ones who work most closely with the interns and provide instruction and guidance for them, it is critical that the mentors are competent and dedicated to the success of the interns. I have seen cases where interns did not successfully complete their internships largely due to this issue. In one case, an intern was allowed to start even though no mentor had been found for him yet. He floundered for a couple of years before dropping out. In another case, the mentor did not receive proper instruction about his role and he expected the field coordinator to be doing the things that were actually his responsibility. This resulted in the intern not receiving the opportunities for training and practice checking he should have had.*

- John Bruner

> *I believe mentoring should become a way of life for us. One endemic characteristic in our organization is that most people are overloaded. Even though one may feel mentoring is worthwhile, even important, the time investments required in the mentoring aspect of our relationships may seem impossible. My conviction is that this conclusion comes from a mistake in setting priorities.* ***It is better to let other things go undone, though they too may seem important, in order to include effective mentoring from top to bottom. I am convinced that in the end, the result will be that more is done more effectively.***
> *Mentoring needs to be a way of life that permeates all one does, not just an add-on. In addition to being central to the command that we love one another, it is central, I would say essential, to developing the human resources needed for the Bible translation task.*

- Dr Frank Robbins

How can we run a robust mentoring program in our context?

Steps that can help:

1. Inform and advocate.

2. Ensure that mentoring is included in the mentor's and mentee's work time.

3. Find the structure for mentoring that works best in your context. Experiment with different types of mentoring.

4. Provide ongoing support to mentors, mentees and supervisors.

5. Monitor and evaluate regularly. Make reports available to motivate staff.

"Mentoring does not happen by accident, nor do its benefits come quickly."
- *T. Addington & S. Graves*

1. Inform everyone and advocate for mentoring

- Explain the **benefits** of a robust mentoring program and that mentoring is **available to all**, not just those who work in academic domains.

- Make sure that everyone is informed about the program and is regularly kept **up-to-date** about **opportunities** and **expectations**.

Materials to support advocacy for mentoring are available on the Mentoring Matters website.
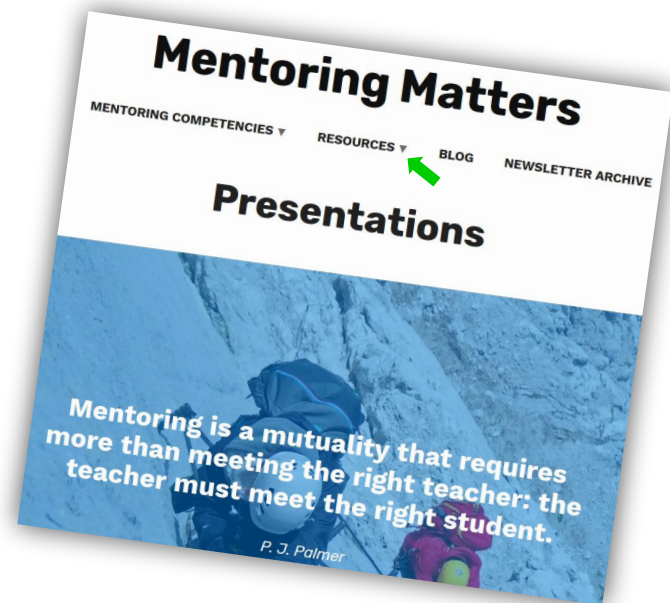
2. Make sure that mentoring is included in the mentor's and mentee's work time

- In a formal mentoring program, mentors and mentees are officially given time by their supervisors to invest in the mentorship. **Mentoring is** not an optional, out of work hours activity but **a valued part of one's assignment and contribution** to the organisation.

- Formal mentoring agreements that clearly outline the goals and limits of the mentorship are known to the mentor, the mentee and their supervisors.

You can find templates for mentoring agreements on the Mentoring Matters website under Downloadable tools.
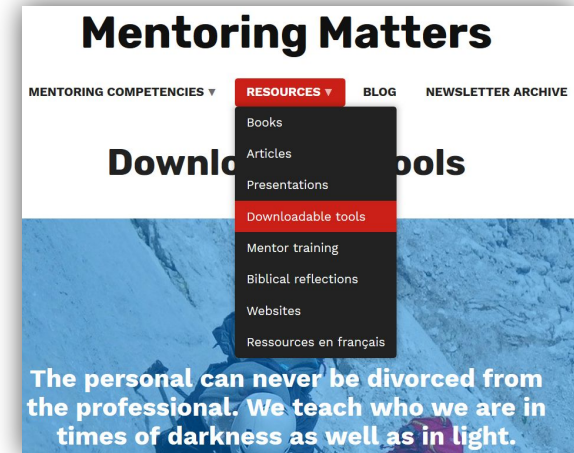
3. Find the structure that works best in your context

A successful mentoring program needs ongoing support from the leadership and a **structure that enables mentoring relationships to function well** in the organisational culture.

You might find the following questions helpful to kickstart your reflections as you look for the most suitable way to run your formal mentoring program.

How will we go about creating readiness for this initiative within our organization?	Which specific opportunities have we built in to engage people in mentoring?	Which structures and practices have we established to support mentoring?	How can we work together with partners to mutually profit from mentoring relationships?
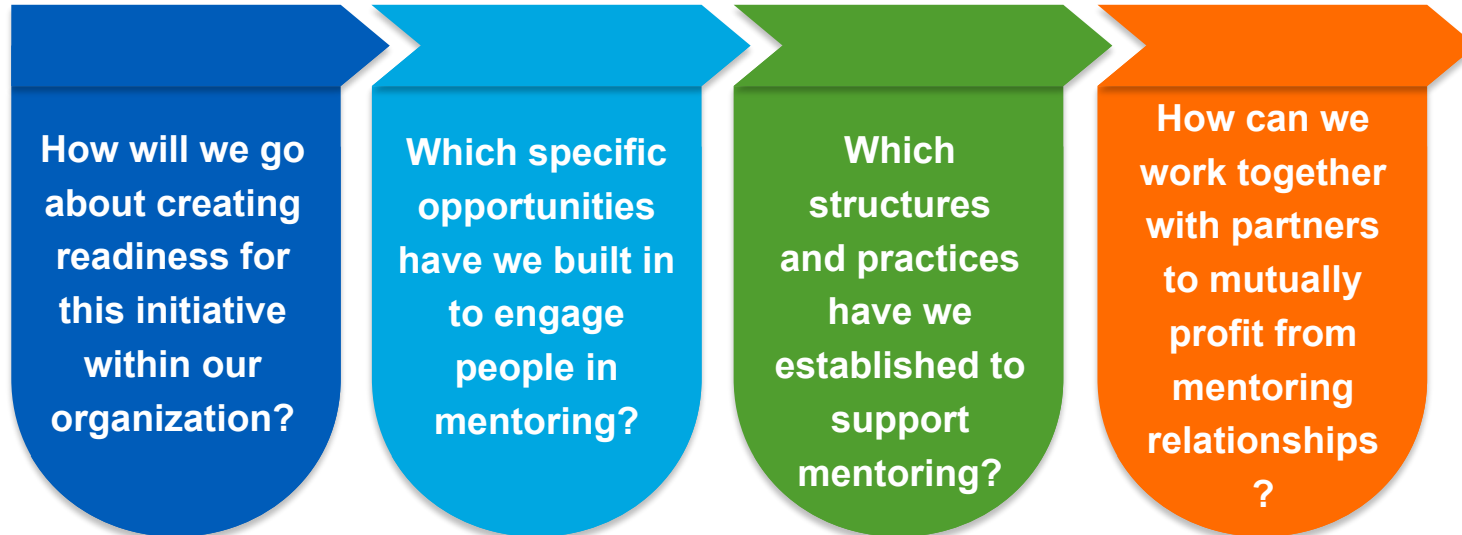
Recommended books: Mentoring Programs That Work by Labin and Creating a Mentoring Culture by Zachary

3. Some ideas to help you find the structure that works best in your context

Readiness

- Explore existing assumptions about mentoring.

- Identify how mentoring is adding value to the work.

- Clarify and communicate organisational goals and expectations related to mentoring.

- Establish a diverse group of people as mentoring champions who lead the initiative locally.

Engagement

- Create a clear way whereby those who would like to be mentored are supported in finding a suitable mentor.

- Communicate clearly about roles and expectations.

- Explore sensitive, contextualised ways to match mentors and mentees (a trusted go-between, an official role in HR, through the supervisor, etc.).

Structures

- Cyclical mentor training

- Budget for mentoring

- Regular mentoring network get-togethers to promote learning

- Regular check-ins with the supervisors to monitor the progress of both mentee and mentor

- Acknowledge and thank mentors for their investment.

- Establish feedback loops.

Partners

- Explore which partners can benefit from mentors in your organisation.

- Explore which partners could offer you mentors.

- Research cross-border and e-mentoring needs and possibilities.

Two downloadable worksheets if you need inspiration

4. Provide ongoing support to mentors, mentees and supervisors

- At the start of the program **mentors and supervisors might need to receive orientation or training in mentoring**. Help is available on the <u>Mentoring Matters website</u>. There are different **online training options** to help you and your staff to make the most of mentoring relationships. You can <u>explore the training options on the website</u>. In addition, you may want to <u>sign up to receive the Mentoring Matters newsletter</u> that contains information about upcoming events and other relevant news.

- Providing **short but regular learning opportunities** for mentors can be very beneficial. Think of training and learning as a journey instead of an event.

"Rather than develop a one-time startup training program, establish ongoing learning opportunities to encourage people to take the next step in their mentoring skills, knowledge and development."

- L. J. Zachary

5. Monitor, evaluate, share results and celebrate

- Measuring progress can be encouraging and **motivating**. It can also provide accountability.

- Evaluate your mentoring program frequently to see where it needs **adjustment**. Templates for evaluating your mentoring program can be downloaded from the website.

- Regularly inform your staff about how the mentoring program is doing and **celebrate the achievements of mentors and mentees** together.

> " *It took me years to realise that just making sure that I find mentors for our consultants-in-training is not enough. Some of the thus formed mentoring relationships were more effective than others, but in general, I as the supervisor of the mentees had to encourage and motivate both sides frequently and sometimes even slip into the role of the mentor temporarily to make sure that the mentees made progress.*
>
> ***Things changed when I started to train our mentors, developed guidelines and resources for mentoring and supported the mentoring pairs in setting up their relationship well at the beginning****. Now it is a joy to see how much more these new pairs enjoy their relationship, and that mutual growth is happening while they are using their time and work together effectively. Another positive side effect is that **our team is growing together more through these relationships and***

> *Being part of **a leadership team that focuses on capacity building and therefore makes the necessary resources available has been an important factor for the success of our formal mentoring program**. I wish I had had a resource like this booklet from the beginning!* "
>
> *- Dora Carlos*
> *Director of Programs, Southern Africa*

7
facilitators
started mentoring

21
participants who started mentoring another

23
people some of whom are also mentoring others

The impact of the Robust Mentoring launch event in SIL Africa after 6 months

<u>Video feedback</u> on the Robust Mentoring launch event in Africa

What resources are there to support mentoring?

In order to support the Robust Mentoring initiative, an inter-agency website has been launched to share resources and to encourage interaction about mentoring for sustainable development: **https://mentoring-matters.org/** The website provides:

Tools	Blog	Information	Platform	Multimedia
Practical tools to support mentoring relationships and the implementation of formal mentoring programs: templates, worksheets for mentors, mentees and administrators, presentations and devotionals around the topic of mentoring	A blog that facilitates reflection and interaction around the topic of cross-cultural mentoring for sustainable development	Recommended books and articles, information about mentoring competencies and continuing professional development for mentors	A platform to share knowledge, experience, resources and to ask questions about mentoring	Materials to advocate for formal mentoring

You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses.
Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.

The Apostle Paul to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2

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