



MANDELA
WASHINGTON
FELLOWSHIP
FOR YOUNG AFRICAN LEADERS

Mentorship Toolkit

FOR MENTORS



Photo: Jim Tuttle



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ANNEX I

Mentoring Agreement and Action Plan



1. INTRODUCTION & PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Thank you for your commitment to mentoring a Mandela Washington Fellow. This prestigious program, part of the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), was established by President Obama to support young African leaders as they spur growth and prosperity, strengthen democratic governance, and enhance peace and security across Africa. Your mentorship of these Fellows can help them to reflect on their vision and to plan and achieve their goals as they grow as leaders and professionals.

About the Mandela Washington Fellowship Program

The Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders is the flagship program of President Obama's Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) that empowers young people through academic coursework, leadership training, and networking. Mandela Washington Fellows are sub-Saharan Africa's most promising young leaders ages 25 to 35. The Fellows have established records of accomplishment in promoting innovation and positive change in their institutions, communities, and countries. Each year, the Fellowship brings a new cohort of these leaders to the United States for six weeks of leadership training in four tracks: Business & Entrepreneurship, Civic Leadership, Public Management, and Energy.

About the Mentorship Program

After Mandela Washington Fellows return home after six weeks of training in the U.S., Fellows are eligible to apply for a professional mentorship along with other USAID-funded professional development opportunities implemented by IREX, such as professional practicums and networking opportunities. Mentorships are designed to support Fellows with individualized leadership development, which will provide opportunities for professional guidance and growth to help them expand their networks and achieve their goals.



Mentorships last for an initial period of six months, and Fellows are matched with either virtual mentors or in person mentors located in their own country.

Program Guidelines

Mentorship is not something to be taken lightly, as a mentoring relationship can have a powerful impact on a young leader. Developing a successful mentoring relationship requires commitment, open communication, and a dynamic and flexible attitude. When starting a mentorship, it is important that you and your mentee understand your roles and expectations so that your mentee can achieve their professional development needs, and so that both parties can benefit and grow from the relationship.

To that end, IREX asks you and your mentee to complete and sign a [Mentorship Agreement](#) prior to the start of the mentorship. Included in this agreement is a [confidentiality clause](#) that you and your mentee must also sign and abide by to ensure that you are comfortable being open and honest with each other.

While you and your mentee will decide when you will meet, how often, and via what medium (virtually or in person), IREX asks that both parties commit to meeting a minimum of once a month over the course of six months, and more often if your schedules allow. You and your mentee can determine at the end of six months if you would like to continue the relationship. It is important for both parties to fulfill their commitments to meet or to give advance notice if they will need to reschedule a meeting.

After the first month of the mentorship, an IREX staff member will contact both you and your mentee to discuss successes, concerns, or challenges and ensure that the remainder of the mentorship is a success. You should feel free to contact IREX at any time with questions or concerns, and you can find [IREX's Contact Information](#) at the end of this toolkit.

2. GETTING STARTED & TOOLS TO GUIDE THE MENTORSHIP

How do I get started?

An IREX staff member will introduce you to your mentee via email. Your mentee will be instructed to send you his/her Leadership Development Plan (LDP), which is explained below, after this introduction. If you do not receive the LDP, please request it from your mentee so that you can review the document prior to your first meeting. Once this introduction is made, you and your mentee should schedule your first meeting, either by phone/Skype or in person. You should also each complete the [Mentoring Agreement](#) and if possible, finalize and sign it prior to your first meeting so that you both have clear expectations about the mentorship.

Before meeting with your mentee for the first time, think about what you would like to achieve through the mentoring relationship and what goals you would like to establish for both yourself and your mentee. These goals could include developing your leadership skills, providing the mentee with advice you wish you had had at their professional level, or learning more about the mentee's country, to name a few. By thinking about your goals prior to meeting, you will be ready to discuss and complete the Mentorship Agreement and assist your mentee with articulating their own goals.

During your first meeting, you should review your mentee's LDP with him/her and use it to complete the mentorship [Action Plan](#). You should also discuss how you and your mentee will communicate moving forward (frequency, communication tools, etc.). Finally, you should set guidelines for discussions that may touch upon sensitive subjects such as gender, race, and ethnicity (see [Section 4](#) for more information).

Mentoring Agreement and Action Plan

The Mentoring Agreement and Action Plan is a tool that you and your mentee should complete at the start of the mentorship to guide your time together and establish expectations. The tool guides you and your mentee to discuss and put in writing: your expectations and responsibilities during the mentorship, your goals, and a notional meeting schedule. Though these elements could change as your relationship evolves, the tool will provide you and your mentee with a framework for the mentorship experience.

The Action Plan will guide you and your mentee to reflect upon and write down the activities and goals you would like to complete during each meeting. You can revisit and modify this Action Plan as needed throughout the mentorship.

Supporting Leadership Development

As noted above, your mentee will have completed a Leadership Development Plan (LDP) prior to beginning of the mentorship. The LDP is a tool that was developed specifically for the Mandela Washington Fellowship experience, which Fellows use to plan and document their professional growth and development during their Fellowship year. It is also a document that you should both use to guide your mentorship. Though your mentee will have completed the LDP prior to starting the mentorship, it is a living document that can evolve throughout the next phase of their career as the Fellow's networks grow and they reach new professional milestones. You can view the LDP template on IREX's website [here](#).

Please review the mentorship timeline below for a summary of key milestones and steps during the mentoring program.

TIMELINE AND KEY MILESTONES DURING THE MENTORSHIP

Before Meeting 1	Complete and Sign Mentoring Agreement with mentee; review mentee's Leadership Development Plan
Meeting 1	Review Leadership Development Plan with mentee to inform completion of the Action Plan and a discussion of the activities you will focus on during the mentorship
After 1 month	IREX Regional Office will check in with mentor and mentee
Meeting 2	Objective TBD according to Action Plan
Meeting 3	Objective TBD according to Action Plan
After 3 months	Review goals with mentee and assess progress of the mentorship; IREX regional office will check in with mentor and mentee at this time
Meeting 4	Objective TBD according to Action Plan
Meeting 5	Objective TBD according to Action Plan
Meeting 6	Objective TBD according to Action Plan
After 6 months	Mentor and mentee complete Exit Surveys to provide feedback on the mentorship and determine if they would like to continue the relationship

Use the LDP as a starting point for your discussions

The LDP guides Fellows to examine their leadership style and values, articulate their vision, and to plan their short and long-term professional goals. Below are some suggestions for discussion topics based on the LDP:

- **Leadership Strengths:** The LDP includes goal-setting exercises and a reflection on the mentee's personal strengths and assets. Help your mentee to identify their key strengths and discuss how to use these strengths to become a more effective leader. The book *Strengths Based Leadership* by Tom Rath and Barry Conchie (Gallup Press, 2009) provides strengths assessment tools and a roadmap for using these strengths to become a better leader.
- **Servant Leadership:** Discuss "Servant Leadership" (see page 12 of the LDP) and what characteristics you think are most important in a servant leader. (For more information about Servant Leadership, see "What is Servant Leadership? <https://greenleaf.org/what-is-servant-leadership/>)
- **Setting goals:** Talk about the short and long-term goals identified in the LDP and how they will help your mentee create change as a leader. Based on your own experience, are these goals and objectives realistic, measurable, and achievable? If not, how can the mentee modify them?
- **Networking and developing contacts:** Discuss tips and techniques for how your mentee can expand their network, and how to successfully develop and maintain strategic relationships to meet their goals.

Use the LDP as a guide to chart your mentee's progress during the mentorship

Mandela Washington Fellows will revisit the LDP in June of 2017. You should revisit the LDP with your mentee several times throughout the course of the mentorship, to check in on their goals, discuss if and how your mentee's vision and priorities have changed over time, and to evaluate how he/she has grown professionally over time.

During your first meeting, please set aside some time to review the LDP with your mentee and discuss what goals may be achieved through the mentorship. The LDP will provide a good starting point for questions about whether the mentee has the relevant skills and contacts to achieve their vision. Reference the mentee's goals on a regular basis so that he/she can reflect on progress made towards meeting their professional development goals.



Expectations and Role of a Mentor

During the Mandela Washington Fellowship mentorship program, mentors are expected to commit to meeting with Fellows at least once a month for six months, either virtually or in person. While Fellows are expected to respect the time and boundaries of mentors, IREX also asks mentors to respond to your mentee's emails or calls in a timely manner. If you are unable to fulfill your obligations as a mentor, please let both your mentee and IREX know, so that IREX can identify another mentor for the Fellow if possible.

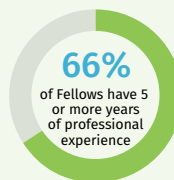
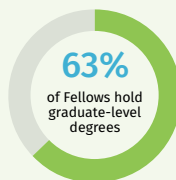
There are many different roles that you might find yourself playing as a mentor over the course of the mentoring relationship, in the short and long-term. Prior to meeting with your mentee for the first time, it might be helpful to think about what roles you are best suited for and how you could prepare yourself for other roles you do not feel as confident about. In general, characteristics of successful mentors often include:

- **Acceptance** of the mentee, regardless of their opinions or background
- **Empathy** and a willingness to listen
- **Openness** to new ideas
- **Enthusiasm** and a motivating energy
- **Patience** when things do not go as planned
- **Humor** in the face of inevitable bumps in the road
- **Trustworthiness** to keep the mentee's confidence
- **Inspiring confidence** in the mentee to take initiative

Developing a successful mentor-mentee relationship is based on balancing a less formal tone that is open and encouraging with a more formal professional relationship. When you understand your mentee's professional goals, you can look for and offer your mentee opportunities to develop professionally. Please see some [sample activities](#) for inspiration, but also consult with your mentee to see what would be most helpful for him/her in order to achieve the goals in the Mentorship Agreement. These activities can range from career development seminars, to training activities, to networking events, and so on. You can also use the mentee's current projects as the basis of your discussions. The Action Plan is another opportunity to brainstorm a schedule of activities early on in the relationship so that your meetings can be as productive as possible.

ABOUT THE MANDELA WASHINGTON FELLOWS

Fellows are educated, experienced, and positioned to make a difference in their communities





“My mentor helped me to redirect my vision, and made me realize exactly how I can use my leadership to change my community.”

*Ramadhan Ndiga, Mandela
Washington Fellow from Kenya*

Expectations and Roles of Mentees and IREX

IREX expects that your mentee will take full advantage of opportunities provided during the mentorship, while maintaining professional boundaries and respecting your time and busy schedule. Some Fellows might be uncomfortable at the start of a mentorship because the relationship is new or they have perhaps never been mentored in the past, so it is helpful to encourage your mentee to be open about their expectations and the guidance they hope you will provide during the mentorship.

Your mentee should be clear with you about the best way to communicate on a regular basis, since internet is not reliable in some countries where Fellows reside. Your mentee should also take the lead on scheduling regular meetings with you, allowing flexibility depending on your schedule, and should be proactive about discussing their expectations and goals for the mentorship. IREX encourages Fellows to be proactive and persistent in solving any challenges that might arise during the mentorship, but also encourages mentors and mentees to reach out to IREX if they have questions or concerns.

IREX also asks mentees to come prepared for each scheduled meeting with a discussion topic and their goals for the meeting. Unless there is an emergency, your mentee should provide at least 24 hours notice if they are unable to meet at the scheduled time—IREX asks you to do the same for your mentee.

IREX is available throughout the mentorship to address any concerns or questions that you or your mentee might have, and will check in with you and your mentee periodically. IREX is also available to discuss other opportunities for partnership through the Mandela Washington Fellowship program and will invite mentors to participate in events or other program opportunities when possible, such as Africa-based Regional Conferences. Please do not hesitate to contact the relevant [IREX Regional Office](#) at any time with questions or concerns.

What do I do if the mentorship is not working?

IREX hopes that you and your mentee will have a productive and long-lasting relationship. If, however, you and your mentee are having difficulty making the mentorship work, **please contact IREX immediately**. IREX will work with both mentor and mentee to try and remedy the relationship. The following are some possible circumstances that, if they arise, we urge you to reach out to IREX as soon as possible:

- Prior to the completion of the six months, both mentor and mentee agree that the goals both parties had at the outset of the mentorship have already been met and there is no need to continue the mentorship.
- Either the mentor or mentee is consistently unresponsive within the first 1-2 months of the mentorship and/or the mentor or mentee misses two or more scheduled meetings without sufficient justification.
- The mentor and mentee have irreconcilable differences due to [inappropriate behavior](#).
- Either the mentor or mentee has a change in their professional/personal priorities or commitments that prevents the continuation of the mentorship, such as a physical relocation, family emergency, or new job with increased demands on the mentor/mentee's time.

In the event that one of the issues enumerated above are beyond repair, IREX may decide to end the mentorship early in consultation with the mentor or mentee as appropriate.

3. TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR MENTEE

Providing Feedback

Giving and receiving feedback are important aspects of the mentorship experience. While you will provide feedback during the mentorship, you may also want to encourage your mentee to provide you with feedback at critical junctures in the mentorship so that you can have the opportunity to learn and improve your mentorship skills as well. Below are some tips on providing feedback throughout your mentorship, adapted from the Institute for Clinical Research Education Mentoring Resources.¹

Types of Feedback

- **Positive** – One role of a mentor is to be a motivator. When your mentee accomplishes something or improves one of their skills, you should congratulate them and give them feedback on what they did well.
- **Constructive** – Feedback should never be “negative.” Rather, if you see room for improvement in something your mentee is working on, you should give them feedback on what they could do better—not on what they did wrong. It can also be helpful to give constructive feedback along with some positive feedback so your mentee does not feel demoralized—but the positive feedback should not overshadow the constructive so that the mentee ignores the advice.

Frequency of Feedback

- Feedback should happen consistently as your mentee will be working on developing their skills and projects throughout the course of the mentorship. That does not mean that you have to give them a grade at every meeting, but rather that you should integrate positive and constructive feedback into your conversations, and help them articulate their progress in meaningful ways.
- In the mentorship Action Plan, you should designate specific meetings to have larger discussions about your mutual progress so far and to reflect back on the mentorship. These are also opportunities for the mentee to provide you with feedback so you can work on your own skills as a mentor. Since the mentee may be reluctant to give you feedback outside of an official, scheduled time, creating that space for them to do so is important. Note that there may be cultural or gender-based norms around hierarchical relationships that make this exercise difficult for one or both of you, but it is a leadership skill that improves with practice. Embrace it!

¹ Institute for Clinical Research Education Mentoring Resources, University of Pittsburgh. *Giving and Receiving Feedback*. n.d. <http://www.icre.pitt.edu/mentoring/feedback.html> (accessed September 23, 2015).

Tips for **GIVING** Effective Feedback

- **Trust** – Having a trusting and open relationship with your mentee is necessary for giving and receiving feedback. When you feel comfortable with each other, it will be easier to have these discussions, particularly when giving constructive feedback.
- **Specificity** – Be specific when giving both positive and constructive feedback. If your mentee wrote an excellent proposal for their project, point out the aspects of that proposal that are particularly well-executed so that the mentee knows what to repeat next time. Similarly, if your mentee's proposal is not very persuasive, discuss the aspects of it that need work and give your mentee advice on how to improve.
- **Participation** – When giving advice, also make sure you ask the mentee how he or she thinks something could be improved so that they are an active participant in their learning.
- **Goals** – Refer back to the goals in the Mentorship Agreement when giving feedback so that the mentee can understand how the work he/she is doing contributes to their ultimate goals.
- **Simplicity** – Do not overwhelm the mentee with a laundry list of improvements—keep it simple while still being specific. If there are many points you want to discuss, break up the feedback across multiple meetings.
- **Listening** – If your mentee is neglecting their work or any assignments you have asked them to complete, lend a sympathetic ear and listen to their reasons. There may be deeper issues at play and the work may have to come second to whatever else is going on in their life.

Tips for **RECEIVING** Feedback

As noted previously, when filling out the Action Plan, you should identify a mid-point during the course of the mentorship at which you and your mentee can review his/her original goals and reflect on both the progress made as well as the goals for the remainder of the mentorship. IREX recommends that some of this time be used as an opportunity for the mentee to provide you with feedback. If the mentee giving feedback is not included as an activity from the outset, he/she may be reluctant to offer it up.

The following are four tips for how to receive feedback in a way that will help your mentee be comfortable:

- **Listen** quietly and try not to interrupt so the mentee can finish their thought.
- **Paraphrase** back to the mentee what you heard so you can be sure that you understand.
- **Ask questions** if you need further clarification.
- **Thank your mentee** for the feedback—it is important that the mentee receives positive reinforcement when giving feedback so that they are comfortable doing it in the future.

Active Listening

Even when not receiving feedback, active listening is important. By listening to your mentee and *showing* that you are listening, you will gain your mentee's trust, show that you respect what your mentee has to say, and—most importantly—learn about your mentee and deepen your relationship. Active listening, however, is more difficult than it sounds. Here are some tips for improving active listening skills:




- **Face the speaker** at a professional distance (approximately an arm's length). Even when sitting next to your mentee, change your position in your seat so that you are actually facing him or her.
- **Look at the speaker.** Even if you are facing the speaker, you may be distracted by activity in the place you are meeting or—more likely—by your phone or computer. Put the technology away if possible and focus your attention on your mentee.
- **Acknowledge** what the mentee is saying by nodding, saying “yes,” and so on so the mentee knows that you are engaged.
- **Paraphrase** what the mentee is saying. By repeating back to him/her what you have heard, you will ensure your own understanding and confirm to the mentee that you were listening.
- **Ask questions** about what the mentee is saying. This will help clarify the conversation for both of you and also demonstrate your interest.
- **Summarize** the conversation when it is over. This will help both of you understand the conclusion reached and make sure you are on the same page.

Scheduling Meetings with your Mentee

Working to schedule meetings, whether virtual or in person, between two busy individuals can be challenging at times. During your initial meeting with your mentee, discuss the best and most reliable ways for both of you to communicate with each other. Be sure to discuss potential busy times over the course of the six month mentorship as well as what days or times are best for each of you. In some cases, it might be best to schedule all six meetings up front, leaving room for flexibility should schedules change. As mentioned earlier in this toolkit, both you and your mentee should try to provide 24 hours notice if you will need to reschedule a meeting.

Negotiating Virtual Mentorships

Virtual mentorships can take place via a variety of media: email, phone calls, video conferences, Skype, and texting apps like WhatsApp. Mentors working virtually with their mentees will have to discuss which media the mentee has available to them and would work best for conducting their meetings. For example, you may want to Skype once a month but exchange emails once a week. A critical issue to discuss as well is the reliability of the mentee's Internet and/or how often they are online. You may also wish to establish a protocol for times when you have set a meeting and one party's Internet is not working.



**78% of
MENTORSHIPS
are VIRTUAL**

- **Work to build trust with your mentee:** It is often more difficult to build trust and establish a relationship virtually without the benefit of face-to-face interaction. Make an effort to build trust with your mentee by sharing information about yourself and making small talk. Try to meet frequently with your mentee early in the relationship, and use videoconferencing whenever possible.
- **Awareness of Differences:** If your mentee is from another culture or gender, be aware of cross-cultural and gender-based differences that might influence your conversations or both parties' perceptions of the relationship. Please see the section on [Negotiating Differences](#) for tips.
- **Telephone Manner:** Executive Coach Nicola Shearer on her website [LittleSpringtime.com](#) notes that many people act differently on the phone or on Skype than they do in person². This may be particularly true for mentors or mentees who did not grow up around technology and are therefore somewhat less comfortable with the medium. Both mentor and mentee should make an effort to act as naturally as possible even if it is not their first instinct. In addition, Shearer observes that natural pauses in conversation occur and, while in person these can clearly indicate someone collecting their thoughts, they can feel uncomfortable over the phone or Skype.
- **Written Communication:** Because it is harder to get in touch when mentor and mentee are not physically close, you should take advantage of email and texting to communicate thoughts and questions so that you do not forget them and so you can keep track of what you want to discuss at the next meeting. Similarly, email and texting can be good ways for you to motivate your mentee and provide positive feedback.
- **Active Listening:** Active listening is an important tool for mentoring. It is particularly critical for virtual mentorships. When you are already at the computer for the meeting, it can be tempting to quickly check your email or engage in other online activities. Remember, however, that typing on a keyboard can be heard on the other end of the call, so please give your mentee your undivided attention.²

A virtual mentorship can be just as rewarding as an in person one. It is up to the mentor, however, to guide the mentee in establishing protocols for managing the virtual relationship and ensuring that both parties feel comfortable using the media at their disposal.

² (Shearer 2013)

4. NEGOTIATING DIFFERENCES AND OTHER SENSITIVITIES DURING THE MENTORSHIP

When beginning a mentorship, it is important to be aware of the similarities and differences between you and your mentee. These similarities or differences could be in location, age, culture, gender, or other identities. By considering potential sensitivities as well as differences in culture and gender up front, many pitfalls and miscommunications can be avoided later on in the mentoring relationship.

Confidentiality

When you sign the Mentorship Agreement, you and your mentee are agreeing to keep each other's confidence. That means that you will not disclose conversations you have together with outside parties unless you mutually agree to do so. It is important that you reinforce this trust with your mentee by asking their permission when you, for example, wish to discuss the mentee's current initiative with a contact who might be of use. By asking permission, you will reassure your mentee that you only want to help them and that you have no intentions of appropriating their ideas or work for you or someone else's benefit. IREX advises that you discuss confidentiality with your mentee at the beginning of the relationship, so that the mentee feels they can speak openly and honestly with you. In extreme circumstances, such as [sexual harassment](#), confidentiality does not apply.

Negotiating Differences

While you may both belong to similar professions, you and your mentee's backgrounds may be very different. These differences should not be a point of friction but rather seen as an opportunity for both parties to learn from each other. The mentor and mentee must be careful not to engage in discrimination (even unintentionally) based on an individual's gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or other factors.³

Race and Ethnicity

Mentors should be mindful of differences in and assumptions about race or ethnicity, and how these differences and assumptions might influence a relationship with their mentee. You should consider developing a strategy with your mentee early in the mentoring relationship on how to handle the issue, either to openly discuss race or to avoid such discussions. Mentors should be aware of their own biases and stereotypes and try to understand the experience of their mentee.

³ For more information on discrimination: <http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/index.cfm>

Gender

Like cross-cultural mentorships, the diverse spectrum of gender identities, roles, and expectations require the mentor and mentee to be open and honest about their differences and assumptions. But cross-gender mentorships have additional considerations that should be acknowledged and discussed. Sonja Feist-Price in the *Journal of Rehabilitation* cites Kram (1985) in her presentation of five main complexities in cross-gender relationships, four of which are relevant and adapted below, along with suggestions solutions for navigating these complexities. Feist-Price's article "[Cross-Gender Mentoring Relationships: Critical Issues](#)" provides more information about dealing with these complexities.

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- **Collusion in Stereotypical Roles** – When men and women enter into new roles (such as mentors/mentees), they may be more likely to revert to traditional stereotypes to accommodate for the discomfort they feel. For example, if the woman is the mentor and the man is the mentee, this may result in the man resisting his mentor's advice and/or the woman feeling more timid about giving advice to her mentee.

Suggested Solution: By simply acknowledging the tendency to slip into stereotypes out of discomfort, men and women are more likely to resist the urge to do so.

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- **Limitations in Role Modeling** – One of the key roles of a mentor is to be a role model. But a male mentee will face different opportunities and obstacles than his female mentor as will a female mentee with a male mentor. Women in particular face unique challenges that a male mentor may not fully understand, such as taking maternity leave, and gender non-conforming individuals are at the highest risk of gender-based discrimination and harassment.

Suggested Solution: Mentors should ask their mentees to be open about what kind of gender-specific challenges they encounter professionally. Mentors should provide advice to the best of their ability, but then reach out to their own networks for assistance if they cannot help in any given situation.

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- **Public Scrutiny** – For mentorships that take place in person, there may be a reluctance to interact socially in public spaces out of fear of gossip or judgment. Further, a man and woman socializing alone together may be looked down upon in certain cultures, which can make it more difficult for the mentor and mentee to forge a deep bond.⁴

Suggested Solution: If the mentorship is in person, the mentor and mentee should have a conversation early on about how they will meet and where. You should be honest about any reservations you might have about appearing in public together and, if that is going to be a problem, arrange to meet at a private office or virtually instead.

Being aware of and anticipating these potential complications will help make a cross-gender mentorship successful. It is important that the mentor and mentee recognize these issues and work together to get past them.

⁴ (Feist-Price 1994)

Sexual Harassment

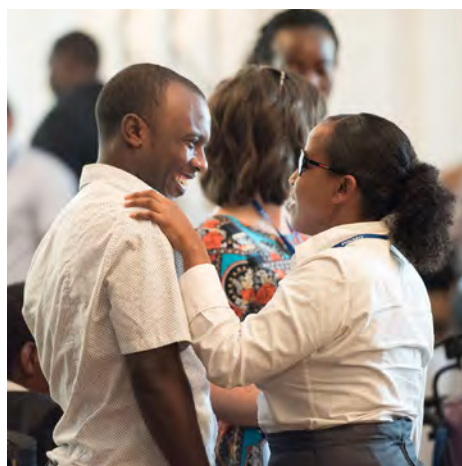
The Mandela Washington Fellowship program aims to ensure gender equality, and empowers all Fellows, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation, with support to achieve their leadership and professional aspirations and capabilities. The belief that men, women, and gender non-conforming individuals should enjoy equal opportunity and equal protection under the law and in practice is foundational to the Fellowship as well as the mentorship program.

As in other professional environments, it is therefore inappropriate for the relationship between the mentor and mentee to be of an intimate or sexual nature. As the mentor, you should be aware that attempting to establish an intimate relationship with your mentee can be viewed as an abuse of power and is unacceptable. Likewise, if your mentee expresses a desire for or attempts to engage in an intimate relationship with you, you should feel empowered to ask them to stop immediately.

Sexual harassment in any form will not be tolerated and includes nonverbal, verbal, and physical forms of sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or creating a hostile or offensive mentorship environment (for example, through inappropriate jokes, images, or references to a person's sex).⁵ It can also occur over email, text message, and other digital communications. IREX expects mentors to adhere to professional standards of conduct and to provide the Mandela Washington Fellow with a mentorship experience free from discrimination and/or sexual harassment. IREX also expects that Mandela Washington Fellows will adhere to these standards.

Culture

Open and honest communication is the key to having a successful cross-cultural mentorship. The mentor and mentee may be from different ages, language groups, ethnicities, countries, regions, or even continents. But rather than ignore these differences, it is important for the mentor and mentee to discuss any assumptions or questions they might have about each other from the outset in order to prevent future misunderstandings. Culture moreover does not simply mean differences of language, race, or nationality—rather it is a difference in the way the mentor and mentee view the world. The mentor and mentee need to have a certain amount of self-awareness of these differences before entering into the relationship so that they can discuss them openly.



⁵ For more information on sexual harassment: http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/sexual_harassment.cfm

Karine Mangion of Regent's University London emphasizes the need for mentors and mentees from different cultures to be clear about how they best communicate. She says that, "Communication patterns may result in irritation, frustration and misunderstandings when they are overlooked or overgeneralized. Therefore, communication patterns should be recognized, analyzed and understood like a code with its own signification." (Mangion 2012) Her paper "[Cross Cultural Coaching and Mentoring in International Organizations](#)" provides more information on different kinds of communication patterns.

While this exploration of differences may not be initially comfortable, it is the mentor's responsibility to facilitate the discussion. Both mentor and mentee are encouraged to ask questions about each other's cultures, such as diverging norms regarding gender, personal space, hierarchy, punctuality, etiquette, and family. In addition to asking questions and sharing openly, it is equally as critical to be an active listener.

By acknowledging cultural differences, particularly those governing styles of communicating effectively, and being open to learning from each other, the mentor and mentee can get far more out of the mentorship than they would have if they attempted to pretend that these differences did not exist.

5. EFFECTIVE CLOSURE OF THE MENTORSHIP

On the end date set out in the Mentoring Agreement, you should meet with your mentee to discuss the mentorship and decide whether or not to continue even after the formal mentorship has ended. The closure date should be a celebration of your time together and an opportunity to discuss the mentorship in a positive, fun way. Please think about ways you can honor the progress your mentee has made, such as creating a certificate or taking them out to dinner.

At the closure of the mentorship, the relevant IREX Regional team will send you an **exit survey** in order to get your feedback about the program and for IREX and USAID to learn ways to improve the mentorship program in the following years.

6. IREX CONTACT INFORMATION

Your main point of contact throughout the mentorship will be the relevant IREX Regional Office. This should be **the Regional Office for the country that your mentee is from**. Please find the contact information for these offices below as well as a chart outlining what region each country falls into. If you have any additional questions, please email MWFAumni@irex.org.

East Africa Regional Office

(Located in Nairobi, Kenya)

Mitra Khaleghian

East Africa Regional Manager

mwfeastafrica@irex.org

Ph: +254 (20) 3871700

IREX's local implementing partner in East Africa is VSO International.

Southern Africa Office

(Located in Pretoria, South Africa)

Marcia Small

Southern Africa Regional Manager

mwfsouthernafrica@irex.org

Ph: +27 11 318 1012

IREX's local implementing partner in Southern Africa is Southern Africa Trust.

West Africa Regional Office

(Located in Accra, Ghana)

Aissatou Diajhate

West Africa Regional Manager

mwfwestafrica@irex.org

Ph: +233 302 542 010

IREX's local implementing partner in West Africa is WACSI, the West Africa Civil Society Institute.

West Africa

Benin
Burkina Faso
Cameroon
Cape Verde
Chad
Cote D'Ivoire
Equatorial Guinea
Gabon
Gambia
Ghana
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Liberia
Mali
Mauritania
Niger
Nigeria
Sao Tome and Principe
Senegal
Sierra Leone
Togo

East Africa

Burundi
Central African Republic
Congo
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Djibouti
Eritrea
Ethiopia
Kenya
Rwanda
Somalia
South Sudan
Sudan
Tanzania
Uganda

Southern Africa

Angola
Botswana
Comoros
Lesotho
Madagascar
Malawi
Mauritius
Mozambique
Namibia
Seychelles
South Africa
Swaziland
Zambia
Zimbabwe

7. SOURCES OF ASSISTANCE AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

There are many resources to help you over the course of the mentorship, including the bibliography. For more links to free online resources and a bibliography of helpful reading, please refer to some [Helpful Resources and Suggested Activities for Mentoring](#) on IREX's website. Your own company or organization may also have further mentoring resources, particularly if they have their own mentoring program. Reaching out to your professional community may give you access to additional resources. Finally, if you have any questions about the mentorship or require further assistance, please email IREX at MWFAumni@irex.org.

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MANDELA WASHINGTON FELLOWSHIP FOR YOUNG AFRICAN LEADERS



Mentoring Agreement and Action Plan

MENTOR INFORMATION

Name:

Title:

Organization:

Business Address:

Phone Number: Email Address:

MENTEE INFORMATION

Name:

Home Country:

Fellowship Track:

Address:

Phone Number: Email Address:

EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Both the Mentor and Mentee should outline their expectations for the mentorship and outline any additional responsibilities he/she will be personally accountable for. Examples are provided below.

The **Mentor** expects his/her Mentee to (e.g. be on time, be open to trying new things, provide regular feedback about the relationship):

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The **Mentor** additionally takes responsibility for (e.g. training his/her Mentee in job negotiation skills, improving his/her Mentee's elevator pitch):

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The **Mentee** expects his/her Mentor to (e.g. introduce him/her to three new contacts, work with him/her on his/her public speaking skills, take him/her to a networking event)

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The **Mentee** additionally takes responsibility for (e.g. networking with one new person every week, working on his/her resume to reflect discussions with the Mentor):

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GOALS

Both the Mentor and Mentee should commit to at least three goals to be accomplished by the end of the mentorship. Examples are provided.

The **Mentor's** goals include (e.g. successfully coaching his/her Mentee on how to conduct a job interview, refining his/her personal leadership style):

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The **Mentee's** goals include (e.g. applying to five jobs, making twenty new professional contacts):

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MEETING SCHEDULE

The Mentor and Mentee should agree to a frequency of meetings as well as a start date for the mentorship, and a date on which the Mentor and Mentee will evaluate whether to continue the relationship. While the meeting (which could be virtual or in-person) does not have to occur at the same time/day on each occurrence, it should happen with a certain frequency (e.g. bi-weekly, phone calls weekly and in person monthly). IREX asks that both commit to meeting for a minimum of 6 times over the course of the mentorship. Each meeting should last no less than 1 hour in order for it to be productive. It is highly encouraged that mentors and mentees meet more often if their schedules allow.

Mentor and Mentee will meet: Starting / /

ACTION PLAN

IREX has provided a guide on [Helpful Resources and Suggested Activities for Mentoring](#) for Mentoring on IREX's website, which provides a number of ideas for discussions, training, and activities the mentor and mentee can/should engage in during the mentorship. Using this handout along with your stated goals, please design an action plan for the mentorship using the attached [guide](#) (if you plan to meet more than 6 times, please copy the page and reuse as needed).

IREX will check in with both mentor and mentee after the second meeting to address any initial concerns and ensure that the rest of the mentorship is a success. In addition, at the closure of the mentorship, the mentor and mentee will be asked to complete an exit survey in order to get your feedback about the program and for IREX to learn ways to improve the mentorship program for future Fellows. IREX appreciates your participation in this exit survey.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information between the Mentee and the Mentor shall be confidential and only shared with outside parties if both agree.

Mentor Signature

Date

Mentee Signature

Date

ACTION PLAN

	Activity	Goal	Assignment for Next Meeting
<i>Meeting Example</i>	<i>Resume Workshop</i>	<i>The mentee has a sector-specific resume that highlights his/her experience and expertise</i>	<i>The mentee will develop a 2-minute elevator pitch</i>
Meeting 1	Review LDP and Complete Action Plan		
Meeting 2			
Meeting 3			
Meeting 4			
Meeting 5			
Meeting 6			



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