



THE ROLES OF THE VOLUNTEER IN DEVELOPMENT





Capacity Building Toolkit 6

THE VOLUNTEER AS MENTOR

IN THIS TOOLKIT

KSA Matrix and Learning Plan	2
What Is a Mentor?	2

MODELS, CONCEPTS, AND CASES

5

Mentoring: Perceptions of PC Host Country Staff	5
What Mentors Do	6
Six Key Types of Mentor Assistance	7
Behaviors to <i>Avoid</i> in Mentoring	10
Developing a Mentoring Partnership	12
Working with Young People: Helpful Hints from A Youth Perspective	14
More Tips for Working with Children and Adolescents	16
Cultural Cautions for Mentors	17
Organizing Mentoring Programs	18
Stories from the Field: Ecuador, Guinea, and Thailand	19

IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES FOR PRACTICING THE MENTOR ROLE

21

Reflecting on Mentors in Your Past	21
Identifying Your Mentoring Resources	23
Active Listening Practice	25
Brainstorming about Mentoring Links in the Local Community	26

KEY RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION AND INSIGHT

27



VOLUNTEER AS MENTOR

KSA MATRIX AND LEARNING PLAN

MENTORING	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	ATTITUDES
Knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs) you need for this role	Examples of successful mentoring models; youth development models, issues, and practices related to working effectively with youth	Modeling skills; relationship building; coaching skills such as guiding with questions; interpersonal communication skills such as active listening and feedback skills	Respect and trust in others; patience and perseverance; consistency and reliability; desire to help self and others grow personally and professionally; give and receive feedback; self-esteem
Your initiatives to learn more (Make a plan)	What knowledge you still need and where to find it: — — — — —	Skills you need to gain or improve and how you might work on further skill development: — — — — —	Things that will help you change any attitudes that will hinder your role: — — — — —

WHAT IS A MENTOR?

Webster’s dictionary defines *mentor* as: “A wise and trusted teacher or counselor.” The term comes to us from Greek mythology—Odysseus, King of Ithaca asked his trusted friend, Mentor, to look after his son while he fought the Trojan War. In the context of capacity building, mentoring is a personal or professional relationship in which a more experienced individual (the mentor) acts as a guide, role model, coach, and sponsor to a less-experienced person (the mentee). In this relationship, the mentor:

- offers knowledge, insight, perspective or wisdom that is especially useful to the mentee;
- listens, affirms, counsels, encourages, and seeks input to help the learner develop skills, expertise, and/or direction; and
- clarifies expectations about the relationship and, in some cases, establishes measures of success with the mentee.

[A NOTE ON THE TERM “MENTEE”: Most people consider the term “mentee” more neutral than the term “protégé,” which for years was used to describe the relationship of an older, more senior person (e.g., a bank vice-president) guiding a younger person (e.g., a junior manager). In our text here, “mentee” refers simply to “the person being mentored”.]

Mentoring relationships vary in terms of the degree of structure (from informal to more formal structure) and length of engagement (from spontaneous, short-term interaction to long-term investment). Decisions about how much structure you need and how long you should maintain the relationship will depend on the people involved and the context.

During your Peace Corps service, you will likely encounter several opportunities to both *be a mentor* and *be mentored*. Sometimes you may find that certain people in the community choose you to be their mentor because they regard you as a role model—you may have little say in the matter other than to continue being a good example! Many Volunteers report an enormous sense of fulfillment and reward from their experiences in mentoring a colleague or a friend, in large part because of the reciprocal nature of the relationship—both people help learn from one another. A vivid example of this sort of mentoring is the partnership between a Volunteer and his or her Counterpart. Both the Volunteer and Counterpart have something valuable to offer the other at various times along the way in their relationship; their success as partners in development depends in great part on their willingness to give and ask for help from one another. In other words, they pass the “mentoring stick” back and forth between them.

An important but indirect capacitybuilding role is to help potential mentors and mentees in your community or organization link up with one another. For example, you might encourage an older girl to help a younger girl cope with peer pressure and social relationship issues. In many countries, girls and young women in particular can benefit from mentoring activities that help them increase their self-esteem, sense of self-worth, and awareness of their potential and options open to them.

EXAMPLES OF THE MENTORING ROLE IN THE PEACE CORPS

1

Kelly, a health Volunteer, meets regularly with Elena, a health worker in her local clinic. Elena has good interpersonal skills and natural gifts as a group facilitator. She has asked Kelly to coach her in some new methods for working with groups and help her move toward her goal of becoming a local leader. Kelly shares ideas and resources with Elena and tries to model good leadership behaviors. Elena, in turn, is helping Kelly practice the local tradition of storytelling and use it to address sensitive health issues. Whenever possible, they observe one another facilitating meetings, and afterwards discuss the experience in terms of skill development.

2

Mark, a small business Volunteer, has organized a small school-based program for linking young people with professionals in the community, including, among others, a teacher, nurse, agronomist, public official, business manager, and artisan. Based on their individual interests, each student selects one of the professional workers to meet with and “shadow” over the course of the semester, exploring different perspectives and opportunities. At the end of the term, the students share their insights from the experience and relate them to their future aspirations.



3

Sabrina, an education Volunteer, organized a girls' club and is currently leading the participants in a series of workshops focusing on life skills such as leadership, assertive communication, and decision making. Over the weeks, as the girls addressed critical issues such as HIV/AIDS, teen pregnancy, and drug use, they expressed concern for the well-being of their younger sisters and girlfriends. They wanted to help these younger people understand the choices they have, feel more confident, and make informed decisions. To address this expressed need, Sabrina and the older girls are initiating a program in which the older girls mentor the younger ones. Sometimes all the girls get together as a large group to discuss "hot" topics; other times, they meet in pairs or trios to talk confidentially about critical situations or decision points in their lives (for example, deciding to say "no" to a boyfriend's sexual advances).

4

Jerome was a National Parks Volunteer who worked in projects to raise environmental awareness among families living in communities that border on park boundaries. About a year into his service, he met a young boy, Miguel, who was an energetic participant in several of the projects. After one of the meetings, Miguel asked Jerome if he could visit him at his office to see some of his conservation books and other materials. That visit launched an informal mentoring partnership that lasted for the rest of Jerome's service. Jerome taught Miguel about biology and ecology; Miguel and his family taught Jerome about the indigenous people's deep ties, both physical and spiritual, to the forest lands. Before Jerome ended his service, he persuaded the Park director to hire Miguel part-time as a junior ranger. Now a year later, the National Park is connected to the Internet and Jerome and Miguel are "virtual" friends, using e-mail to stay in touch, exchange conservation information, and share stories.

***You don't truly know something yourself
until you take it from your own mind
and put it into somebody else's.***

— Jazz great **Milt Hinton**
(born 1923)





Capacity Building Toolkit 6

MODELS, CONCEPTS, AND CASES

MENTORING: PERCEPTIONS FROM PEACE CORPS HOST COUNTRY STAFF

In a workshop, Peace Corps Language/Cross-Cultural Trainers from 11 different countries explored what it means to serve as a mentor. The table below captures their initial thoughts and experiences.

For you, what does “mentoring” imply?	Knowledge, options, nice, advisor, promotes diversity of ideas, enhances, change, responsibility, good counselor, leader, guidance, competencies, experience, monitoring and evaluation, specific needs, support, resource person, outcomes, shares ideas, capacity builder, facilitator, empowering, initiator, helps to fill a gap, instructor
Who is generally involved in a mentoring relationship?	Trainers, parents, whole organizations, someone who needs help, trainees, teachers, experienced people, a learner
When is mentoring appropriate and when it is not appropriate?	When appropriate—when needed, asked for, wanted, specific, fills a gap, shared goals and understanding, agreed on strategy, knowledgeable and professional, one-on-one
	When NOT appropriate—no need, imposed, not qualified, not serious, when culturally inappropriate
How is it initiated – formally, informally?	Spontaneous, not planned, consensus, referral
What is the role of the mentor?	Patience and honesty, active listener, helper, provides guidance, develops strategy, creates new opportunities to learn, is humble, adapt knowledge to a situation, good facilitator, role model, sets an example, supportive, flexible, motivator, resource, assists
What is the role of the person being mentored?	Patience and honesty, active listener, identifies needs, seeks outside opinion, wanting to learn, self-confidence, not totally dependent, sets expectations, flexible and open to change
How do you know when the mentoring is successful?	Skills are transferred, feels better, feedback, results (not always instant), follow-up, sustainability, ongoing, positive change
Think about someone you consider a good mentor. What are some of the things that make him or her good?	Develops individual talents, non-judgmental, knowledgeable, resourceful, easy to approach, works with local resources, realistic, creative, supportive, empathetic, open to personal growth, humorous, available, interpersonal communications skills, flexible but organized, is credible, has appropriate skills, delegates, creates comfort, safe environment, aware of culture, values diversity

From a Language/Cross-Cultural Mentor Workshop, October, 2000, Washington, DC.





WHAT MENTORS DO...

Here is a list of things mentors frequently do to help their mentees. The list is not exhaustive — you may want to add some actions based on your own past or current experiences.

MENTOR SKILL OR ACTIVITY	Others have done this for me	I've done this for others
1. Set high expectations of performance.		
2. Offer challenging ideas.		
3. Help build self-confidence.		
4. Encourage professional behavior.		
5. Offer friendship.		
6. Provide positive reinforcement and encouragement.		
7. Listen to personal problems.		
8. Teach by example.		
9. Inspire through actions and words.		
10. Encourage risk taking.		
11. Confront negative behaviors and attitudes.		
12. Offer wise counsel.		
13. Share critical knowledge.		
14. Assist with career development.		
15. Suggest ways to excel.		
16. Are available when needed.		
17. Teach specific skills.		
18. Trigger self-awareness.		
19. Explain how the organization works.		
20. Provide access to key people and information.		

[Adapted with permission from: **Mentoring** by Gordon F. Shea, Crisp Publications, Inc., 1200 Hamilton Court, Menlo Park, California 94025. 1997.]

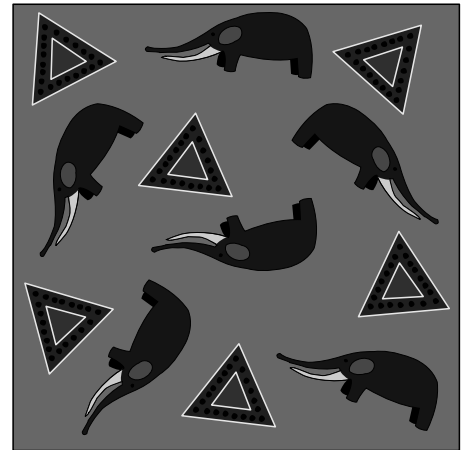




SIX KEY TYPES OF MENTOR ASSISTANCE

These are six particularly helpful ways to encourage personal development. They are critical components of a healthy growth process for all of us. Their strength lies not in the notion that they meet all the mentee's needs—they don't. But they meet *key* needs, and when offered at important junctures in a person's life they can help the person resolve a problem or decision and move on.

1. Helping a person shift her or his mental context (envisioning outcomes/goals)
2. Listening when the mentee has a problem; identifying mentee feelings and verifying them (active listening)
3. Effectively confronting negative intentions or behaviors (using "I" statements/feedback)
4. Providing positive reinforcement
5. Providing appropriate information when needed
6. Encouraging exploration of options (asking questions, suggesting alternatives)



1 HELPING A PERSON SHIFT MENTAL CONTEXT

Imagination is a critical component of one's development. As mentors, we help our mentees create a personal vision of healthy change. They, on their own, will do most of the things needed to bring the vision to reality. The following exercises will help you better understand how to shift context:

- Think back to an important decision you have had to make in your own life where you were torn between alternatives. List three things you needed from people close to you to help you make the best decision.
- Think back to a time in your past when you made or were about to make a serious mistake or error in judgment. Identify three things that someone else did or could have done to keep that situation from turning out bad.
- Envision one personal goal you would like to achieve. Picture yourself being there. Focus on the "what," not the "how."



2 LISTENING ACTIVELY WHEN THE MENTEE HAS A PROBLEM

All of us need someone to talk to, someone to serve as a sounding board when we have problems or issues weighing us down. Providing a listening ear—without taking on the other person’s problem, giving advice, or joining her in the “blame game”—can serve as a powerful aid to a mentee. Many mentors believe that respectful listening is the premier mentoring art. Respectful listening is the ability to become absorbed in what the other person is saying about her problem, treating her words as confidential, not interjecting our own views, opinions, or suggestions. When respectful listening occurs, the other person has an opportunity to gain insight into her problem by articulating it, to sort things out, perhaps to develop some alternative solutions, and almost always to gain emotional relief from the issues before her.

When you listen actively and respectfully, you accept what the person is saying as genuine and try to “hear” the feeling and meaning in the words. The facts in a message are the objective reality; how a person feels about them usually identifies whether or not a problem exists, the dimensions of the problem, and often its importance.

Active listening is...	Active listening is not...
Empathizing: Nodding, eye contact, attending	Arguing
Questioning (who, what, how): “How do you feel about...?” “What are some examples of...?”	Giving the “facts”
Clarifying (paraphrasing): “You’re really frustrated about...” “So, you’re suggesting...”	Jumping to premature conclusions
Encouraging the individual to generate solutions: “How do you picture...?” “What might that look like?” “If you were in her place, what would...?” “If you could do it again, how would...?”	Giving the answer

[Adapted with permission of The McGraw-Hill Companies from *The Diversity Tool Kit IV*, by Lee Gardenswartz and Anita Rowe, Irwin Professional Publishing, 1994.]

3 PRODUCTIVE CONFRONTATION

Sometimes a mentor finds it important to confront the attitude, behavior, or plans of the mentee. To criticize or pressure the mentee to adopt another course may lower the mentee’s self-esteem or push away the mentee and hurt the relationship. A helpful way to communicate in this type of situation is to use an “I” message—an authentic statement directly from the mentor. An “I” statement should contain:

- a clear but neutral statement of the problem as you see it;
- a statement of the negative consequences you perceive from the mentee’s action; and
- a statement of your feelings or concerns about the mentee’s behavior or intention.



Example:

Your mentee has stated with force that he wants to quit school because the headmaster is picking on him and making him do menial chores that other students don't get assigned to them. You have been aware of some issues between the two, but did not realize the conflict had gotten more serious.

"I" Message:

"I'm concerned that you are considering quitting school altogether as a way to avoid the interpersonal conflict between you and the headmaster. I'm afraid you'll lose the valuable educational opportunity you have now and won't find another easily in the future. I'd like to help you figure out a way to deal with the headmaster and stay on track with your studies, too."

4 PROVIDING POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

When done sincerely, positive reinforcement can be a powerful tool for building trust and encouraging repeat behavior. As mentors, we should always be on the lookout for opportunities to praise outstanding performance. Although there is no prescribed manner to giving praise, many mentoring teachers suggest these three steps: (1) state what the person did that was positive, (2) say something about its value—the results or difference it made to others, and (3) express appreciation. Be aware that praising in public is considered inappropriate in some cultures and may result in unintended embarrassment for the receiver. In such cases, you will need to adjust your approach to make it more culturally comfortable.

5 PROVIDING APPROPRIATE INFORMATION WHEN NEEDED

The key words here are "when needed." Mentors frequently make the mistake of providing advice in the guise of information or overwhelming the mentee with a ton of ideas, data, and materials. In many cases, especially ones involving personal problem solving, it is better to wait for the mentee to *ask for information* and then provide targeted ideas. To build further independence, we can also teach mentees where to go to access the kinds of information they need and then let them take the initiative.

6 ENCOURAGING EXPLORATION OF OPTIONS

The purpose of this type of assistance is not to find the "right" answers, but to create a list of courses of action or alternatives. The quantity of options is sometimes more important than the quality (i.e., the quality can be worked on later). The mentor's task here is to create an open and stimulating environment for identifying possibilities. Both mentor and mentee need to guard against snuffing creativity ("It can't be done," "They'll never agree to that," and so on). If you find yourself falling into that trap, try playing the "what if" game ("What if you had someone partnering with you on your project...?" "What if you won the WID scholarship...?"). It is okay for you to offer a couple of suggestions based on your own experience and expertise, but they should not be considered any more or less valid than the other ideas on the list.

[Adapted with permission from *Mentoring* by Gordon F. Shea. Crisp Publications, Inc., 1200 Hamilton Court, Menlo Park, California 94025. 1997.]



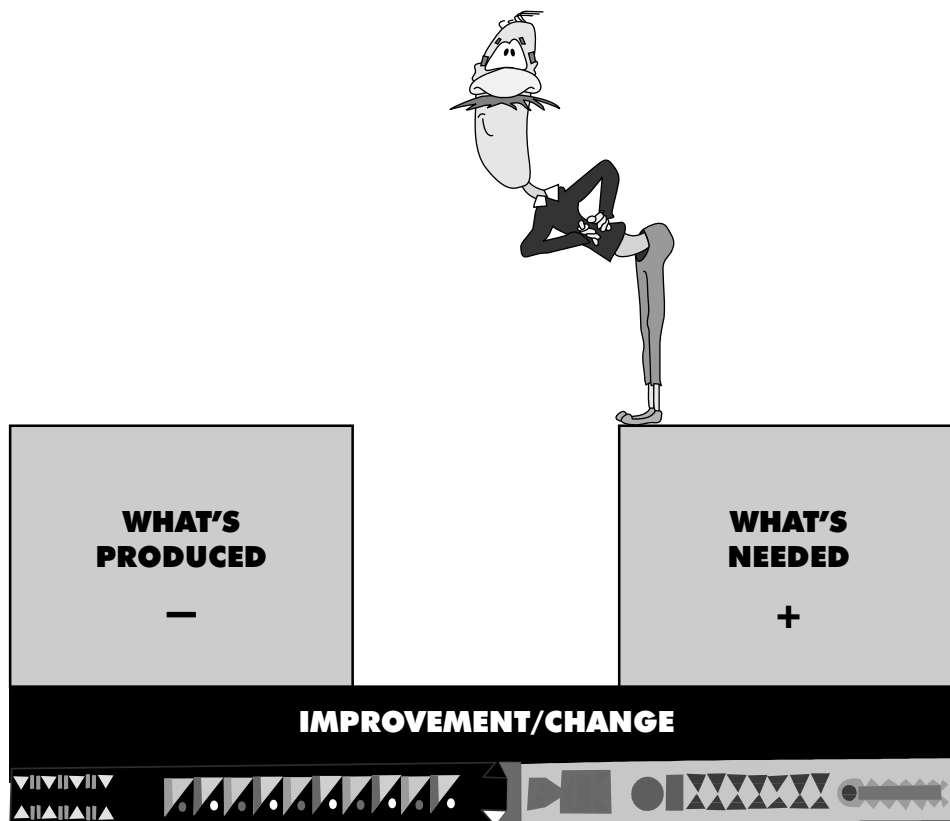


BEHAVIORS TO AVOID IN MENTORING

Sometimes in a mentoring relationship, we revert to behaviors that are less than helpful to the process of personal or professional development. Criticism and giving advice are two such behaviors.

CRITICISM

Criticism is evaluative and judgmental no matter how nicely we may say it. We may be trying to be constructive, but our intention may inadvertently damage the self-esteem of the mentee. Avoiding criticism does not mean accepting negative behaviors or self-defeating, repetitive actions. What it means is finding objective and creative approaches to encourage positive change. When a person is not performing up to his or her potential, he or she may need information rather than criticism. Mentors often give their best when they help their mentees break out of repetitive negative patterns of behavior. One way to do this is to help the mentee view the problem as a gap between what is needed and what is being produced. The gap can be described and measured and then a plan made for closing it. In this way, the gap is described in neutral terms and closing the gap is viewed as a feat to be accomplished.



GIVING ADVICE ("WHY DON'T YOU...")

When we give advice, we assume we have superior knowledge, insight, or wisdom related to the subject at hand. If we are engaged in a general professional conversation with our mentee, that may be true. But if we are trying to help the mentee deal with a personal problem, job-related or not, the mentee is likely to know much more about the problem than we ever will—especially so in cross-cultural mentoring situations. When we attempt to give advice about personal problems, we often encounter resistance of various forms (“yes, buts,” downcast faces, a withdrawal of attention to the conversation, and so forth). It is presumptuous to assume we know more about another person’s problems than that person does. Often, we can serve our mentees best by:

- Listening carefully as they describe the problem;
- Feeding back the emotions we hear them expressing, to confirm that we heard and understood the nature of their difficulty; and
- Providing ideas or information, when they ask, which they can use to help build their own solution.

This sort of approach encourages greater independence and decision making on the part of the mentee.

Personal Reflection Activity...

Considering Constructive Alternatives to Criticism and Advice

- List five things another person can do to help you change for the better (help you adjust to a new culture, stop smoking, exercise regularly, etc.)

- What causes you to feel best when you are making progress toward a significant personal goal? List five things that help your progress.

- When you try something and get in trouble for it, how do you want people close to you to behave? List five behaviors you would like from them.

- Ask a host country trainer or colleague these same questions and contemplate the similarities/differences between their answers and yours.

[Adapted with permission from *Mentoring* by Gordon F. Shea. Crisp Publications, Inc., 1200 Hamilton Court, Menlo Park, California 94025. 1997.]





DEVELOPING A MENTORING PARTNERSHIP

In a successful mentoring experience, both parties contribute to and benefit from the relationship. There is no supervisory hierarchy. Perhaps the mentor is more experienced than the mentee, but he or she is *not better or more important* than the other. The spirit of mentoring is more one of two people taking a journey together where they have some ideas about their ultimate destination, but they aren't exactly sure what the roads look like or what it might take to finally arrive. One way to view the evolutionary nature of mentoring relationships is to think of them in terms of stages of development.

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT IN A MENTORING PARTNERSHIP

- Stage 1:** The mentor and mentee become acquainted and informally clarify their common interests, shared values, and professional goals.
- Stage 2:** The mentor and mentee communicate initial expectations of one another and agree upon some common procedures as a starting point. If the two individuals sense a major disparity between their needs and interests—and where neither party can accommodate the other—the pair is able to part company on a friendly basis before the actual mentoring and inevitable frustration begin.
- Stage 3:** The mentoring meetings and conversations happen. Gradually, needs are fulfilled. Objectives are met. Professional and/or personal growth takes place. New challenges are presented and achieved. This stage may last for months or years.
- Stage 4:** The mentor and mentee redefine their relationship as colleagues, partners, peers, and/or friends.

GETTING STARTED

As you contemplate a mentoring partnership with someone, discuss what you want from and can give to one another. Here's a worksheet to help you organize your thoughts:



FROM THE MENTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Contribute to Partnership

Gain from Partnership

FROM THE MENTEE'S PERSPECTIVE

Contribute to Partnership

Gain from Partnership

Once you have a general idea of what you and your mentoring partner want from the experience, make an agreement about how you can work together most effectively. Since a mentoring relationship is voluntary, it's a good idea to set some ground rules and develop some shared expectations at the outset. Here are some sample questions** you can use as a frame of reference to gain a better understanding of your mentee:

1. What are the most important things you would like to get from this relationship?
2. Here is a list of things I believe I am particularly good at. Are any of them of particular interest to you?
3. What developmental needs, knowledge, skills, etc. would be of greatest value to you?
4. What is your preferred method of learning? (through examples or cases, demonstration, hands-on practice, observation, etc.)
5. What can I do to increase the level of comfort between us?
6. What can each of us do to make sure we start off on the right track?
7. Is there anything I need to know about you right now that would be helpful to me?
8. What else is important for you?
9. How often should we meet and for how long?
10. Where will we meet?
11. What are the best ways we can contact one another?
12. If we need to cancel a meeting, how would we go about that?
13. What ideas do we have for getting our activities organized?



** As with any sample list, these questions should be adapted to suit your particular mentoring focus and the cultural and organizational context in which you work.

[Adapted with permission from *Mentoring: Participant's Notebook*. Brainstorm Dynamics, Inc., Phoenix, Maryland, 1998, and from the *Mentor Teacher Handbook, Stages of Development in a Mentoring Partnership*, Rita W. Peterson, University of California at Irvine, <http://www.gse.uci.edu/doehome/EdResource/Publications/MentorTeacher/Chapter3.1.html>, date accessed: April 4, 2002.]





WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE: HELPFUL HINTS FROM A YOUTH PERSPECTIVE

This excerpted article was written by Matlhogonolo Mogapi, a 19-year-old woman from Gaborone, Botswana, who has worked as a peer educator in AIDS and who was a UNICEF-sponsored participant in “Young People in Action,” the 8th International Conference on AIDS in Africa, December 1993. The article was originally included in a UNICEF report from that conference.

WHY INVOLVE YOUNG PEOPLE:

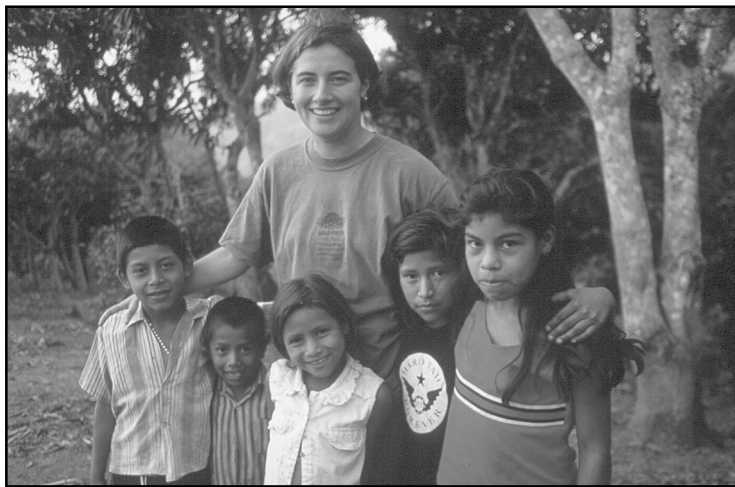
- We are enthusiastic.
- We know our needs best.
- We are at a stage when we can learn and change.
- We are more open to new ideas.
- We are very impressionable, we can be influenced easily, and the influence can be positive.
- Most youth are very passionate; once we are convinced about something, we stick to what we believe in.
- We are creative, and so can be in a position to lend advice about how issues that affect us can be approached in as creative a manner as possible, and one that will appeal to us.

FOR EFFECTIVE YOUTH PARTICIPATION:

- Use “our” language;** it is important that we are able to understand you.
- Be honest and upfront** when dealing with young people. You should state exactly what it is you expect of them in as concise a manner as possible. Be very clear and direct, and that way they will be honest enough to tell you exactly what it is they can or cannot do.
- Be patient.** Some young people will have invaluable ideas, but will not be able to articulate well what it is they want to see happening. Have the patience to put them at ease. This will show them how much you value their ideas and so will make them more accepting of you.
- Let the young people outline for themselves what they feel they want to do and can do.** In that way you will not be delegating duties for them that they might find uninteresting and unchallenging, or overwhelming and totally out of their scope.



- Allow them to learn from experience.** Never tell young people that they can never do something. Even if you feel their seemingly “idealistic” ideas are too ambitious, do not disillusion or discourage them. Let the youth explore their own capacities and in that way they will know their limits.
- Be non-directive when initiating a discussion.** Ask the youth open-ended questions such as, “What do you think we can do?” “What would you like to see happen?” In that way the youth will end up not even needing you to prod them for answers. As they talk about some of their ideas, they will need only your guidance as their facilitator, to put them back on track of what had initially been the issues.
- Be fair,** and admit when you are wrong or do not know something. Let the youth teach you what they know, especially on issues regarding them. Be very open-minded when working with young people and expect of them what you can expect of yourself, too.
- Be neutral in the face of disagreements** between yourself and young people. Try to see things their way. If you feel they are giving you a hard time, feel free to tell them how you feel and how it is affecting you. If you do that, they will see you as a human being with feelings and will act in your best interests if you do so for them, too.
- Be consistent;** always keep to what you profess to believe in. Young people will see you as someone they can trust.
- Show them you have faith in them** and that will enable them to make independent decisions and so be able to build good leadership skills for themselves.



*“I learned wisdom from all my teachers
and teaching from all my students.”*

— Ben Ezra
Second Century AD





MORE TIPS FOR MENTORS WHO WORK WITH CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

- Maintain regular contact.** This cannot be overstated. Consistency is crucial, especially during the all-important trust-building phase of the relationship. Mentors must be willing to make a considerable time commitment.
- Take the time to develop trust.** Many young people have not had positive relationships with adults in the past. Mutual trust and respect are goals to work toward, not a given. Keep your promises, speak truthfully, state your expectations, and set clear boundaries. In addition, remember that most youth are very sensitive about being labeled. Avoid using phrases like “street kid” or “abusive families.”
- Don’t preach.** In working with your mentees, practice active listening and try to help *them* solve *their* problems. Offer alternatives instead of answers. It is important to work together to determine activities and define the direction of the relationship. A mentor is an advocate, friend, role model, sponsor, nurturer, or coach. A mentor is *not* a parent, therapist, judge, rescuer, authority figure, employer, or bank.
- Identify areas of need.** Don’t expect each conversation to be a confession. Once problem areas are identified, work to find ways to address those areas of need and give support. Some mentees may not easily accept help. You can be a strong and committed voice of support. Stay alert to changing individual needs.
- Access resources.** Help your mentee access community resources. Instead of doing the research yourself, model the process you use when seeking information and service. Then guide your mentee through a brainstorming process to start targeting appropriate resources.
- Debrief with supervisors and peers.** Mentoring can be both exhilarating and frustrating. Find time to share your stories (but take care not to betray confidences). Seeking the advice of others will help strengthen your communication and problem-solving skills.



[Adapted with permission from “*Tips for Mentors*,” Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory Project Learns, www.nwrel.org/learns/resources/mentor/index.html, website last updated: March 1, 2002.]



CULTURAL CAUTIONS FOR MENTORS

The nature of mentoring calls for special attention to the cultural environment in which we are working. As mentors, we get involved in one-on-one relationships, we engage in conversations that address personal and sometimes sensitive issues, and we offer help and support with the best intentions. To ensure our intentions have the positive impact we desire, we must make ourselves aware of the snares that may be hidden in the cultural landscape. Here are a few potentially difficult situations to recognize and address:



- 1** Two people meeting alone may draw suspicions from people in the neighborhood or community. This situation can happen to almost any type of mentoring partnership: an adult and a young person, a woman and a man, two men, etc. Prevent raising eyebrows by choosing public, open places for mentoring meetings. In some cases, you may also need to consider whether it is permissible/advisable for you to play a mentoring role with certain people (for example, a member of the opposite gender about your age or younger).
- 2** Sometimes the mentors and mentees misinterpret their relationship and start acting (and appearing) more like friends or brothers/sisters or parent and child or companions. In such cases, you may need to reestablish the roles and goals of relationship or, if the metamorphosis has gone too far, link the mentee up with another person who can be his or her mentor instead of you.
- 3** A Volunteer may inadvertently encourage a mentee to take a course of action that is beyond the boundaries of acceptable behavior, and in so doing, expose the mentee to reprimand or chastisement from his or her family or community. One Volunteer, for example, persuaded a woman to attend a local meeting of a women's group without the permission of her husband, who later beat her for disobeying him. In another case, a Volunteer's attempts to help a young friend be more assertive backfired when the mentee's father whipped him for "talking back." Boundaries for behavior are often subtle and difficult for cultural outsiders to perceive. Train yourself and your mentee to consider the possible consequences (positive and negative) of a particular course of action.
- 4** Other (ask your host country trainers, colleagues, and/or Counterpart to help you identify other culture-related pitfalls or cautions for mentors).





ORGANIZING MENTORING PROGRAMS

Mentoring programs can be designed for any segment of the population, but the majority of them focus on school-age children or young people starting out in their craft, trade, or profession. Most mentoring programs emphasize one or more of the following elements:

EDUCATION

These programs typically focus on improving overall school achievement through tutoring and study skills enhancement. Mentors also offer encouragement and counseling to build or bolster the student's self-esteem.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Mentoring programs can provide a new avenue for exploring educational and career paths. To help students make the transition from school to work, students are paired with professionals, introduced to role models, and encouraged to visit various work environments.

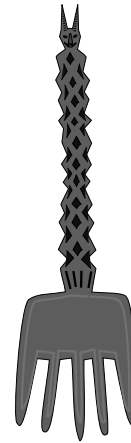
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

These types of programs usually focus on reducing high-risk behaviors in youth, e.g., drug use, sexual activity, and truancy. They may intervene at a critical point in the student's life and focus on providing guidance for decision making and assertiveness.

PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT

Many organizations have mentoring programs in which senior or seasoned staff mentor junior or newly arrived staff, helping them develop organizational savvy, leadership, networks, and/or specialized expertise.

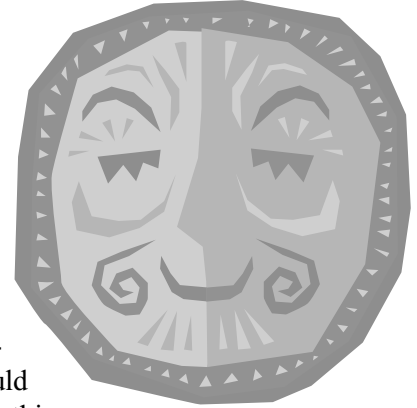
During your service, you will stumble upon (or may create) some wonderful opportunities to link people in your community together in mentoring partnerships. Your Counterpart and other community members may also be interested in setting up a structured mentoring program involving local schools, businesses, churches, NGOs, or other institutions. If you and your community get involved in organizing structured mentoring programs that involve a number of different stakeholders (e.g., youth, their parents, the mentors, and/or the hosting organization), you will need to approach the task with careful planning. For example, the ICE publication *Beyond the Classroom: Empowering Girls*, offers an excellent planning format for a "Take Your Daughter to Work Day" project; refer to this and other resources listed on the last page of this Toolkit. Also, consult with your APCD, your supervisor, and/or colleagues who have prior experience with designing and implementing mentoring projects.



[Adapted with permission from "Types of Programs," Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory Project Learns, www.nwrel.org/learns/resources/mentor/index.html, website last updated: March 1, 2002.]



STORIES FROM THE FIELD: ECUADOR



A Volunteer was a professional large-scale mural painter in the United States before her Peace Corps service. Her current site is the capital of Ecuador, Quito. Knowing that paint can last on a wall upwards of five years, she entered the Center for Rehabilitation for Boys with the idea to prepare them for work that would last a little bit longer than just that one night. She used art, in this case mural projects, as a tool to approach and address a multifaceted program agenda to create a transition period between life in a penal institution and life outside of one. The nature of the work is public and very visible. It is an avenue for the boys to link up again with the culture that they find themselves at odds with, on their own terms, and with a sophisticated language.

She met a 16-year-old boy by the name of Pablo. Pablo had been living on the streets for eight years and had only gone to school through the fifth grade. He had attempted to live in several of the homes set up for youth but had found life preferable on the streets. Prostitution has been his main moneymaking activity, which he would never allow to be known to anyone. He slept throughout the day and stayed up during the night to keep warm and alive. He started painting murals with the Volunteer because he had told her previously that he was interested in drawing. The Volunteer secured permission from the rehabilitation center for Pablo to live there during the months they painted on the project. It was during the rainy season, and it was the first time that the boy had been warm in months. He certainly started to look better within the first few days. Pablo had actually been looking for something for a long time. He didn't have proper papers, he had no diplomas, and he had no connections except those of the street. There was no way that he could reconnect himself to society. The small salary that they were able to pay him (the equivalent of 30 American dollars a month) went toward rent for a small room. With this small room, he was able to establish an address, a place to go to, and a place where he could keep his things. This small sense of security allowed him to begin to take night classes and continue his education, and the connection to the mural project allowed for a base where he could reach out and find other, more permanent employment, with ready references from the foundation.

Mural making allowed Pablo to participate in a very active way in a project from its beginning all the way to its conclusion, and at every level. Inherent in the project are mechanisms for creating self-esteem. The participants create something that is physically larger than themselves and is permanent. Pablo changed without much direct intervention.

The Volunteer's plan is to make this activity a permanent part of the *Fundación Estrella del Mañana* (Morning Star Foundation), with Ecuadorian artists taking over her role once the program has been established. There are plans to move on to the rehabilitation centers for girls, and to develop projects in other parts of the country, talking largely and loudly the whole way.



GUINEA

HELPING GIRLS STAY IN SCHOOL

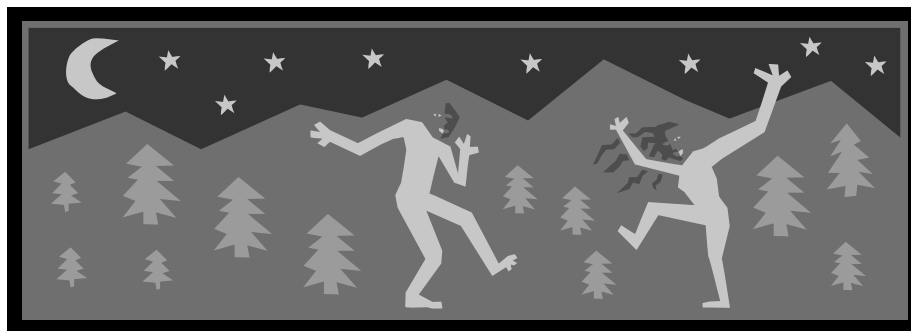


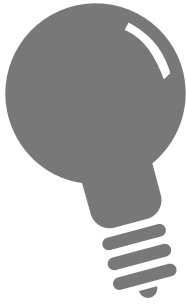
Volunteers have institutionalized the Girls' Conference. Every year, Volunteers in each region gather together in the regional capital. They bring young schoolgirls with them to discuss issues that female students face in the classroom, and to come up with some workable solutions that empower female students in the learning process. This year, sessions included the following topics: Reproductive Health, Staying in School, Test-taking Skills and Good Study Habits, Career Day (participants "shadowed" a woman working in a non-traditional career), and African vs. American Feminism. Many of the girls who attended the workshops did presentations at primary and secondary

schools when they returned to their towns and villages.

THAILAND

A Volunteer, based at Kun Jae National Park, has spent his free weekends helping at the orphanage home in Chiangmai. Supported by private funds, this orphanage is the home of approximately 20 children from three to 15 years of age whose parents have died of AIDS and who have no family member to take care of them. All of these children are free of AIDS and came to this orphanage directly from the crowded government orphanage home. While working at the orphanage, the Volunteer plays sports and music, reads, and does other recreational activities or household chores with and for the children. He has become known as "Uncle Ed." He serves as a male role model and father figure for the children. More important, he has established a linkage between the park and the orphanage. For example, he brought these children to learn about nature by staying a few nights at the park. It is worth noting that, ever since these orphanage children were brought to the park, many of the park staff have taken their own initiative by assisting or participating in the orphanage activities whenever they can.





IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES FOR PRACTICING YOUR ROLE AS A MENTOR

REFLECTING ON MENTORS IN YOUR PAST

PURPOSE

To learn from a past mentoring experience where someone had a positive effect on your life or you were able to help someone

ACTIVITY

- 1. Think back into your past and recall times when you made important changes. Identify the people who have significantly influenced you and made positive contributions to your life.

Someone who inspired you to shift the direction of your life in a constructive way:

Someone who provided something to help you grow in depth of feeling, character, or ethical integrity or who has helped you develop a deeper commitment to your values:

Someone who gave you some form of help at just the right time:



Someone who arranged an unusual learning experience for you that allowed you to see something from a different perspective or with a deeper meaning or insight:

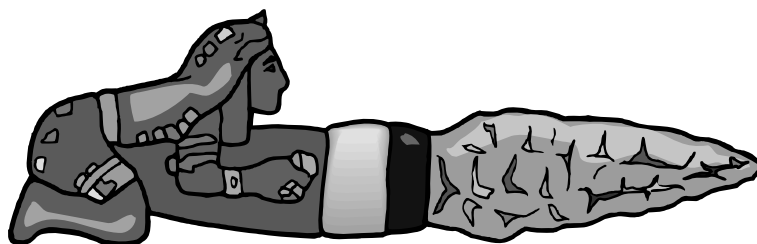
- 2.** Relate an experience where you reached out to another person who was deeply in need, and your help appeared to make a beneficial difference to that person.

Describe an experience you observed, read, or heard about where someone reached out to another person to help in an unusual way.

Describe one mentoring experience you have had that did not fit the direct, one-to-one personal aspect of mentoring (for example, a special parental message, a speech, a quote from literature, and so on).

- 3.** Using these same reflection questions, ask your host family, community friends, or professional counterparts about their experiences in mentoring. Explore with them the possible cultural similarities and differences in mentoring.
- 4.** Share your reflections with your colleagues, trainers, Counterparts, and/or community friends. Together, have a conversation about the possibilities of mentoring in the new context in which you will be living and working. Using your collective experiences and your cultural understanding, write some guidelines that will help you get started well in this capacity-building role.

[Adapted with permission from **Mentoring**, by Gordon F. Shea. Crisp Publications, Inc., 1200 Hamilton Court, Menlo Park, California 94025. 1997.]





IDENTIFYING YOUR MENTORING RESOURCES

PURPOSE

This exercise will help you become aware of the personal and/or professional assets you have to bring to a mentoring partnership. These resources will vary according to your job, personality, interests, experiences, network of friends and associates, and available time.

ACTIVITY

On the worksheet below, identify some of your special assets you bring to a mentoring partnership.

My position and work experience: _____

Things I like to do: _____

My education, training, and/or experience: _____



My pastimes, hobbies, and/or clubs: _____

My special skills and knowledge: _____

My special passion(s): _____

Any other asset: _____

[Adapted with permission from **Mentoring**, by Gordon F. Shea. Crisp Publications, Inc., 1200 Hamilton Court, Menlo Park, California 94025. 1997.]





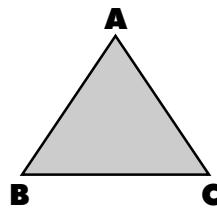
ACTIVE LISTENING PRACTICE

PURPOSE

To build skills in using active listening in the context of mentoring (for example, to help a mentee clarify and resolve a problem)

ACTIVITY

You and two of your fellow Trainees or colleagues will join together to form a triad for role play practice. There will be three rounds with each person in the triad having a chance to play the role of mentee, mentor, and observer (see diagram below).



A = Mentee

B = Mentor

C = Observer

In preparation for your turn as Mentee, you should think of a real issue or problem you are experiencing or have faced recently (a situation you are willing to share with your two colleagues). In Round One, the Mentee talks about his problem. The Mentor uses active listening skills in responding to the Mentee, helping him solve the problem. The Observer watches the interaction, using the Active Listening table (page 8 of this Toolkit) to tally the number of times the Mentor uses the different behaviors. At the end of the interaction, the Observer gives the Mentor feedback. The triad then rotates the roles two more times, giving each participant a chance to play all three roles. After the three rounds are over, discuss the practice using the following questions as a guide:

- How did it feel to actively listen?
- What did you do well?
- Which behaviors were easy? Difficult?
- What did you learn from your Observer's feedback? What did you learn while being the Observer?
- Under what conditions can you envision using this skill in your professional work and interpersonal relationships?





BRAINSTORMING ABOUT MENTORING LINKS IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

PURPOSE

To become more aware of the mentoring opportunities that exist in a given community

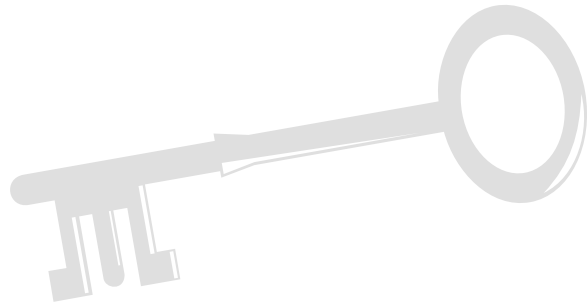
ACTIVITY

In a small group with your fellow Trainees, trainers, and/or community partners, consider all the possible ways people in the local community might link up in mentoring relationships. Think about less structured or more structured, and short-term or long-term opportunities. The mentoring options may or may not be related to your technical sector.

Use the brainstorming technique to generate as many mentoring links as possible and write them down on a flip chart. Don't stop to evaluate any of the ideas until you have exhausted your imagination and memory. Afterwards, review the options and cluster or categorize them by whatever means is most useful to you (for example, degree of structure, length of relationship, potential for getting started, and so forth).

Discuss more specifically what role the Volunteer might play in each type of mentoring opportunity (for example, serving directly as a mentor, or encouraging others to link together in a mentoring partnership, or training others in mentoring skills, and so on).





KEY RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION AND INSIGHT

Beyond the Classroom: Empowering Girls. Idea Book Series. (Peace Corps, Washington, DC). [ICE M0080]

Children's Participation: Theory and Practice of Involving Young Citizens in Community Development and Environmental Care. Roger Hart. (UNICEF, New York, NY). 1997 [ICE YD029]

Coaching for Development: Skills for Managers and Team Leaders. Marianne Minor. (Crisp Publications, Inc., Menlo Park, CA). 1995 [ICE TR123]

Developing Managers as Coaches: A Training Guide. Frank S. Dalisburg. (McGraw-Hill, New York, NY). 1994. [ICE TR068]

Life Skills Manual. (Peace Corps, Washington, DC). 2000. [ICE M0061]

Mentoring. Gordon F. Shea. (Crisp Publications, Inc., 1200 Hamilton Court, Menlo Park, California 94025). 1997.

What Did You Say? The Art of Giving and Receiving Feedback. Charles Seashore, Edith Whitfield Seashore, and Gerald Weinberg. (Bingham House Books, Columbia, MD). 1997. [ICE TR115]

Well done is better than well said.

— Benjamin Franklin



NOTES

