



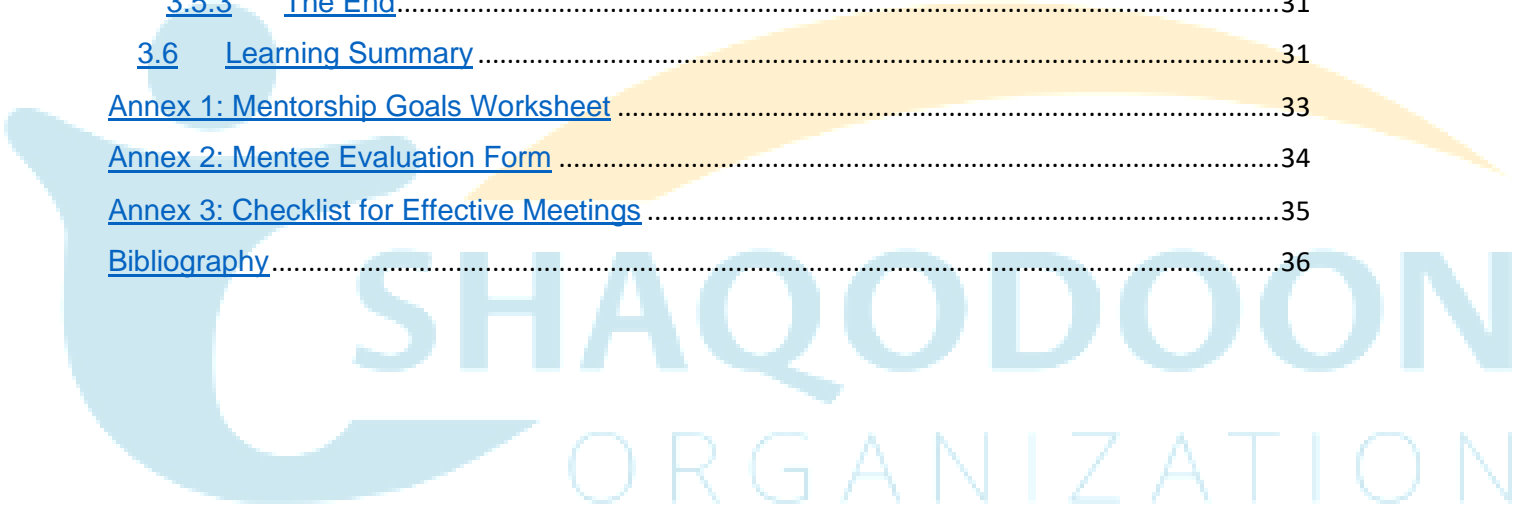
# MENTORSHIP HANDBOOK

A GUIDE FOR BUSINESS MENTORS

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## 1. Why This Handbook

Since its establishment in 2011, Shaqodoon – a local non-profit organisation – has been designing and delivering innovative programs to support the development of a vibrant and productive job market in Somalia/Somaliland. The organisation has also implemented a range of activities with a core focus on supporting to create an enabling business environment for particularly the youth through the provision of training, access to capital and business start-up support services.

Having served a mixed clientele that includes youth jobseekers, youth-owned local businesses, and aspiring entrepreneurs, Shaqodoon's approach places great emphasis on learning from the work that the organisation implements in various regions. Business mentorship has certainly made a tremendous difference in the professional world of commerce and career development internationally. However, it would be an understatement to say it is almost entirely non-existent in the Somalia/Somaliland context. This is among the most important lessons the organisation has captured over the years.

In fact, while numerous examples of mentoring can be found in our society (e.g. initiation/discipleship in Islamic tutelage, carpentry and metalwork, and traditional leadership), the Somali language does not have a word that fully and exactly captures the meaning of the word 'mentoring'. There are words such as 'barbaarin' (parenting), 'macallin' (educator), 'tababare' (trainer), but these words fail to fully capture the mental, intellectual and physical nurturing involved in mentoring. In the same vein, the culture of business mentoring is largely absent for several reasons that will be explained in detail in Chapter 1 of this handbook. While there are many successful Somali individual and family business owners, there appears to be a lack of opportunity for young entrepreneurs to leverage the skills and experience of successful business owners. Additionally, there have not been any documented efforts on the part of the public, private or civil society sectors in response to the mentoring needs of young entrepreneurs.

This handbook, therefore, has been created to serve as the foundation upon which the organisation aims to deliver its mentoring program. Because business mentoring is so rarely found in Somalia/Somaliland, the primary objective of the handbook is to provide the understanding, techniques and tools that prospective mentors will require in order to effectively fulfil their role.

While business mentoring is now a multi-billion-dollar industry at the international level, its value remains largely untapped in the Somali regions. As a result, the process of developing a handbook such as this for a Somali audience was not an easy one. Prior to explaining the ins-and-outs of the process, there is a need to explore why successful business owners are disengaged in the first place. Similarly, the trends that are reshaping the socioeconomics of the Somali regions must be explained, linking the explanation to why mentoring for business success is more important today for particularly Somali youth.

## Structure of the Handbook

The handbook consists of four chapters that provide an understanding of mentoring from a historical perspective and its benefits. Each chapter starts with a list of the key learning objectives and an introduction that summarizes the key principles. Each chapter also concludes with a summary of the key learning points and a list of review questions to help the mentors make sense of the content in as little as words as possible.

The first chapter discusses the crisis in the Somali regions specifically the business mentoring gap, and the lack of opportunities for youth to receive guidance and support in business development. The chapter also discusses how this gap is a product of how the Somali culture's misunderstanding of modern trade and commerce in a complex, face-paced and very competitive world. As a matter of principle, any given mentor must be very familiar with these issues in order to make sure the advice and guidance provided to his/her mentee is grounded in the complex reality's Somali youth face.

The second chapter of the handbook covers the common issues in mentoring for business success. The foundations of successful mentoring are discussed so that potential mentors know what to expect. This chapter also discusses the most common mentoring methods and models used around the globe. Although in favour of maintaining a simple and straightforward approach at this stage, it is important that the understanding of potential mentors is rooted in established models.

The third chapter is perhaps the most important chapter of the handbook as it discusses the *mentoring process in detail*. The chapter pays particular emphasis on critical success factors—interlinking them with the different stages of mentoring. Here, potential mentors will be provided with both theoretical background as well as more importantly practical guide to fostering the skills and attitudes required for carrying out their role effectively.

The final chapter of the handbook covers best practices in business mentoring. The inclusion of this chapter is necessary to better acquaint prospective mentors with the professional standards and ethics that are expected of them.

In producing this handbook, the author engaged in a desk review and extensive analysis of existing literature on the key principles, standards and best practices in business mentoring in order to ensure the content presented builds on a strong theoretical framework. Following this, the author conducted interviews with emerging youth entrepreneurs including Shaqodoon's direct and indirect beneficiaries, members of the country's private sector, renowned development workers, and respected members of the wider community. The evidence gathered was then synthesised into a range of themes which were incorporated into the design and content of the handbook.

# Chapter 1: What Is Mentoring?

## 1.1 Learning Objectives

This chapter of the handbook is intended to enable the mentor (or reader):

- I. To understand what mentoring as a concept in practice is
- II. To explain what a mentor stands to benefit from engaging in a mentoring relationship on a personal level
- III. To outline the basic types of mentoring
- IV. To explain the potential benefits and challenges of mentoring for business success
- V. To broadly understand the basic challenges of mentoring and why mentoring for business success is more important today for particularly the youth of Somalia/Somaliland.

## 1.2 A Brief Introduction

When discussing or learning about mentoring, it is important to put this subject in historical perspective to better understand the central role it has played in the survival and prosperity of humans all over the world. Practiced in various forms as well as in different disciplines, mentoring has been a constant feature of life in almost any society at any given period since the beginning of time. The core of mentoring is the passing down of knowledge, skills and experience through the ages from generation to generation.

The fact that “mentoring” in its basic form exists all over the world illustrates that the need to cultivate better and more prosperous future generations is a universally shared basic characteristic among all societies. Moreover, this speaks to the fact that younger generations cannot thrive solely based on their talents, hard work or even access to resources they require for success. That, in addition, young people also depend on the wisdom and timely guidance of older generations in order to put themselves on a course to achieving success. Mentoring, as such, is how, faced with the limitations of formal education, individuals and communities manage to close the gap by ensuring traditions, knowledge and skills are passed down from one generation to the next.

Although mentoring has been practiced in various forms for as long as humans have existed, business mentoring is relatively new and is believed to have popularised since after the Second World War. A business mentor is someone who provides technical or motivational support to a business owner or an aspiring entrepreneur in need of guidance on certain professional skills and competencies; exploring the viability of opportunities and proposed ideas; and on learning the ins-and-outs of a particular trade.

- Mentoring is a relationship of personal or professional nature between an experienced person and a developing individual.
- The relationship can take place in a variety of settings and disciplines. It can be arranged within a company or institution for the purpose of orientating and counselling new employees with specific performance targets.
- It may also be of a personal nature in which a less experienced person turns to the advice and support of an older person in making important decisions about their future.



### 1.3 The Basic Types of Mentoring for Business Success

Although mentoring can take many forms, according to most of the literature on this subject, there are a number of basic types of mentoring. It is important that a prospective mentor understands the differences, values and requirements of each in order to be able to fulfil his/her role effectively.

In its page on “Mentoring”, Wikipedia explains “there are two broad types of mentoring relationships: formal and informal.” When formal, a mentoring relationship is based on a structured and time-bound partnership with specific and measurable goals. This type of mentoring normally takes place in a work or school setting either as stand-alone or part of a broader work or academic process. When informal, however, mentoring is a relationship initiated by an experienced individual who is naturally interested in making a contribution to the personal and professional growth of someone younger with whom they either work or know in their personal life. This relationship may be based on short or long term. It can also take place within the same organisation or personal setting.

- There are two basic types of mentoring:
  - Formal mentoring is structured and time-bound with specific and measurable goals.
  - Informal mentoring is less structured and has no pre-determined specific outcomes.

Despite the fact, these two broad types encompass several other sub-categories which relate to the specific nature of the mentoring process. According to a study by Washington University in St. Louis, these include:

- **Situational Mentoring** – occurring at all stages of the career or business process, mentoring here is targeted at achieving specific goals and is commonly set for a short period of time. For example, a company interested in improving its sales efficiency may ask a sales and marketing expert to step in for a specific period to work with designated company staff in exploring the most viable sales and marketing techniques.
- **Supervisory Mentoring** – refers to when a direct supervisor also takes on the role of mentoring a junior staff. Whether this occurs naturally or as part of a company’s formal procedure, this type of mentoring has the added advantage of providing the mentor and mentee ample time. However, much of the literature reviewed to produce this handbook point to the fact that willingness and motivation are key to the success of a mentoring partnership. As such, when a supervisor does not feel comfortable in serving as a mentor, it is believed this approach to mentoring does not work.

As an ever-evolving field, there are a number of new sub-types of mentoring which have recently become very popular. These sub-types of mentoring underpin two important points: that mentoring can take place between more than two people; and that mentoring does not need to be offered only by an older and more experienced individual. These modern approaches to mentoring respond to the critical limitation of time by enabling organisations, practitioners and mentees to maximise the use of available resources and time.

These modern approaches include:

- **Peer-to-Peer Mentoring** – a relationship that takes place between two people of similar backgrounds and in similar positions who extend support to each other in the form of advice and the exchange of knowledge and skills.
- **Mentoring Circles** - a guide developed by Abbott Laboratories, a US-based health care company, defines this approach to mentoring as: “a collection of mentoring relationship that meets on a regular basis for an agreed upon length of time.” The aim can be to provide a platform for people to support each other in achieving with similar interests and common goals. The fact that participants can take on any role – mentor or mentee – is another distinct feature of this type of mentoring.
- **Flash Mentoring** – originally invented by K. Scott Derrick, a business management and leadership expert, this type of mentoring encompasses a one-time meeting or discussion that provides a learning opportunity from an experienced individual to less experienced individuals. Like Mentoring Circles, there is emphasis here on maximising the time and resources allocated for the mentoring process.

Mentoring is today a multi-billion-dollar industry that has transformed or been incorporated into a range of other practices aiming to cash in on a rising demand for personal and professional development in the world of commerce and trade.

These practices include:

- Business coaches who help aspiring entrepreneurs and those already engaged in a business to explore whether they are on the right track and provide support to taking action toward achieving business success.
- Business trainers who help businesspeople develop by honing skills and knowledge in specific areas of the business process.
- Business consultants who help aspiring entrepreneurs and business owners transition into success.

#### 1.4 Potential Benefits and Challenges of Mentoring for Business Success

There are many benefits and challenges associated with business mentoring both for the individuals involved – i.e., the mentor and mentee – as well as for the wider society. Most of the literature on this subject matter points to the fact that while the benefits associated with business mentorship are almost universal, the challenges are context specific. Moreover, there is widespread consensus that the benefits always outweigh the challenges—particularly when actionable steps can be taken to mitigate the impact of the challenges.

For an aspiring entrepreneur, interacting with an experienced individual in a business mentoring partnership can serve as a great source of inspiration and motivation. This is of particular significance when the aspiring entrepreneur is a youth. As a partnership based on trust and respect, the knowledge acquired from the guidance and support of an experienced individual increases competency to overcome challenges faced throughout their entrepreneurial journey.



Below are some specific ways in which a business owner or a mentee may benefit from business mentorship.

- Entrepreneurs have many things to worry about, particularly at the start-up, therefore finding a mentor who provide expert advice and guidance based on their successes and failures can prove extremely valuable.
- Business mentors can support entrepreneurs on coping with a particular challenge or a set of hurdles by providing a fresh and different perspective.
- Business mentoring enhances the professional development of entrepreneurs particularly those new to the business world by learning new skills or refining/advancing existing technical abilities.
- Business mentoring can serve as a psychological relief by providing an entrepreneur the necessary space and time to express their frustrations and disappointments.

In addition to enabling the mentee to achieve their professional/business goals, a business mentoring experience can also benefit a mentor in many ways.

<b>Table 1: Benefits of Mentoring to the Mentor</b>
▪ Gives satisfaction in assisting a colleague in achieving his or her professional and personal goals.
▪ Promotes sharing of knowledge and demonstration of expertise.
▪ Gains recognition and respect for contributing to the development of youth mentees.
▪ Generates new ideas and new perspectives from mentees.
▪ Enhances their own skills in listening, modelling and leadership.
▪ Widens one’s own professional competence.
▪ Develops greater understanding of barriers and issues faced by emerging entrepreneurs.

<b>Table 2: Benefits of Mentoring to the Mentees</b>
▪ Contributes to personal development.
▪ Offers a tool for stress reduction.
▪ Overcomes the initial challenges and fears of becoming an entrepreneur.
▪ Provides a safe and a conducive environment for learning and development.
▪ Helps identify personal learning needs.
▪ Widens one’s entrepreneurial competence.
▪ Generates learning from business experiences of others in a safe environment (fast-track learning).
▪ Provides professional support during the transition from theory to practice (for novice teachers).
▪ Aids job retention and career advancement.
▪ Provides an opportunity to indulge in self-reflection.
▪ Helps in problem-solving.
▪ Helps goal setting and goal clarification.
▪ Provides tacit knowledge.
▪ Provides a safe and a conducive environment for learning and development.

The benefits of business mentoring extend beyond just the individual level. At the societal level, the transformative powers of business mentoring are self-explanatory. This is evidenced by the fact that commerce and generally the economy in the US soared to

unprecedented heights in the 1950s and 1960s when more and more business executives and leaders took young and new entrepreneurs under their wing. It was also this period formal mentorship programs were introduced.

More specifically, some of the documented positive effects of business mentoring are shown in the following table:

<b>Table 3: Benefits of Mentoring to the Mentees</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Business mentoring is an effective way to help a society mitigate the opportunity gap which all societies struggle with, but more so in a developing one. Because formal education in the Somali region cannot serve all members of the society equally, business mentoring can help mitigate the impact of this limitation.</b></li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Business mentoring contributes to improved productivity across the sectors by equipping young and seasoned entrepreneurs with the necessary technical competencies and professional skills that ensure business success.</b></li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Business mentoring, as a result, ensures improved overall economic growth.</b></li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Business mentoring fosters a culture of self-replicating the sharing of knowledge and skills.</b></li></ul>

### 1.5 Why Mentoring Youth Matters

While there are a number of areas in Somalia/Somaliland with considerable agricultural potential, the vast majority of the Somali population lives in predominantly harsh environmental conditions grappling with the realities of resource limitation. Nevertheless, it is through sheer resilience and resourcefulness that Somalis have survived in these circumstances for centuries. Having relied on nomadic pastoralism, Somalis have found the most strategic way to make the best use of their native soil.

A closer examination of how Somali live in their natural habitat reveals the fact that resilience and resourcefulness are qualities that have been passed down many generations to ensure the survivability of the individual, the family, and the society. From a young age, both boys and girls are acquainted with a world that has high expectations for them—expectations that have endured through the generations. At the earliest stage, young boys and girls are taught to play their part by tending to daily chores that instill a mind-set and character of toughness in order to ensure their survival in such an unforgiving environment—aspiring poets are tutored by seasoned lyricists; the son of a chief is provided with the social, intellectual, and physical preparation required for leading a community under such difficult circumstances; and veteran warriors prepare strong and tough-minded young boys for the battlefield.

While it is clear then that mentoring is part and parcel of the Somali way of life in its traditional setting, it appears the culture of mentoring has failed to cross-over to the urban setting. Transplanting this cultural legacy has been particularly absent in the field of commerce and trade. In fact, an overwhelming majority of the first generation of well-known Somali business owners intentionally kept their children away from the business. As a result, most businesses perished soon after the fathers passed away—with no experience,

exposure or skills to speak of, the inheritors were entirely unprepared for running the business.

When asked about this phenomenon, most of the people interviewed to produce this handbook argued the fact that the conditions of rural and urban life are setup entirely differently is a major issue. One commentator said that the youth living in an urban setting have more opportunities and options open to them in comparison to their rural counterparts. As a result, most business owners had other ambitions for their children—perhaps to pursue a profession of a different nature in fields such as medicine, civil service, and even politics. Another observer commented that urbanisation is still a new phenomenon in the Somali regions and that, as such, the local population is struggling to overcome incompatible elements between the two settings.

Whatever the reason may be, it appears that the absence of the culture of mentoring particularly geared towards promoting the knowledge and skills of young entrepreneurs is an added layer to the considerable number of challenges they face in successfully establishing and running a business.

Mr. Osman Geelle – a renowned businessman from Somaliland – is commonly seen as a standout for having engaged his children in his business affairs. Even from an early age, all his sons were involved in different facets of his diverse businesses—from managing technical operations to sales and marketing. Further, already equipped with a wealth of experience on the ground, Geelle’s sons were then sent to the US and the UK to study business and commerce at renowned institutions. Consequently, relying on their trading background as well as their formal education, Geelle’s sons have managed to build a large conglomerate of diverse and innovative businesses that includes:

- Somaliland Beverage Industries – the company that produces Coca Cola products in Somaliland and, at \$20 million, the largest private investment in the country’s history.
- DHL’s franchise in both Somaliland and Djibouti
- An immensely successful import/export company
- A medium-sized frankincense oil processing plant
- A home pest control services company
- An advertisement and marketing company.

Collectively, these companies which employ a huge number of workers, serve as a testament to the powerful impact business mentorship, even if family-based, can have on the future of businesses. In contrast, the businesses of many of Mr. Geelle’s contemporaries have either failed or considerably declined at the hands of their inheritors.

For a number of reasons, business mentorship for youth is more critical today than ever:

- First, the youth make up the largest segment of the population whose lives and livelihood prospects continue to suffer from the drawn-out effects of war and conflict across the region. With limited access to adequate formal education, employment opportunities or capital to start-up their own business, many are nevertheless expected to play an important role in the economic wellbeing of their families and generally the social and economic development of their country.

- Second, the youth are entering a job market and business environment that has undergone a tremendous transformation during the past 20 years. Although livestock production and export continue to serve as its backbone, the economy in Somalia/Somaliland is far more diversified than ever before. A number of sectors have since the late 1990s emerged as key drivers of the regions' economic development. A rapidly expanding service sector is the most notable including: import/export; financial services; wholesale and retail trades; air and road transportation; telecommunications; technical and professional support; health care; education and training; and accommodation and food services. Additionally, particularly in Somaliland, a light industry has more recently demonstrated a slow, but sustained growth.
- Finally, the youth are not only faced with challenges inherent in their own region, but are also entering a globalised, fast-paced and highly competitive world economy. While many local youths face dire employment opportunities, many potential employers complain about a shortage of skilled labourers. As a result, skilled workers from a number of countries such as India, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Kenya and Yemen are filling the gap.

Despite its transformative powers, business mentorship alone cannot be seen as the solution to the personal and social challenges faced by the youth: it must rather be looked to as a crucial part of an integrated approach. In response to the problems stated above, mentoring can be a source of inspiration and self-confidence for youth looking to start their own business, those already engaged in a business as well as those seeking employment in the labour market. As explained in previous chapters of this handbook, mentoring can help guide the youth to cope with the difficulties they face in the evolution of new and modern era of Somali commerce.

## 1.6 Business Mentoring Models

According to Management Mentors, a US-based management consulting firm, there are five corporate models of business mentoring which are as follows:



- 1.6.1 One-On-One Mentoring** – the most common model in which one mentor with one mentee. It is preferred by most people “because it allows both mentor and mentee to develop a personal relationship and provides individual support for the mentee.”
- 1.6.2 Resource-Based Mentoring** – like one-on-one mentoring, this model of mentoring is less formal and puts the onus on the mentee to choose a mentor from a list which contains a number of volunteer mentors.
- 1.6.3 Group Mentoring** – this model of mentoring involves a mentor being matched with a group of four to six mentee at a time which meets once or twice a month with the aim of helping “one another learn and develop appropriate skills and knowledge.”
- 1.6.4 Training-Based Mentoring** – tied directly to a training program, this model involves a mentor being matched with a mentee as part of efforts to enable him/her to develop “the specific skills being taught in the program.”
- 1.6.5 Executive Mentoring** – the least common of all the models, “this top-down model may be the most effective way to create a mentoring culture and cultivate skills and knowledge throughout an organisation.”

## 1.7 Mentoring vs. Coaching

Mentoring is similar in terms of some of its functions to coaching and tutoring, but there are also important differences. As illustrated in Table 4, compared with coaching, mentoring is usually a long-term relationship (or at least as long as the mentee’s training period), ranges widely in scope (depending on what objectives have been agreed between mentor and mentee) and with an emphasis on personal and career development.

**Table 4: Summary of the 4 Most Important Distinctions**

Mentoring	Coaching
▪ <b>Normally long-term</b>	▪ Most often short-term
▪ <b>Wide ranging in focus</b>	▪ Focuses on specific issues and goals
▪ <b>Focus on career and personal development</b>	▪ Focus on performance and development issues
▪ <b>Focus on future</b>	▪ Focus on the present

**Important Note:** these distinctions are more pronounced in a business mentorship tailored for young entrepreneurs whose needs for comprehensive development can best be met by mentoring as opposed to coaching.

## 1.8 Learning Summary

- a) Mentoring is defined as a relationship of personal or professional nature between an experienced person and a developing individual.
- b) Mentoring is an age-old practice in which all societies have engaged since the beginning of time to ensure the survival of their future generations.
- c) Business mentoring is a new practice with a set of important benefits for the mentor.

- d) While there are a number of basic types of mentoring, situational and supervisory are the two most traditional types along with new approaches such as peer-to-peer, mentoring circles, and flash mentoring which maximise the use of time and available resources.
- e) Mentoring for business success is more important particularly today because this generation of youth in Somalia/Somaliland face far more challenges both in number and complexity than any of the generations before them.
- f) Because mentoring is so inherent in the Somali way of life, business mentoring for the youth should be easily adoptable if resources such as this handbook are supported with those interested in entering the field.

## Chapter 2: Mentoring for Business Success

### 2.1 Learning Objectives

This chapter of the handbook is expected to enable the mentor to:

1. Develop a greater awareness of the fundamentals of mentoring as whole.
2. Understand the foundations of successful business mentoring—i.e., knowledge, skills and attitude.
3. Understand and explain the industry's best practices for ensuring positive impact in mentoring including the required ethical and professional standards.
4. Explain the similarities and differences between mentoring and coaching; and
5. Recognise the most common models of mentoring and their associated techniques and tools.

### 2.2 Introduction

In practice, mentoring can seem to be fundamentally straightforward. A mentor voluntarily seeks out a mentee – or is matched with one in a mentorship program. The expectations on both sides of the partnership are agreed upon from the start. The relationship runs its course from there on. Although this may seem rather simple, there are a number of issues which require a deep understanding and appreciation for the mentoring effort to be effective in achieving its intended results. It is important that a mentor is aware of what these issues are and is prepared for them in advance. This chapter of the handbook will explain the important concepts and requirements of mentoring from an international perspective. More importantly, however, these concepts will be grounded in local realities based on the outcome of the interviews conducted with a range of different people for the purpose of producing this handbook.

### 2.3 Foundations of Successful Business Mentoring

Successful mentoring is essentially based on the confluence of three key factors—i.e. knowledge, skills, and attitude—on the part of the mentor. This chapter of the handbook explains the importance of these elements in relation to business mentorship for youth entrepreneurs in Somalia/Somaliland. While a potential mentor may already possess all



three elements naturally, it is important to point out that a mentor needs to continue developing them. At the end of the chapter, therefore, a list will be provided of reference material for prospective mentors to strengthen their knowledge-based on the subject matter.

### 2.3.1 Knowledge

When asked about what they considered to be the most important trait a potential business mentor must have, most of the people interviewed for this handbook answered “knowledge”. Aspiring young entrepreneurs in Somalia/Somaliland face a range of challenges as they look to start a business or find success in an existing one. A mentor, therefore, must be someone who has acquired expertise on how to overcome these challenges resulting from years of experience in the field of business.

One commentator stated that in this day in age young entrepreneurs can learn how commerce and trade works in the international arena from a variety of different sources including the internet. However, their success depends on knowledge of how the business environment in Somalia/Somaliland works. Therefore, the experience of a mentor must serve as a source of guidance in helping young entrepreneurs to put the challenges they face in starting-up and operating a business in perspective.

Below is a summary of the specific expertise which are seen as most critical to Somali business owners:

- **Financial Literacy** – whether for the purpose of controlling operations, guiding day-to-day decisions, or comparing actual results with planned objectives, book/record-keeping is a widespread problem facing the vast majority of business owners in the Somali region—even successful ones. This is an area that is expected to draw much interest in a mentoring partnership on the part of a mentee. As such, it is critical that prospective mentors familiarise themselves well with the ins-and-outs of the process of managing the finances of a business.
- **Business Planning** – setting short and long-term goals and the strategic thinking required for achieving them is another area with which the vast majority of Somali-owned businesses struggle. It appears that most business owners do not employ a systematic approach to identifying the priorities that are essential to their mission, acquiring and allocating the resources they require, and committing to critical decisions. This is a crucial area in which mentees are expected to seek support in a mentoring partnership. As such, prospective mentors are expected to enable their mentees to think about, prepare and use a focused and structured plan to guide their business process.
- **Sector-specific Information on Market Trends** - Somali businesses operate in a low-capacity, resource-poor and post-conflict environment that is overwhelmingly unpredictable as a result of which most businesses close within a very short period of their opening. The absence of a business culture that favours the formal study, analysis and planning in response to the problems facing the private sector further exacerbates the situation. As a result, prospective mentors are expected to inspire in their mentees the competence to identify, assess and mitigate the risks and threats both in the immediate as well as long-term future.

- **Sales and Marketing** – entrepreneurs in Somalia/Somaliland face a plethora of questions on how to successfully run a business in such a volatile business climate. Particularly with regards to sales and marketing, prospective mentors are expected to help their mentees develop sound strategies that fit well with what is going on in their environment. Mentors are expected to support their mentees exploit their key resources in maximising opportunities while cutting losses. Finally, mentors are expected to help their mentees develop the analytical skills necessary for cultivating an advantage over their competitors.
- **Time Management** - time management in the Somali context is often inconsistent with that of most of the rest of the world. This is an area in which many prospective mentors will be asked to provide support as part of efforts to making sure mentees are able to exercise time management in order to increase productivity, effectiveness and efficiency. Some of the elements that will be explored here include setting goals and deadlines and prioritising activities as per their importance.

The above summary indicates that due to the lack of a support system elsewhere, knowledge serves as the basis of the type of mentoring partnership pursued by young entrepreneurs in Somalia/Somaliland. The exposure, experience, and expertise of seasoned business owners is a valuable resource from which young entrepreneurs seek to benefit as the foundation of their own future successes.

### 2.3.2 Skills

If knowledge and experience are the foundation upon which a mentoring partnership is built, the mentor's own skills serve as the means of carrying the partnership forward. In this context, skills refer to the abilities a mentor must possess in order for the mentoring experience to be both enjoyable and successful. A mentor may naturally possess these skills, but research has shown that these skills can also be developed and reinforced prior and/or through the mentoring experience. In addition, these are skills a mentor should seek to inspire and empower within their mentee throughout the duration of their partnership.

The following outlines the set of skills desired in and expected of a mentor in leading a mentorship partnership. The literature reviewed and the people surveyed to produce this handbook were consistent in their view of the skills which are critical on the part of a mentor.

#### i. **Interpersonal Skills**

Interpersonal skills are crucial to initiating and sustaining an effective mentoring partnership, particularly in relation to young entrepreneurs in Somalia/Somaliland—the vast majority of whom have never been a part of a partnership such as this. Closely linked to the kind of attitude expected of a mentor, interpersonal skills are about building trust through consistency of behaviour and the demonstration of integrity.

#### ii. **Communication Skills**

Communication is central to human interaction in any context whether of personal or professional nature. Communication and interaction are essentially about the way we send and receive information which helps us to understand people and situations. It goes without saying that communication and interaction are the backbone of a mentoring partnership.

However, it must be understood that communication and interaction in such a context encompass more than simply speaking with clarity or the ability to convey a message. There are other aspects to communication which if not handled properly can serve as a roadblock to effective mentoring.

As such, there are a set of rules – i.e., dos and don'ts – which are laid out for the way in which a mentor communicates and interacts with his/her mentee. For example, judging, dismissing, ridiculing and lecturing too much can often make the mentee feel a diminished sense of self-worth. Instead, a mentor must listen and place greater emphasis on the talents and strengths a mentee already possesses in order to build his/her self-confidence and a sense of pride in their achievements.

In their handbook on “Designing and Customising Mentor Training, the Centre for Applied Research Solutions, Inc. recommends that mentors be “as objective as possible” by not allowing their judgement to get in the way they communicate with their mentees. Similarly, mentors are encouraged to put themselves in the shoes of their mentees and attempt to interact with the problems they face first-hand. This not only improves the quality of the relationship, but it also results in realistic and effective solutions to the problems a mentee faces in their entrepreneurial journey.

The mentor's responsibility is to create a relationship that gives room and space for the mentee to learn. Mentoring is not about teaching how things are. Listening indicates respect, caring and a genuine interest in the other person – the building blocks of trust. It is unlikely that a person will mistrust someone who signals appreciation and vice versa.

### **iii. Listening and Communication**

Listening is necessary for identifying and understanding the needs and aspirations of the mentee and reacting to these. Listening entails the ability and willingness to look at things from the other person's perspective. This requires empathy and sometimes keeping back the mentor's immediate reactions, thus leaving room for reflection.

Non-verbal communication can be more powerful than verbal communication. It is estimated that most of the communication between people is non-verbal (Leathers, 1997). Non-verbal communication includes facial and bodily expressions, such as smiling or shaking one's head, distance and placement in relation to other people, use of emphasis and volume when speaking and touching (for example, shaking hands or embracing another person).

Non-verbal communication has many functions. It can complement verbal communication or sometimes even speak more than words. For example, eye

contact can indicate various emotions in a mentoring session. It can be used to communicate whose turn it is to speak. Eye contact can also be used to signal feelings and relationships between people. For instance, frequent, confident eye contact by the mentee can indicate comfort or trust, whereas the same, used by the mentor, can convey a sign of genuine interest.

In contrast, lack of eye contact by the mentee can act as a reflection of his or her current state of mind, indicating, for example, feelings of dejection or sadness. Interpreting non-verbal communication can be difficult and requires sensitivity. It can contain a number of messages and it can be easily misinterpreted. Non-verbal communication is also culturally bound.

Communication Tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Listen actively – active listening, which is expressed in posture, facial expression, eye contact, movement, and gestures. More importantly, active listening expresses a mentor’s intention to treat the partnership as a two-way learning opportunity.</li> <li>▪ Providing more than just information by incorporating personal stories, questions and humour into the mentoring partnership.</li> <li>▪ Using specific and descriptive language when speaking with mentees.</li> </ul>

Table 5: Listening Habits	
Good Habits	Bad Habits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Opening your mind to new perspectives.</li> <li>▪ Listen to the whole message.</li> <li>▪ Listening with understanding.</li> <li>▪ Asking for clarification.</li> <li>▪ Getting the message without judgment.</li> <li>▪ Not interrupting.</li> <li>▪ Listening for facts and feelings.</li> <li>▪ Listening rather than pretending to listen.</li> <li>▪ Creating a positive, comfortable environment.</li> <li>▪ Reflective listening.</li> <li>▪ Identifying and replacing negative words.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Closing your mind before hearing all the facts.</li> <li>▪ Hearing only part of what is being said.</li> <li>▪ Making instant assumptions</li> <li>▪ Thinking you know what is being said.</li> <li>▪ Putting the speaker down</li> <li>▪ Interrupting before the speaker is finished.</li> <li>▪ Listening for facts only.</li> <li>▪ Faking attention.</li> <li>▪ Creating or allowing distractions</li> <li>▪ Ignoring feeling words.</li> <li>▪ Reacting to trigger words without thinking how they are meant by the speaker reaction ahead of time.</li> </ul>

**Source:** *Designing and Customizing Mentor Training*. Folsom, CA: Center for Applied Research Solutions, Inc.

#### iv. **Problem-solving Skills**

Problem-solving skills are important to a mentor in helping youth entrepreneurs to identify challenges and the most appropriate line of action to address them. It is here that a mentor can empower an aspiring youth entrepreneur to make the right decisions—i.e., prioritising what is supposed to be done and when and whether certain actions are worth the time, effort and resources.

#### v. **Time management Skills**

Time management skills are essential to a mentor to insure the effectiveness and efficiency of the mentoring process as well as to exercise greater control over its

outcome. In essence, time management skills mean setting goals effectively, planning, prioritising and executing activities as per their importance.

### **2.3.3 Attitude**

The attitude of a mentor and the quality of character he/she brings to the partnership is essential to mentoring effectively. The people interviewed to produce this handbook were unanimous in saying that a mentor must demonstrate commitment to the process. A mentee who believes his/her mentor is genuinely committed to making a difference in their lives is more likely to pay attention and make an honest effort.

The people interviewed to produce this handbook also stressed that mentors must consistently demonstrate the qualities of a great teacher such as patience and self-control in dealing with the issues as they occur. Relying on their interpersonal skills, mentors are expected to develop a healthy relationship with their mentee based on respect and trust.

## **2.4 Best Practices for Impactful Mentoring**

Like any discipline or professional field which has benefited from years of research and academic focus, industry experts have named a number of procedures as part of the most effective ways to approaching the mentoring process. These so-called best practices are both accepted and prescribed because they ensure that mentoring relationship achieves its intended purpose and goals in as little time as possible, but, equally important, that both parties enjoy the experience along the way.

As, it is extremely importance that a prospective mentor learns about and incorporates these best practices into their mentoring program. Although there are many procedures considered part of the mentoring best practices, this chapter of the handbook will attempt to identify and explain a few of the most important and relevant practices in a business mentoring partnership particularly designed for young entrepreneurs.

### **2.4.1 Some Questions Worth Exploring in Mentoring for Business Success**

As explained in previous chapters of this handbook, the possibility that any prospective mentor or mentee will have participated in a mentoring relationship or program is very slim given the absence of the practice in the Somali context. Therefore, it is critical that a mentor explore the answers to a number of self-directed questions. In their handbook on “Designing and Customising Mentor Training”, the Centre for Applied Research Solutions, Inc. explain that “self-reflection can serve as a powerful tool in guiding volunteers to take ownership their own conscious and unconscious expectations”. What this essentially means is that a mentor – as well as their mentee – will both be going into the partnership with a clear set of expectations in return for time, effort, energy and possibly resources put in.

Some of the questions which are most relevant for a mentor to ask him/herself with regards to a mentoring partnership for youth include:

- What do I, on a personal level, want to accomplish out of this experience?
- How will I make sure the process will continue to impact my own growth as an individual and as a professional?
- What external support do I have available to me and will seek in being able to fulfil the demands of the role?
- What are some of the challenges I can foresee even at this early stage and what can I do to mitigate their impact on the relationship?
- What are some of the qualities I look for in a mentee – i.e., initiative, eager-to-learn attitude, open, communicative, etc. – and what will I do if I am matched with someone who lacks these qualities?

A mentor asking him/herself these questions will bring them the mental preparedness they will need in the likelihood that any of one of their major fears become true.

### 2.4.2 Ethical and Professional Standards

Mentoring is a complex relationship that is often a very emotional experience even when of a professional nature. Because the people involved are constantly exchanging personal stories and confronting together personal challenges, it is highly recommended that a set of ethical and professional standards are adopted and practiced. The IIC&M, which is a body that provides professional accreditation to coaches and mentors, says that because the mentoring relationship puts the mentor in a privileged position, “mentoring requires clear behavioural guideless in order to safeguard clients and mentors.” This is mentoring as a relationship between an adult and at-risk or vulnerable youth in various contexts. While mentorship for youth in a business context is very different, it is still important that a potential mentor familiarise and practice him/herself with these standards.

Basically, being ethical means using moral judgement to guide the decisions one makes and the way in which a person behaves when carrying out certain responsibilities. In a mentoring relationship of professional nature, a mentor has the added responsibility of teaching his/her mentee ethical behaviour and instilling its value in the way they approach the business world.

*“Mentoring requires clear behavioural guideless in order to safeguard clients and mentors.”*

The global and regional bodies instituted around the world to maintain the professional standards in mentoring concur in what they believe to be the core values required in a mentoring relationship with slight variations. The Professional Charter for Coaching and Mentoring whose signatories include the European Mentoring and Coaching Council,



International Coach Federation, Association for Coaching, and Société Française de Coaching, lists the following as the five as the code of ethics.

- **Competence** – the ability and willingness of a mentor to ensure that he/she has the necessary level of experience and knowledge to meet the needs of the client. This is consistent with the view of the people who were interviewed to produce this handbook who felt that a mentor’s relevant knowledge was critical in the effectiveness of a mentoring partnership. In case a mentor lacks competence in a certain area, he/she must be committed enough to raising their competence through training or research.
- **Context** – the understanding of a mentor of the circumstances that surround their mentoring relationship with his/her mentee and his/her willingness to respond to its demands by ensuring the relationship remains a valuable learning opportunity.
- **Boundary Management** - the commitment of a mentor to always carefully manage the limitations of the relationship particularly with regards to any of conflict of interest in the discussions and activities which the mentoring process involves.
- **Integrity** – a mentor must provide guarantees to his/her mentor that everything discussed, and all the business ideas reviewed together will be treated with utmost confidence. This, in turn, raises the likelihood that a mentee will open up to their mentor and share ideas and concerns throughout the mentoring process.
- **Professionalism** – a critical factor to the effectiveness of the mentoring process, this forms part of the mentor’s willingness to respond to the learning and development needs of mentee and assurances that they will not exploit them. This also involves that this is a responsibility that will continue even if the mentoring relationship has ended particularly with regards to confidentiality.

## 2.6 The Most Common Models of Mentoring for Business Success

As a field that has been researched and analysed extensively, a range of models have been developed for mentorship. It is particularly important that someone new to the field familiarise him/herself with the tools and techniques of the more the renowned and practiced mentorship models.

The below list highlights the 4 most-popular models. Because a short summary is provided below, it is recommended that mentors do further reading on each of these models.

### 2.6.1 The CLEAR Model

The CLEAR Model is one of the classic models in the field of business mentorship. Also used as an effective model of business coaching, it was developed in the 1980s by Peter Hawkins, an industry expert, whose aim was to structure the process in a well-defined and chronological manner. CLEAR is an acronym which stands for the following.

### 2.6.2 The GROW Model

The GROW Model is another classic model in the field of mentorship which revolves around the four key elements of mentoring—i.e., Goals, Reality, Options, and Will. The effectiveness of this model is its ability to be used as the basis for a single session or as

part of wider and more long-term mentoring relationship. This model is popular because of its rather straightforward premise which is:

- a) Set goals which are specific and achievable
- b) Reflect on the current reality
- c) Explore the options for actionable steps
- d) Find the will or motivation for taking action

Although presented in a sequence here, industry experts note that this model does not have to be followed in a linear manner. Any stage of the model can be used as the basis for resolving issues discussed in a mentoring relationship.

### 2.6.3 The Storyteller Approach

The Storytelling Model was developed by Doug Lipman with the aim of enabling mentors to become great storytellers. As the name suggests, the Storytelling Model relies on conversations and active listening as the basis of successful mentoring. The structure of this model is basic and is arranged around the following four tools:

- **Listening** – actively and sympathetically listening to the mentee with as little intervention as possible.
- **Appreciating** – understanding and confirming the issues raised by the mentee.
- **Suggesting** – proposing options for the way forward in response to the issues discussed.
- **Asking** – raising questions about what else can be done for the mentoring relationship to be a success.



#### 2.6.4 Solution-Focused Model

As its name suggests, this approach to mentoring focuses on solutions rather than the problems. It is particularly effective in that it allows the mentoring relationship to flourish in a positive and forward-looking atmosphere in which solutions are pursued. The opposite of doing this is to base the partnership around problems which can sometimes minimise the chances of discovering solutions.

The model often employs the OSKAR framework which serves as the basis for discovering solutions. OSKAR is an acronym which stands for:

- **Outcome** – aim of what is to be achieved.
- **Scaling** – measuring current reality against future prospects.
- **Know-how and Resources** – what one needs to make a solution a reality.
- **Affirm and Action** – understanding what has gone well and what is needed to get to the next level.
- **Review** – evaluating how the solution had happened and the effects it has had.

#### 2.7 Learning Summary

- a) Although mentoring can seem to be straightforward, there are a number of issues which require a deeper understanding and appreciation for the mentoring effort to be effective in achieving its intended results.
- b) Successful mentoring is essentially based on the confluence of three key factors—i.e., knowledge, skills, and attitude—on the part of the mentor.
- c) Because the people involved are constantly exchanging personal stories and confronting together personal challenges, mentoring is a complex relationship that is often a very emotional experience even when it is of a professional nature.
- d) Therefore, like any discipline or professional field which has benefited from years of research and academic focus, industry experts have identified a number of procedures as part of the most effective ways to approaching the mentoring process.
- e) Best practices are both accepted and prescribed because they ensure that mentoring relationship achieves its intended purpose and goals in as little time as possible, but, equally important, that both parties enjoy the experience along the way.
- f) The world's most respected mentoring experts and practitioners recommend competence, context, boundary management, integrity and professionalism as cornerstone in a mentoring relationship.
- g) Although essentially part of the same industry, there are important differences between mentoring and coaching which must be understood—these include their respective duration, the orientation or focus of the practice, and whether performance or development serves as the basis of the relationship.
- h) The CLEAR Model, the GROW Model, the Storyteller Approach, and Solution-Focused Models are among the industry's most effective and popular approaches to mentoring and it is recommended that anyone interested in engaging in the field first familiarise themselves with these models.

### Summary of Ethical and Professional Standards:

- a) Use moral judgement to guide the decisions you make and the way in which you behave when carrying out your mentoring responsibilities.
- b) Teach your mentee to behave ethically and instil in him/her its value in the way they approach the business world.
- c) Acquire and practice the five core values and codes of ethics.
  - **Competence** –ability and willingness of a mentor to ensure that he/she has the necessary level of experience and knowledge to meet the needs of the client.
  - **Context** – appreciation for the circumstances that surround the mentoring relationship.
  - **Boundary Management** - commitment to always carefully manage the limitations of the relationship.
  - **Integrity** – treating everything discussed and all the business ideas reviewed together with utmost confidence.
  - **Professionalism** – willingness to respond to the learning and development needs of mentee and assurances that they will not exploit them.

## Chapter 3: Lifecycle of the Mentoring Process

### 3.1 Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter of the handbook, the trainee, reader or mentor should be able to:

- a) Fully understand what a mentor is and is not.
- b) Outline the critical success factors for a mentor to be able to effectively carryout his/her role; and
- c) Outline the sequence of activities involved in the mentoring lifecycle.

### 3.2 Introduction

While mentoring is an opportunity of personal and professional development for both the mentor as well as the mentee, it is also a process that demands a great deal from the mentor. This is particularly significant in business mentorship for young entrepreneurs in Somalia/Somaliland due to its sheer absence. As such, it is important that anyone looking to serve as a mentor knows what to expect and in turn can respond to the roles and responsibilities expected of them.

### 3.3 The Mentor

As explained in previous chapters of this handbook, a mentor is someone who makes their knowledge, wisdom and advice available to someone less experienced for the purpose of achieving specific personal, academic or professional goals. Accordingly, a business mentor engages in the mentoring relationship for the purpose of enabling an existing or

aspiring entrepreneur to acquire and build the competencies and motivation for becoming successful in business.

In a volatile business environment such as that of the Somali regions', a young entrepreneur's need for business mentorship cannot be overstated. Young entrepreneurs in Somalia/Somaliland face a multitude of challenges to achieve success in business—some which they share with their contemporaries around the world, but some which are peculiar to this region. Therefore, it is important to define what exactly it is that a mentor can do to help. In a business mentorship program that is specifically designed for young entrepreneurs, a mentor can:

- Relying on their experience in the field of business – provide their mentee guidance on how to cope with and overcome the challenges they face daily or are expected to face in the future.
- Instil a sense of self-confidence in his/her mentee – enabling them to see their own strengths and the successes they can achieve now and in the future.
- Help break the cycle of self-defeating mind-set by exposing his/her mentee to new opportunities, possibilities and more focused and determined mode of thinking.

### **3.4 Critical Success Factors**

Formal business mentorship is an entirely new concept in Somalia/Somaliland, particularly for youth entrepreneurs in the region. Since it is not inherent in local practices, it is expected that many potential mentors will view the knowledge and experience they bring to the relationship as the cornerstone of the mentoring. This is a mistake commonly made by mentors in even societies where business mentorship has been traditionally practiced for decades. However, while it is true that knowledge and experience are crucial to successful mentorship, there are other factors without which a mentor cannot effectively fulfil the requirements of his/her role.

#### **3.4.1 Preparation**

Preparation is critical both at the first stage as well as during the mentoring partnership because it provides a mentor the ability to harness his/her knowledge and skills in successfully leading a mentoring relationship. Equally important, preparation is a mark of a mentor's attitude towards the partnership as it proves his/her motivation and commitment to the process. Particularly because the Somali business environment is so precarious, the mentor is expected to be well versed on the roadblocks to business success in a Somali context. This is a gap a potential mentor may fill by consulting organisations like Shaqodoon which specialise in the delivery of programs that respond to the issues at hand. Preparing and sharing written material will add substantial value to the mentoring process because it enables the mentor to respond to the questions and concerns of an aspiring youth entrepreneur.

In its Training Guide for Volunteer Mentors, Be A Mentor, Inc. points out that “predictability breeds trust”. Further, the program adds that “the mentor must be consistent and accountable.” Preparation in the form of consistently showing up to meetings on time,

following through on agreements, and carrying out planned sessions enables a mentor to remain predictable—a critical factor to effective mentoring can be delivered.

Effective meetings are dynamic, focused and productive while, in turn, dysfunctional meetings are tedious, draining and unproductive. Prospective mentors must be aware of the difference between the two and make sure that each meeting or session they hold with their mentee is run well and leaving both with a sense of empowerment.

Having an agenda for each meeting is not a must, but it does help that a mentor has a roadmap of the process. More importantly, it is a must that a mentor is organised and exercises time management both as skill a mentor to instil in their mentee, but, equally important, as a tool to enhancing the quality of the relationship. Therefore, a mentor should always start and end meetings on time.

A mentor should make sure that each meeting is not treated as a complaint session, but one where issues are discussed, and potential problem-solving strategies are identified. This can be achieved by setting goals, establishing action items and assigning responsibility before each session. Closing each meeting by reviewing what was discussed also helps to keep the process on track.

### 3.4.2 Setting Goals and Expectations

The literature on business mentorship consistently identifies setting goals and expectations from the start as one of the most important best practices the industry has to offer. It is recommended that a mentor set up an agreement on these matters with his/her mentee on the first session. However, a mentor may also strategically postpone doing this for a later session—opting to first prioritise getting to know their mentee well.

This serves as the means upon which the learning outcomes or desired results of the mentoring relationship is both defined and agreed. In their mentoring handbook specifically developed for distance learning, A.T. Wong and K. Premkumar recommend that by the end of the negotiating phase, the mentor and mentee should have established an agreement on:

- Desired learning outcomes
- An action plan for achieving the learning goal.
- Criteria for measuring success.
- Mutual responsibilities; and
- Protocols for addressing problems.

Establishing an agreement on mutual responsibilities sets the stage for what is expected of both parties in the mentoring relationship. Addressing this right away is very important because it enables the mentor to help his/her mentee clearly understand what they expect from him/her as the mentor.

In their handbook on “Designing and Customising Mentor Training”, the Centre for Applied Research Solutions, Inc. defines a number of misconceptions which must be clarified right at the start of the mentoring relationship. Among the misconceptions outlined in this



handbook, the following are particularly relevant for a business mentorship program designed for youth:

- Avoid the know-it-all approach: a mentor may fully understand and appreciate his/her mentee's situation and the challenges they are facing. However, a know-it-all approach is not the right way to respond because it will affect the possibility of a relationship based on trust developing. Also, being open to new perspectives and the ability to learn from others is a great value which a mentor can instil in his/her mentee.
- Avoid being seen a potential "source of financial support": given the circumstances, most of the youth in Somalia/Somaliland are in dire need of financial support. The fact that a mentor's role is not to provide monetary support must be clarified right away, otherwise it can be a huge source of distraction and may even lead to an end of the relationship.
- Avoid being seen as a saviour: a typical mentee in an environment such as this will likely be confronting a range of challenges. It is critical that the focus of the mentoring process be on developing a healthy relationship of mutual trust rather the mentoring relationship being understood as a "salvation" or "betterment".

In addition, most of the literature on mentoring recommends that a mentor set achievable targets based on the special challenges and opportunities which have been identified early on in a mentoring context.

### 3.4.3 Building Relationships

All the research on mentoring in the context of youth development emphasises building relationships as central to successful mentorship. A strong relationship based on respect and trust enables both parties to share and talk openly about their concerns. The implications of this are even greater in business mentorship because one of the biggest priorities of an aspiring youth entrepreneur is protecting their business idea or proposal. Therefore, it is through assurances of confidentiality that a mentee can be made to feel confident and comfortable to discuss his/her business ideas with their mentor.

### 3.4.4 Giving and Receiving Feedback

In simple terms, feedback is a verbal interpretation of the way we feel and think about a particular action, idea or product. Giving and receiving feedback is a central characteristic of human interaction as it helps people to navigate the difficulties of daily life. There are three types of feedback:

- **Positive** – a simple praise of someone for having performed something well.
- **Constructive** – a forward-looking evaluation of a performance that is delivered in a sensitive manner.
- **Negative** – a negative appraisal of an act without a proposed resolution.

In their mentoring handbook, A.T. Wong and K. Premkumar argue that "mentoring is a learning process where helpful, personal, and reciprocal relationships are built." By default, then, giving and receiving feedback is critical to the success of a mentoring relationship.

Initially, feedback opens the lines of communication between the mentor and mentee so that there is free flow and exchange of knowledge, information and opinions. Thereafter, constructive feedback facilitates and later reinforces the learning that takes place because of this exchange.

In a mentoring relationship, it is crucial that all of the mentor's feedback is constructive and aims to build the mentee's perspective on new possibilities and options. This is fundamental to the development of a strong and healthy relationship in which the mentee is made to feel comfortable to assert themselves through favourable observations. It is therefore crucial that a mentor look for and use constructive feedback as both part of the mentoring process, but, equally important, as a mechanism to guiding it.

According to "Designing and Customising Mentor Training", the Centre for Applied Research Solutions, Inc., constructive feedback ensures that the lines of communication remain open between the mentor and mentee. Equally important, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development recommends that the timing and amount of feedback provided must be taken into consideration if the intended learning is to be achieved. Finally, it is important for a mentor to invite feedback to make sure their mentee has understood them as well as intended.

There are several possible ways in which a mentor may actively seek the feedback and reaction of his/her mentee to either the content of a particular session/discussion or the entire mentoring process/relationship.

- **Formal** – obtaining feedback from the mentee: using a form and a scheduled session, the mentor asks the mentee to fill out a form with a set of questions.
- **Informal** – incorporating a set of probing questions into the sessions/meetings: the mentor makes a habit of asking the mentee questions to probe the reaction and feedback of their mentee to sessions/meetings.

In both cases, the aim is to reflect upon the mentee's feedback which should be used to guide the content and format of future sessions. The feedback provided by the mentee should be used as constructively as possible to make whatever adjustment necessary to the format and facilitation of the learning process thereafter.

### **Recommendations on Giving and Receiving Feedback**

Effective feedback is a vital aspect of mentoring. The way in which feedback is administered can either make or break a mentoring relationship. This chapter of the handbook provides suggestions on how mentors might best give feedback and the importance of being sensitive to the mentee's responses.

It is the duty of mentors to give honest, critical, timely, regular and supportive feedback to their mentees. Such feedback should always be aimed at the well-being of the mentee to develop their practice effectively, to learn and grow to take on and achieve new challenges. Often, a mentoring experience is described as experiencing the world from someone else's shoes without having to be in them. This may also be a good guiding principle for a mentor in giving effective feedback to his or her mentee.

For instance, would you like to hear some of the (harsh) answer, to this question is no!  
Therefore,

- a) Mentors should be specific and realistic about feedback, mentioning practical methods and particular areas in which the mentee can achieve the recommended changes.
- b) A feedback session must always start with feedback and acknowledgement of positive areas in which the mentee is doing well, even if these are relatively minor, before moving on to discuss challenging points.
- c) Feedback must always be honest and genuine. Feedback must never be personal in nature and should address the target areas for development.
- d) Mentors need to avoid giving over-positive or over negative feedback, adjusting their expectations to suit the level of development of the mentee and the overall situation involved.
- e) Mentors must avoid both over-formal and over-familiar approaches when giving feedback. A skilful balance between these opposites ensures a good mentoring approach which is simultaneously positive and challenging, in which the mentor provides appropriate guidance and support to develop the mentee (see next chapter on types of mentoring feedback for more information on dealing with sensitive feedback).
- f) Mentors should be observant of the way in which the mentee deals with feedback. He or she must have a contingency plan if he or she notices the mentee getting upset or hostile over the feedback received.

Some steps to resolve such a situation are by adjusting the mentoring discussion, postponing the meeting if necessary or allocating time to the mentee to explore the feedback, reflecting and discussing areas of unwelcomed feedback; mentors may also need to prioritize between items of feedback. In the case of several points of criticism, it may be wise to raise only the most important areas in the first instance, gradually introducing the other issues as the mentee makes progress in adapting to changes, he or she may need to make.

### **3.5 Critical Activities in the Mentoring Lifecycle**

#### **3.5.1 The Beginning**

All stages of the mentoring process bear equal importance. However, the significance of the first (beginning) stage cannot be overstated. How well a mentor manages this stage and the activities it involves has serious implications for the effectiveness of the rest of the entire mentoring process. This stage essentially involves 3 basic activities—introductions, definition of goals, and agreement on a schedule.

There are different recommendations in the literature on mentorship on the approach and exact duration of this stage. Some experts recommend that this stage run over the course of several sessions to provide ample time for the mentor and mentee to fully get to know each other while others advise that a single session would suffice. Similarly, some industry experts recommend a linear approach to this stage—meaning following the activities in the

sequence in which they are presented here. Others, however, believe the activities can be sequenced in the way with which the mentor and mentee feel most comfortable.

### ***Activity #1: Introduction***

To get started, the mentor should prepare and deliver a brief introduction of themselves at the first meeting with their mentee. The introduction should cover basic information including educational and professional background. Having done this, the mentor should then invite the mentee to do the same and share information on his/her personal background. The aim here is to get to know one another and getting the mentoring partnership off to a good start. Therefore, industry experts recommend that the mentor and mentee also share with each other information about any mentoring experience they may have previously had—discussing their thoughts on and feelings about the experience.

### ***Activity #2: Clearly define and agree on the purpose and goals of the mentoring process.***

Having gotten to know one another, the mentor should then inquire about the mentee's intentions for the mentoring. Many industry experts recommend that while the mentor plays a lead facilitative role in the partnership throughout most of the process, both parties must share equal responsibility in its ownership. As a result, it is important that a mentee clarifies why they are entering into the partnership. The mentor can ask questions about the specific competencies the mentee seeks to develop. This enables the mentor to understand and make full preparation for the demands of the mentoring process. To begin a conversation around this issue, a mentor may ask the following questions:

- Is it to gain competency and skills in specific areas of business start-up and management?
- Is it to gain insight into local and/or market trends?
- Is it to identify, assess and mitigate certain risks and threats involved in running a business?
- Is it to discuss, analyse and plan for a specific business idea or proposal?

Answers to these questions and others help to define the purpose of the mentoring relationship while also facilitating an agreement on schedule, duration and learning outcomes thereafter.

### ***Activity #3: Agreeing on a schedule and setting boundaries.***

Once the mentee's expectations of the relationship are understood, the mentor and mentee must agree on how often to meet, when to meet, where to meet, and how long meetings should last. From a logistical standpoint, the responsibilities of both parties must be made clear—what are the requirements for the meetings and who is each party expected to bring what? From an administrative standpoint, the roles and responsibilities each party is expected to carry out during the meetings will also need to be agreed on. It is also important that the rules of engagement are established here including respect for each other's time, open and proper line of communication, and confidentiality.

### 3.5.2 The Middle

The middle stage is typically the longest in the process and is predominantly focused on meeting the purpose and goals of the mentoring process which were agreed upon during the first stage. More familiar with one another, the mentor and mentee will engage in in-depth conversations around the topics which have been proposed above such as gaining competency and skills in specific areas of business start-up and management.

Not all goals in a business mentorship process are met the same way. Some may run over a longer term while others may be achieved within a short period of time. For example, a mentee with a business proposal he/she needs scrutinised and appraised may need more time than a mentee requiring insight into local market trends. The important thing is that the mentor and mentee discuss the practical steps that are necessary for resolving the issues they have collaboratively identified.

Experts recommend that this stage of the process be facilitated using a range of models—the most notable of which is the SMART goal model used in many different disciplines and fields. The SMART model recommends that goals are:

- Specific – are concrete and action-oriented.
- Measurable – can be tracked and measured.
- Achievable – are attainable.
- Realistic – consider the resources, time, and capability required for achievement.
- Timely – have a pre-set timeline.

When asked about typical problems which an aspiring youth entrepreneur in Somalia/Somaliland may decide to focus on in a mentoring process, some of the people interviewed to produce this handbook answered: keeping business and family finances separate. This is a good example of an issue for which the SMART model is relevant. As a mentor will need to discuss the problem in detail with their mentee: what it is and the impact it has had on the business as well as the family life. The mentor will then need to prepare and share written material on the topic which will be covered and discussed in subsequent sessions. If possible, the mentor may find and introduce the mentee to an individual who has found great success in keeping the business and family finances separate. Following this, the mentor will need to challenge and encourage the mentee in applying the learning that has taken place.

In such a largely informal, unregulated and unpredictable business environment, it is inevitable that problem-solving forms an important feature of a business mentoring relationship particularly in the Somali regions. It is crucial that prospective mentors are aware and can respond to questions regarding the challenges an aspiring or a seasoned entrepreneur faces in such a volatile business climate.

Following the initial period in which a strong rapport is established, a mentor will need to engage in a collaborative 3-stage problem-solving process.

- **First** - the mentor and mentee should discuss and identify specific problems facing their start-up prospects or business success if already engaged in an existing business.
- **Second** – the mentor and mentee should brainstorm possible solutions in a series of discussions that should lead to the selection of a plan/strategy to resolve the problem.
- **Third** – the mentor and mentee should collaborate on implementing the identified solution with mentor providing the necessary encouragement to ensuring that the plan is successfully execute.

Following the successful completion of the three stages, the mentor and mentee should evaluate the process together, reflecting particularly on where adjustments may be required in future attempts on addressing another business challenge.

### 3.5.3 The End

Having covered some ground, the final stage is when the mentoring process is normally brought to a closure. Here, the mentor and mentee together reflect on a range of questions regarding: the achieved results, challenges faced, and lessons learned. This reflection must be in conjunction with the pre-set purpose and goals which enables the mentor and his/her partner to ascertain progress. In doing so, it is also particularly important to own up to any failures or weaknesses experienced in the mentoring process. This proves a commitment to growth on the part of both parties. It is considerably important that this reflection is done collaboratively in order to ensure equal ownership of the process and that the mentee is benefiting from the exchange and the learning is being applied.

It is important to note, however, that a business mentoring partnership—the type for which this handbook has been produced—does not have to end at this stage. The outcome of this type of exercise can instead be used to redefine and agree on the best way of moving on to addressing the next problem. Given the multitude of challenges youth in Somalia/Somaliland face, it is imagined there is no shortage of problems to address in a second, third or even fourth incarnation of the mentoring process.

### 3.6 Learning Summary

- Mentoring, while beneficial to both mentor and mentee, is a demanding process particularly in a business mentorship program for young entrepreneurs in Somalia/Somaliland. In turn, it is critical that anyone looking to serve as a mentor knows what to expect and in turn can respond to the roles and responsibilities expected of them.
- Young entrepreneurs in Somalia/Somaliland face a multitude of challenges to achieve success in business—some which they share with their contemporaries around the world, but some which are peculiar to this region. Therefore, a mentor is someone who, relying on his/her experience in business, to: guides a young aspiring businessperson to cope with and overcome the challenges they face daily or are expected to face in the future; instil a sense of self-confidence in his/her mentee – enabling them to see their own strengths and the successes they are capable of



achieving now and in the future; and helps break the cycle of self-defeating mind-set by exposing his/her mentee to new opportunities, possibilities and more focused and determined mode of thinking.

- As such, it is a must that a potential mentor has sufficient knowledge and the right skills and attitude as critical factors to effectively carrying out the roles and responsibilities of the mentoring partnership.
- Mentoring involves 3 stages—i.e., the beginning, middle, and end—each of which has its own activities and demands.



## Annex 1: Mentorship Goals Worksheet

Mentor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentee's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Outline the goals you would like to achieve whilst engaged in this mentoring partnership during the period specified in the agreement form.

<b>Goal</b> What do you hope to achieve during the period specified in the agreement form?	<b>Steps</b> What steps will you take to achieve the stated goal?	<b>Resources</b> What will you require to achieve the stated goal?	<b>Date</b> When do you hope to complete this task or achieve this goal?
<b>Goal 1</b>			
<b>Goal 2</b>			
<b>Goal 3</b>			

Mentor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentee's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Annex 2: Mentee Evaluation Form

It is important that a mentor is aware of how well he/she is performing their role as a mentor. Therefore, it is recommended that a mentor administer an evaluation of themselves according to their opinion of the individual(s) he/she is mentoring.

This evaluation form looks to provide the mentor insight on the perception and opinion of their mentees on key aspects of the mentoring relationship. The purpose of administering such an evaluation is to enhance the effectiveness and nature of the mentoring partnership. The mentee should be encouraged to be as honest as possible.

**Mentee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mentor:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please rate the following statements by checking the appropriate box:

1. Strongly Agree    2. Agree    3. Disagree    4. Strongly Disagree

Questions	1	2	3	4
I feel my mentor was accessible and available.				
I feel my mentor communicated clearly and effectively with me.				
I feel my mentor helped me upgrade my skills, learn new things, and achieve tangible success in my business.				
I feel my mentor assisted me with determine and attempt to solve the key problems I was facing in my business.				
I feel my mentor assisted me with setting and meeting a set of key performance targets.				
I believe, where possible, my mentor was able to help me access the necessary support to resolve problems outside his/her ability.				
I believe my mentor demonstrated a reasonable interest/concern towards me.				
I feel my mentor's behaviour and attitude generally is an example of professionalism.				
I feel I learned at least one important lesson about running a business successfully and life in general from my mentor.				
I feel that, overall, my mentor was an asset and a benefit to me.				
I predict an extended future relationship.				

Mentee's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Annex 3: Checklist for Effective Meetings

Running productive meetings may seem simple. But the truth is that meetings can fail to achieve their purpose without proper preparation, particularly in a mentoring context.

These basic rules will help you have effective and efficient meetings from which your mentee will leave energised.

### Preparation

- Define a clear goal.
- Decide the location of the meeting.
- Set date and start and end time.
- Provide supporting material in time.
- Instruct that the mentee arrive at the meeting prepared.
- Request that your mentee take notes at each meeting. Provide brief instructions on the best way how.

### Actual Meeting

- Start on time.
- Repeat the goal of the meeting.
- Provide updates on tasks from previous meeting(s) if applicable.
- Follow to the agenda, stay on time.
- Stay focused, place new topics on parking lot for next meeting.
- Take clear brief notes and distinguish between informational notes and decisions.
- Assign tasks and set due date.
- At the end of the meeting:
  - summarize all decisions and tasks.
  - schedule follow-up meeting if needed.
- End on time

### Follow-up

- Request that mentee provide the minutes as soon as possible.
- Communicate tasks assigned to mentee.
- Track tasks and follow-up if not completed by due date.
- Demand proper preparation and communicate a unified decision outward.
- Make sure tasks are executed.

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