

**PROJECT
DESCRIPTION
No. 5**

A black and white illustration of a diverse group of children of various ethnicities and ages, looking towards the right.

Girls' EDUCATION

MENTORING PROGRAMS: AN APPROACH TO IMPROVING GIRLS' PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION

Why invest in girls' education?

Education of all children is important. Education, especially primary schooling, contributes to economic growth, social development, and democracy. While the education of all children is important, investing in the education of girls yields high economic and social returns. Increases in female literacy and schooling have been linked to development gains in both maternal and child health as well as agricultural production.

Despite enormous gains, girls' enrollment rates still lag behind boys. In many countries, girls' attendance in schools is much lower than for boys because of family needs and resources, facilities available for girls at schools, treatment of females in the classroom by teachers and male classmates, and cultural beliefs about the appropriateness of educating women. Many countries have engaged in comprehensive changes in their educational systems to expand access, improve instructional quality, and increase efficiency. The programs have laid the groundwork for increased educational participation of all children, but they usually have not been sufficient to reduce gender disparities between girls and boys. The fact that many of the impediments to girls' enrollment and persistence in school are specific to girls but not to boys requires a concerted effort to increase educational opportunities for girls as a development imperative.

What is mentoring?

A mentoring relationship involves a more knowledgeable or experienced person, a mentor, helping a less knowledgeable or experienced one, a protégé, rise to his or her potential. Mentors remove barriers to opportunities, model positive behaviors, and provide guidance to their protégés. Mentoring can be part of a naturally occurring relationship or part of a planned program. Mentoring

programs can be adapted to fit the needs and missions of many organizations. Schools can implement mentoring programs to reduce dropout rates and increase student achievement. Religious organizations can help young people develop social or academic skills and offer role models who will instill moral and religious values. Businesses can use mentoring programs as a means to educate and recruit future employees.

Why implement a mentoring program?

Mentors, especially female role models, can make a difference in girls' participation and persistence in education and in their personal and economic lives after their schooling is over. Mentors can help girls overcome such barriers to education as low educational aspirations, low parental expectations, and inadequate information about careers. When tutoring is provided, mentors help girls improve their academic performance. Many programs work with parents to help them appreciate the importance of educating their daughters, to involve them in the school, and to help them provide their daughters with a supportive environment at home. When these structures are in place, girls' retention and graduation rates increase. Other important benefits of mentoring programs include helping girls prepare for the transition to adulthood; providing girls with information about careers and job opportunities; giving them nurturance, support, and encouragement; and helping them cope with difficult circumstances (Freedman 1993).

Mentoring programs can provide substantial benefits to girls for relatively little cost. A major advantage of the mentoring approach is that it allows the sponsoring organization to tailor the program to the level of skills and resources available in the organization and community. In addition to helping girls, many mentoring programs also provide assistance to their mothers and other family members, thereby having an even greater impact on the community.

What are the different types of mentoring programs?

Most mentoring programs take one of the following forms:

Adult/Child Programs. Many children in the developing world are raised by parents who have little or no education and whose energy is focused on providing basic necessities, and, therefore, do not have the knowledge or the time to provide their children with educational guidance. In countries where the mortality rate from HIV/AIDS is high, relatives other than parents, who have a large number of other children to care for, cannot give them the attention they need. This lack of parental/adult involvement in a child's life often results in low aspirations, frequent absences from school, and poor performance. A variety of programs attempt to compensate for this deficit by providing children with adult mentors who will give them the guidance, support, and encouragement they need, and who also serve as positive role models of a better life.

Parent/Child Programs. Parents play a vital role in their children's education. Consequently, parent/child programs attempt to involve parents in the schools and help them provide a supportive environment at home. Some programs are designed to benefit children and parents by providing career information, tutoring, and counseling to students and their parents. Such programs are particularly beneficial in countries where girls face severe constraints to completing their education and where many parents fail to see the importance of educating their daughters.

Peer Mentoring. Peer mentoring programs match a student who is disadvantaged, performing poorly in school, or at a high risk of dropping out with another, usually older student who can provide assistance and serve as a role model. Both the mentor and the protégé benefit from the program. Programs of this type may be of particular interest in countries where resources are limited and adult mentors are unavailable.

Sample mentoring programs

Mentoring programs exist throughout the world, but there is little documentation and analysis of their activities. Consequently, the outcomes of many programs are known through success stories about mentoring relationships that changed the lives of the participants (Flaxman and Ascher 1992). Here are several examples of different types of mentoring programs and their outcomes.

The *Fille pour Fille* (Girl for Girl) Program is one of several UNICEF activities in Benin that seeks to increase girls' participation in education at the primary level and enhance the academic skills of the older girls. The program has three primary objectives: 1) increasing girls' access to education; 2) increasing their retention in school; and 3) improving their academic performance. Sixth- and seventh graders act as tutors, confidantes, and mentors to first-through-third graders. The protégés are girls deemed by a village committee to be the most vulnerable and are usually from dysfunctional or severely economically disadvantaged families. Mentors visit the girls in their homes, help with homework, and talk to them about their difficulties at home and school. When problems are identified, such as physical abuse or harassment from teachers, mentors report them to the village elders, who intercede on the girl's behalf. The program is currently being evaluated, so it is not yet possible to assess its effectiveness with any certainty. Nonetheless, school inspectors report that the program is effective in achieving its objectives.

The Students Tutoring for Achievement and Retention (STAR) program, begun in April 1996, is a peer-tutoring program serving nearly 900 girls in four primary schools and two high schools in Lomé, Togo. The program is managed in partnership between the parents and the *Club des Enfants du Monde*, a nongovernmental organization. The program provides teachers with training on specific needs in educating girls and conducts activities to sensitize the community to the importance of girls' education. Most important, the program attempts to improve retention and achievement through one-on-one tutoring. Under the supervision of teachers, the tutoring occurs weekly for two hours on each of two days during the academic year. Adult volunteers from the community also visit the girls' families once each month. After the program's first year, teachers reported that program participants were more willing to raise their hands in class and to participate in class discussions. Most impressive, the dropout rate for girls who participated in the program had declined from 15 to 1 percent.

The Ghana Education Service initiated a **Science, Technology, and Mathematics Education (STME) Clinic** for girls in 1987. Each year the two-week clinics serve about 150 girls. The clinics seek to have girls: 1) "show a decreased propensity to accept gender stereotypes that inhibit girls/women from entering STM-based occupations; 2) show an increase in the number and range of science and mathematics subjects girls will chose; 3) show increased interest in STM-based careers; 4) be able to identify at least four models of successful women in STM-based occupations; and 5) be able to specify subjects that must be studied as preparation for entry into given STM-based occupations" (Mensah 1994). Clinics blend traditional subject-area content with applications of the

concepts to various science and technology disciplines, such as the production of goods and services, nature and use of computers, and knowledge of the scientific method. Over the two weeks, students spend the majority of their time visiting industries, research institutions and laboratories, universities and medical schools, power plants, military establishments, and the national zoo and botanical garden. In the places visited, the girls are introduced to the host institution's administrative structure and type of work done. During the 1993 clinic, groups of two to four girls spent four mornings working under the supervision of scientists, industrialists, and technologists in an establishment of the girls' choice. Most of the supervisors were females. Evaluation of the clinics shows that activities such as role-modeling visits and talks seem to reduce the girls' negative stereotypes about science and math careers (Mensah 1994).

Mentoring programs do not require formal organization to be successful. For example, mentoring can be a part of a multifaceted program. A mothers' and girls' club in El Salvador, *La Nueva Esperanza*, provides Saturday classes in income-producing skills, an incentive program of back-to-school motivational packages, and a small scholarship program. The club also sponsors two types of mentoring, informal tutoring, on an as-needed basis, for high school scholarship students and "Saturday Scholarships" for selected club members.

High school-age club members are encouraged to bring their needs for academic assistance to club leaders. If the sponsors have knowledge of a subject, one of them meets with girls who need help. If none of the leaders can provide the help, teachers are asked to identify a peer tutor. On one occasion a sponsor recorded cassette tapes for a student who was having difficulty with a foreign language.

"Saturday Scholarships" provide the cost of transportation to the capital and lunch, enabling girls to attend programs at a prestigious university, tour the campus, and see several sights. For some of the girls these trips are their first visit to the capital. The occasion provides a view of university education to girls who often are unfamiliar with this option.

Designing and implementing a mentoring program

Developing a quality mentoring program can be time-, staff-, and, in some cases, cost-intensive. Maximizing effectiveness requires a sense of ownership by the community. It is important that local stakeholders be involved in all stages of program development and implementation. Several key questions should be asked when designing and implementing a mentoring program.

What will the program's objectives and methodology be?

Objectives

Mentoring programs have many goals and employ a wide range of methodologies. Some programs try to increase the economic value of young people entering the marketplace by increasing their academic achievement and knowledge of career options. Others emphasize developing bonds between participants or the transfer of knowledge, information, and skills. Still others attempt to reduce the likelihood that protégés will engage in antisocial behaviors (Flaxman and Ascher 1992).

Methodology

Whatever the objectives, mentoring programs usually employ either a developmental or prescriptive approach; some employ both. In developmental programs, mentors try to establish trusting relationships with their protégés, help them through school and life transitions, and provide holistic support. Prescriptive programs focus on problem-oriented goals, such as improving academic performance or preventing dropout. Mentors in these programs focus on providing protégés with academic support and tutoring (Smink 1990).

What are the community's needs, resources, and limitations?

Before starting a mentoring program, it is important to know the target community. If the community's needs, resources, and limitations have not been determined, a thorough needs assessment should be conducted. The following questions should be answered:

- What are the community's aspirations for girls and to what extent will a mentoring program address those aspirations?
- Who is the target audience (e.g., severely economically disadvantaged girls, girls whose parents have never been to school, or girls with only one parent)?
- What are the ages of those in the target group?
- What local resources are available to address the community's needs?

Who will implement the mentoring program?

The primary sponsor must determine whether it will be the implementing agency or whether another organization should be asked to assume responsibility for the initiative. Key questions include these:

- Is the methodology chosen consistent with the sponsor's goals and objectives?
- Does the sponsor have the requisite skills, expertise, and commitment?
- Who will have primary responsibility for implementing the program?
- Which employees will be involved?
- Will additional staff be required?
- Will time be allocated during working hours for participation, or will staff be expected to participate on their own time?
- Will incentives be provided to encourage the staff's participation?

How will mentors and protégés be recruited?

Recruitment of mentors

Mentors can be teachers, school administrators, religious or community leaders, parents, siblings, or peers. They can be people who are experienced in a particular career or individuals who care about nurturing others. Program managers must define which types of mentors are needed to accomplish their objectives. It is often desirable to ask businesses, religious groups, or other organizations to recommend or recruit mentors from within their ranks (Flaxman and Ascher 1992; Hamilton and Hamilton 1992). Whatever the criteria for mentors, program managers must be concerned with maintaining the physical safety and psychological well being of the youth involved. To this end, most programs employ a screening process to eliminate mentors who might pose a threat to youth or who are unlikely to honor their commitment to the program. Screening can involve a written application, one or more interviews, or a reference check. While many mentor programs depend on volunteers, other programs pay mentors. Programs that do not pay mentors sometimes provide stipends for mentors and protégés (Smink 1990).

To address the problem of mentor dropout, some programs overrecruit mentors from the start (Flaxman and Ascher 1992). Others provide training before protégés are selected. Then, during mentor training, if some mentors choose not to continue, the administrators can adjust the target number of protégés. This prevents administrators from having to deal with a protégé's disappointment in being abandoned by a mentor (Thompson 1991). From the outset, a program must consider how it will replace mentors who leave after they are matched and how to work with children who may be hurt emotionally by such an event.

Recruitment of protégés

Funding for mentoring programs is usually limited, so criteria must be established for selecting protégés. Some mentoring programs target youth at risk of dropping out or at risk of academic failure. Other programs operate under the philosophy that all youth can benefit from the program, but almost all mentoring programs set some guidelines for participation. For example, youth in many programs must possess minimum social skills. Girls in other programs must show academic potential, as demonstrated by standardized tests. Evaluators recommend screening for participants who are receptive to new ideas, can make a commitment, and are enthusiastic, because these young people will benefit most from mentor relationships (Smink 1990). It is also important to set the age range of the youth who will be served. In addition, because protégés are usually in the care of a parent or guardian, recruitment frequently involves interaction with a parent as well as the child.

How will mentors be trained?

Programs should include ongoing, structural support for mentors (Hamilton and Hamilton 1990), and agency staff should serve as guides for the mentors (Flaxman and Ascher 1992). To this end, mentor programs often provide training in communications and conflict management for their staffs (Blechman 1992). Once the internal staff have the requisite skills, they are ready to train mentors.

Many programs hold preservice training for mentors. During the training, staff review the required time commitment, describe how to manage expectations of youth, and explain the program's goals

and philosophy. Some programs provide mentors with additional training about how to build positive relationships with youth and how to recognize and report sexual abuse (Smink 1990; Flaxman and Ascher 1992; Tierney, Grossman, and Resch 1995).

How will mentors be matched with protégés?

Programs must make critical decisions about criteria for matching a mentor with a protégé. Criteria for matching are not always apparent. For example, is shared religion a consideration? Should mentor and protégé come from the same ethnic background? Differences between the two people in the relationship can enhance the bond and increase learning or may cause problems (Flaxman and Ascher 1992). Regardless of how the choice is made, the priority must be placed on identifying the needs of a particular youth and then finding a mentor who can address those needs.

How will participants be introduced and what activities will they undertake?

Orientation

The first meeting of a mentor and his or her protégé is usually held in a group setting. This provides context for the meeting and helps to build a relationship. Programs may require pairs to set goals during the orientation and may provide an opportunity for youth to discuss the activities they would like to pursue with their mentors. Orientations can also include an opportunity for participants to provide suggestions about the program's design and to establish common goals (Smink 1990).

Program activities

One of the most difficult problems for mentors is deciding what to do with their protégés. Many mentors need help from program staff on how to motivate protégés and which activities might best benefit youth (Flaxman and Ascher 1992). Mentoring often needs context, and this is where the sponsoring (or implementing) organization can provide assistance to mentors. Mentors need to understand how their effort will contribute to their protégés' needs, and doing so usually requires that the mentor understands the reasons a protégé is participating in the program and what he or she expects to gain from it. The artificiality of some matches provides an awkward arrangement, but youth matched with mentors in a work environment automatically have context. Activities flow naturally, and a relationship develops as the mentor teaches workplace skills (Hamilton and Hamilton 1992). During activities, mentors model behavior, provide useful feedback, and demonstrate principles of decision making and organization (Flaxman 1993). Without a structured environment, such as a workplace, mentors may find their efforts somewhat more difficult. Here again, however, the implementing institution should be available to provide guidance to the mentors.

Many programs plan group activities for the mentors and their protégés that serve to:

- help them choose something to do together;
- allow staff to observe and monitor relationships;
- provide a forum for staff to publicly recognize accomplishments; and
- provide a peer support network for mentors and youth.

Group activities can involve trips, seminars, or games. Many programs mark the end of the mentor-protégé relationships with an awards ceremony (Smink 1990).

What will be the mentoring program's guidelines and how can they be enforced?

Guidelines should be created and enforced for all aspects of mentoring programs. Guidelines form the basis for recruiting mentors and participants. Guidelines are needed to impose a limit on the term of the protégé as well as to define whether mentoring will involve tutoring, sharing activities, or something else. Guidelines can also define the target. Programs should determine what the commitment from mentors and protégés will be once pairs have been matched. Some programs expect pairs to contact each other twice a month for two years; others require a daily commitment for a short period of time. Still others require biweekly meetings for an extended period of time (Flaxman and Ascher 1992).

Key questions must be answered prior to beginning the program, including:

- What will the procedure be if a mentor or protégé fails to appear for a meeting?
- Will a mentor or protégé be expelled from the program after a certain number of failed meetings?

Answers to such questions should reflect the needs of the target population and the program's overall objectives.

How will the mentoring program be monitored, evaluated, and revised?

Monitoring

A monitoring process should be established to examine how well program objectives are being met. Monitoring seeks to ensure that commitments are kept and that meetings of mentors and their protégés contribute to the attainment of overall objectives. To assist with monitoring, program administrators can ask mentors and protégés to complete evaluation forms periodically. Program staff might engage in monitoring school attendance or other records or in conducting interviews with mentors and youth. To avoid the possibility of abuse, many programs require pairs to meet in public places. In some programs, both the mentor and one of the protégé's parents or guardians must confer with one of the program's sponsors frequently during the first few months. The mentor is then required to maintain monthly contact with program staff throughout the first year (Tierney, Grossman, and Resch 1995). Process evaluations help to determine whether youth and mentors are, in fact, meeting their time commitments. Mentors can be involved with data collection by keeping journals about the relationship and activities and by monitoring their protégé's behavior, such as school attendance.

Evaluation

Surveys and interviews are not always the best evaluation tools for mentoring programs because a tendency exists for both mentors and protégés to give socially desirable responses. Instead, evaluators can engage in systematic participant observation. Other assessment tools include:

- portfolios — records of protégés' work;
- exhibitions — protégés' artifacts, creations, performances;

- records — protégés’ assessments of their own progress and strengths and weaknesses; and
- conversations with teachers or school masters.

Evaluations can also be employed to measure outcomes, but it is important to distinguish between short-term results, such as higher test scores, and long-term results, such as sustained academic improvement.

The indicators chosen to assess whether a mentoring program works must be based on the program’s specified objectives and methodology. Developmental indicators measure such things as whether mentors expose youth to new educational, social, and cultural experiences; whether they have an impact on the development of character and sense of self; and whether they encourage achievement of long-term goals. Prescriptive indicators measure behavioral changes in the protégé, such as increased academic success and persistence and unwanted teenage pregnancies (Flaxman and Ascher 1992).

Program adjustment

To be useful, evaluation information should be incorporated into the program planning and revision process. Expected versus actual goals should be assessed and appropriate adjustments made.

How long will it take to implement a mentoring program?

Once funding is obtained for a mentoring program, it can be implemented within four months. Here is a suggested time line for implementation activities:

Project Time Line

Activities	Month			
	1	2	3	4
Assess local resources	X			
Conduct needs assessment	X			
Formulate strategy and select advisory committee	X			
Determine selection criteria for mentors and protégés	X			
Develop program strategy and work plan		X		
Develop participation guidelines and handbook		X	X	
Recruit and select mentors and protégés		X	X	
Collect and analyze baseline data			X	X
Develop training materials for mentors			X	X
Train mentors				X
Conduct orientation				X
Implement program				X

How much will it cost to implement a mentoring program?

The cost of implementing a mentoring program will depend on the number of participants and the availability and cost of local resources, including staff, equipment, and facilities. In developing a budget for the mentoring program, consider the following items:

Personnel - staff employed by the implementing organization (staff needed will vary according to size of the program)

- Mentoring coordinator (one person full time)
- Administrative assistant (one person half time)

Consultants - individuals hired to complete specific tasks, such as collecting and analyzing baseline information, developing a mentors' handbook, and training mentors. The extent to which consultants are needed will depend on the mentoring coordinator's skills and expertise and those of the sponsoring organization.

Travel and per diem - expenses required for staff and consultants to collect data, monitor mentors' meetings, arrange for and attend seminars, visit participants, etc.

Equipment - required to operate the office, as well as communicate with mentors, protégés, consultants, and the local community. The additional equipment that must be purchased will depend on what is available to the organization. For example, an office may already have photocopy and facsimile machines. It may be necessary to purchase an additional telephone, computer, printer, software, etc.

Training/seminars/conferences - training should be provided to all mentors, and an orientation should be held for protégés. It may be advisable to provide an orientation for employers of mentors, teachers, and school administrators. Items needed include:

- **Operational costs** - expenses incurred in operating the programs (e.g., communications, printing, art/graphics, equipment maintenance, rent, supplies)
- **Overhead** - based on the organization's normal overhead rate.

This list is not exhaustive and is intended to provide a beginning framework for outlining the costs of implementing and maintaining a mentoring program. The following table lists major categories of concern when developing a budget.

Illustrative Budget

Category	Estimated Percentage
Program coordinator	10-15
Admin. and financial assistant	5-10
Outreach workers	15-25
Promotion and training	5-10
Travel and transportation	5-15
Other direct costs	5-10
Monitoring and evaluation	5-8
Administrative costs	10-15

What will be the duration of the mentoring program?

The sample project outlined in the appendix is designed to be a four-year project. At the end of this period, the expectation is that a Ministry of Education or members of the private sector will continue the activity. Consequently, throughout the project, emphasis needs to be placed on encouraging community support for the program. This requires frequent interaction with the media, working with local businesses, and developing a committed and active advisory committee composed of community leaders who are involved in all phases of the program. The participation of local stakeholders is essential to a program's sustainability. Accurate assessment and documentation of the impact of the program on the lives of participants is also important for developing and maintaining community support.

Appendix: An example of a mother/daughter mentoring program

Goal: To increase girls' persistence and achievement in school by providing girls and their mothers with positive role models who demonstrate the benefits of education.

Objectives:

- To reduce the female dropout rate in primary school.
- To increase the number of girls advancing to secondary school.
- To improve girls' academic performance.
- To improve girls' educational and career aspirations.
- To raise mothers' expectations for their daughters.

Implementing Organization: Local nongovernmental organization.

Description: This program matches girls and their mothers with female mentors from the local community, including businesswomen, university faculty, religious leaders, public officials, and other community leaders. The aim is to provide female role models who demonstrate, through their own lives, the benefits of education. Mentors meet with girls and their mothers once a week to discuss girls' progress in school, help with homework, talk about future aspirations, and develop realistic strategies for achieving goals. Girls visit the workplace of the mentors who are employed, at least once, to gain insight into what is required of that profession and what happens on a daily basis. Girls and their mothers benefit by attending a monthly seminar, given by community leaders or other mentors, on topics that can inspire achievement. A seminar can include presentations about careers, goal setting and achievement, microenterprise, health care, or family life. Mentors meet once a month to exchange information and discuss progress.

Incentives for mentors to participate include certificates of appreciation, publicity in a local newspaper or on radio and television, and recognition at their workplace. As an additional incentive, some employers pay their employees for the time they devote to the program.

Intended Results

Indicator

Decreased dropout among participants

Percent decrease in school dropout

Increased number of participants going to school

Percent increase in secondary enrollment

Increased academic achievement

Percent increase in girls passing primary leaving exam

Increased educational/career aspirations

Percent of girls who report higher levels of education or career aspirations compared to goals upon entering the program

Higher educational expectations of mothers for their daughters' education and career

Percent of mothers reporting higher levels of expectation for daughters' education and career compared to their expectations upon entering the program

Duration of Program: Four years; each cohort of girls and mothers participates for two years.

Target Audience: Twenty girls in grades 4 through 6 and their mothers (or female guardian) matched with 20 mentors.

Criteria for Selection: To be developed in conjunction with representatives of the school, parents, local leaders, and nongovernmental organizations.

Formative Evaluation: The project coordinator makes weekly visits to mentor/protégé meetings, attends all monthly seminars and mentor meetings, and provides feedback to mentors. Internal monitoring and formative evaluation of program administration is conducted quarterly. An external evaluation is completed annually.

Impact Evaluation: Baseline information is collected on girls and mothers entering the mentoring program. Data include girls' academic performance and their educational and career aspirations. In addition, interviews are conducted with mothers to ascertain their expectations for their daughters. Follow-up data are collected upon their completion of the program and again after two years to determine whether the program has had an impact on the lives of girls or their mothers. Girls' academic performance is also tracked, final primary school exam scores are examined, and teachers are interviewed to assess whether performance has improved.

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