



# together

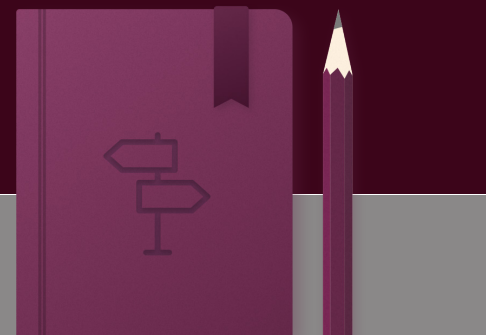
A UN MENTORING PROGRAMME

## Mentor Handbook

**Get help with your UN mentorship journey.**

This handbook offers tips and practical guidance for mentors.

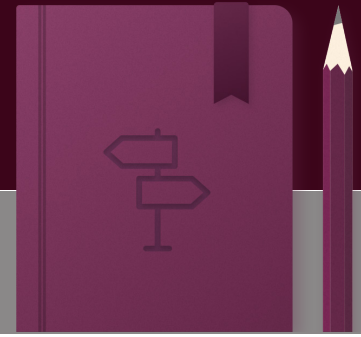




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## Introduction

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Dear mentor,

Welcome to **Together: a UN Mentoring Programme** and congratulations on your new role as a mentor.

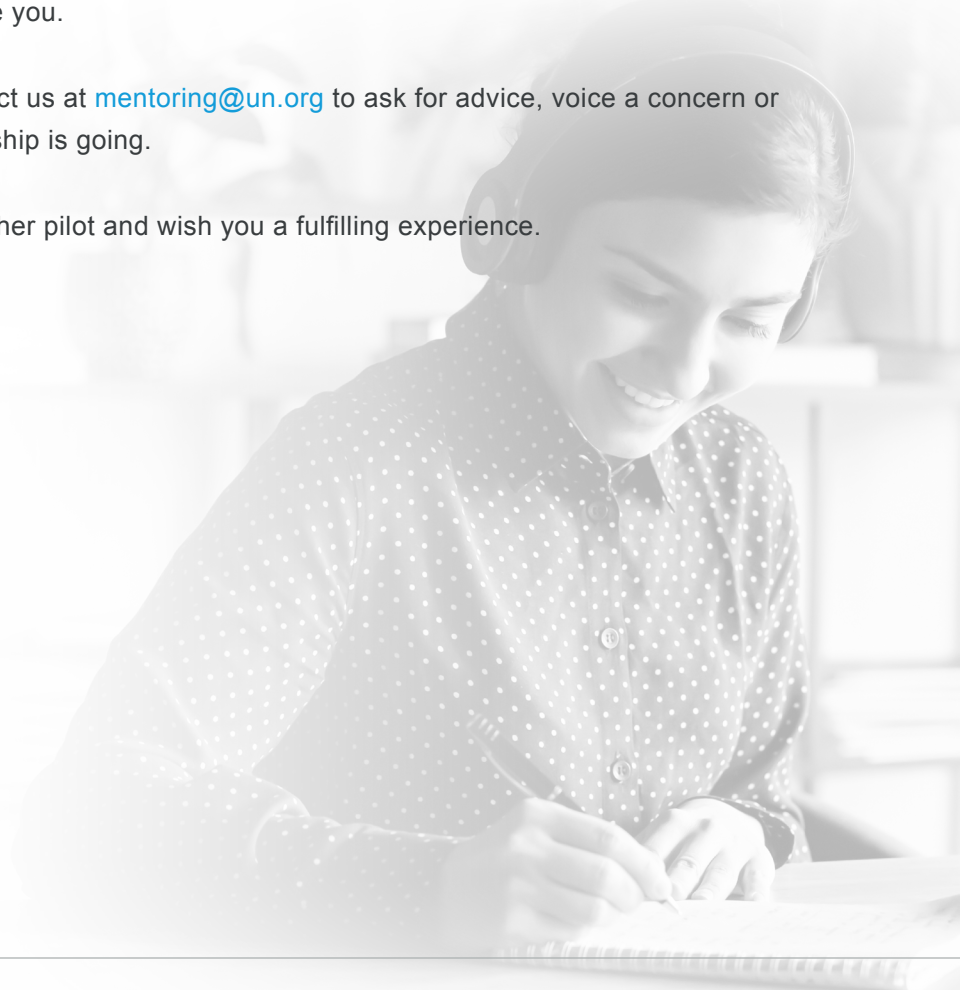
This handbook provides an overview on how to approach your participation in the Together pilot. We recommend you review it before the first meeting with your mentee and revisit it as often as you wish. We hope it can help you navigate the mentoring relationship in a structured and effective manner.

You can also find resources on the Together platform including proposed agendas for mentoring sessions and other resources to prepare and inspire you.

At any point of the process, you can contact us at [mentoring@un.org](mailto:mentoring@un.org) to ask for advice, voice a concern or simply tell us how your mentoring relationship is going.

We thank you for being a part of the Together pilot and wish you a fulfilling experience.

Together Team





# 1 Mentoring Overview

## 1.1 Benefits for mentors

Mentoring is a relationship between two people aimed at professional development. It is based on mutual respect, trust and integrity.

Why is mentoring important? Relationships drive growth, motivation and inspiration in an organization. Mentoring relationships are proven to improve productivity, staff engagement and retention.

And connecting with mentees and building these relationships can be a fulfilling part of one's career. Some benefits we hope you will gain from this pilot include:

- Gain new insights and perspectives
- Develop your management skills
- Reflect on your accomplishments
- Reduce isolation during COVID-19
- Increase your awareness of talent in the Organization



## 1.2 What Mentoring Is and Is Not

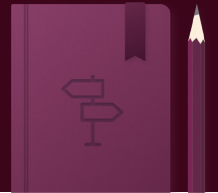
It is important to understand what constitutes a mentoring relationship.

### Mentoring Is...

- **Development tool** — a mentoring relationship can help you understand more about the Organization and what you want out of your career.
- **Knowledge-sharing opportunity** — mentoring facilitates the flow of information and ideas among staff in different departments and duty stations.
- **Organizational culture support** — mentoring can help staff better understand the Organization's cultural norms, some of which are not captured in written policies and rules.
- **Candid and Specific** — a good mentoring relationship provides honest and specific feedback and a route to growth.

### Mentoring Is Not...

- **Replacement for formal development** — Mentoring cannot take the place of formal training but can augment it.
- **Management replacement** — A mentor should not take on the role or responsibilities of a mentee's manager.
- **A guaranteed promotion** — A mentoring relationship provides no assurance of a promotion. However, both parties may develop competencies and skills that improve overall job performance.
- **Personal counselling** — It is best to seek help on personal issues from a life coach or mental health professional.



## 1.3 Mentoring and Coaching: What's the Difference?

Mentoring and coaching differ in their objectives, impact, and duration.

### Mentoring

- Tends to focus on an individual's overall career goals and aspirations
- Mutually benefits the mentor and mentee.
- Formal mentoring period may be finite, but the relationship may continue

### Coaching

- Assesses and improves an individual's performance in a particular area.
- Benefits the coachee more than the coach
- Often has a time-bound relationship defined to meet specific goals

## 1.4 Cornerstones of Mentoring Relationships

### Self-reflection



Some important traits of a mentor include empathy, curiosity, authenticity and the ability to connect and impart trust. Research shows that these are more important than the professional skills a mentor may have. Reflect on how you display or convey these traits in your relationships and how you might use them in mentoring.

### Building Trust



**Trust is a cornerstone of effective mentoring relationships.** As a mentor in a four-month programme, remember that your mentee will need to trust you rather quickly in order to accomplish their goals. Everyone has a different trust profile. Some of us trust people quickly and others take longer, withholding trust until the other person has proven trustworthy. Keep this in mind as you get to know your mentee.

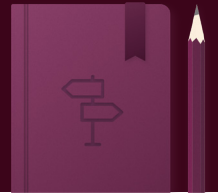
There are actions that erode trust in a mentoring relationship. These may include:

- Cancelling meetings for more important priorities
- Lack of preparedness
- Lack of follow-through on planned actions
- Breaches of confidentiality
- Impatient or unfocused listening

### Confidentiality



Personal and professional information divulged during a mentoring relationship may be confidential. It is expected that both parties not disclose such information to anyone else unless both mentor and mentee agree otherwise.



## 2 Getting Started

Some mentees may know just what they want to discuss from the first meeting. Some may need more encouragement to open up. Some mentees can be keen on more structured meetings and have a detailed plan while others prefer more spontaneity.

There is no right mentoring formula. All of these approaches and preferences are okay! Aim to simply get to one another at first and communicate expectations and preferences. Together you will figure out what works best for both of you.

Also, keep in mind that if you've been a mentor before, the way you communicated last time may not work this time. Many factors influence communication in a mentoring relationship including interpersonal chemistry, years of experience in the Organization, one's cultural background and one's personality type, to name a few.

For both first-time mentors and more experienced ones, we recommend that you consider the following phases and related steps.

### Phase 1: Establish expectations and build trust (pre-work & sessions 1-2)

- Identify your expectations for the mentoring relationship
- Hold introductory meeting
- Listen to your mentee's expectations and goals
- Clarify roles and responsibilities
- Share your expectations for the programme with the mentee

### Phase 2: Create an action plan (sessions 2-3)

- Ask about your mentee's strengths and challenges
- Discuss their goals and action items for the programme
- Encourage your mentee to fill out the Mentorship Agreement on the platform (or another action plan document of their choosing)

### Phase 3: Meet consistently and revise the action plan (session 3 onward)

- At each meeting, review progress on actions items
- Discuss items of interest, current challenges, recent successes, etc.
- Foster learning and development with practical exercises



### Phase 4: Reflect on your experience and determine next steps (last session)

- Acknowledge your relationship and what you accomplished together
- Discuss next steps: challenges ahead and new goals
- Provide feedback on the Together mentoring programme

The next section provides more details on how to address each phase.

## 2.1 Phase 1 – Establish Expectations (pre-work & sessions 1-2)

At the start of a mentoring relationship it's important to focus on expectations – for both parties to understand what each would like to give and gain from the relationship.

Part of this process is figuring out what kind of role you might play. The list below has roles that mentors typically have and the effective and ineffective behaviours that can result.

	Effective Behaviours	Ineffective Behaviours
Advisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acts as a sounding board and facilitator</li> <li>• Maintains privacy/confidentiality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fixes problems</li> <li>• Assumes responsibility for mentee</li> </ul>
Protector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports, is a safety net</li> <li>• Ensures a safe environment to take risks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fights mentee's battles</li> <li>• Overprotects</li> </ul>
Developer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives structure and direction</li> <li>• Provides guidance based on observations during interactions with mentee</li> <li>• Empowers mentee to handle their problems independently</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dictates, controls learning</li> <li>• Looks for quick-fixes</li> <li>• Provides general criticism or judgment</li> <li>• Tells mentee what to do</li> </ul>
Broker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies skill or competency gaps through a "third party" lens</li> <li>• Identifies and facilitates development opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows for personal biases</li> <li>• Abdicates, does not follow up</li> </ul>
Challenger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positively provokes, pushes toward highest standards</li> <li>• Helps mentee explore potential career opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pushes too far too soon</li> <li>• Discounts mentee's thoughts and opinions</li> </ul>





	Effective Behaviours	Ineffective Behaviours
Clarifier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaches organizational values and politics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removes obstacles so mentee does not have to deal with organizational politics</li> </ul>
Affirmer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gives needed support, enhances self-esteem</li> <li>Exhibits empathy and understanding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gives too much feedback</li> <li>Discounts mentee's feelings or concerns</li> </ul>
Sponsor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides visibility and recognition of mentee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotes mentee at the expense of others</li> </ul>

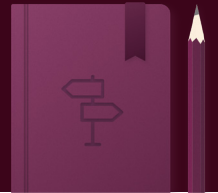
Remember that the role(s) you take on – and they may change periodically - depend on your personal preferences and personality, the approach you might have to mentoring and your mentee's expectations and goals. Again, there is no right formula.

Get to know each other as people. Spend time introducing yourselves, sharing information such as your preferred names, one another's current positions and your relevant job histories, why you decided to participate and any information about hobbies and interests that you feel comfortable sharing. You might use some of the following questions to help drive conversations:

### Questions for the First Meeting

- What is your motivation for signing up for the mentoring programme?
- What is your educational and professional background (including an explanation of your current role and how long you have been with the UN)?
- What have been some high points in your UN career? Some low points?
- What is interesting about life in your duty station?
- What is your next big challenge?
- What are your greatest strengths? Greatest weaknesses?
- What do you hope to accomplish in the next 6 months, 1 year, 3 years and 5 years?
- What are your hobbies/interests outside of work?
- Discuss things about the mentee's profile that were interesting to you.





**Also, keep in mind that mentors can learn from mentees.** You will need to communicate with your mentee about what you would like to learn. Review their profile and identify a topic that you would like their input on or a skill you would like to develop during the four months.

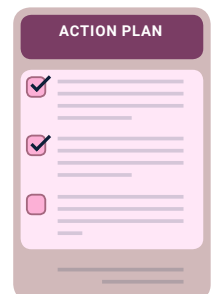
**In the Together mentoring pilot, participants may define how often they meet.** We suggest twice monthly for four months but this is not required. Meeting lengths are flexible. Your mentee will be responsible for scheduling and leading each session, but we recommend that in the beginning you decide on a time that usually works for both. Having sessions booked in advance in your calendar will help you prioritize them.

**Finally, mentoring programmes can contribute to civility and “good citizenship”** in an organization. In other words, in places where mentoring programmes are successful, staff tend to treat each other well, staff engagement is high and staff focus more on their development goals. We hope the Together pilot (and future programmes) will have the same effect in the United Nations.

**Please help us reach this goal by following these mentoring citizenship tips.**

### Mentoring Citizenship Tips

- Attend mentoring-related meetings and events
- Maintain privacy/confidentiality of conversations with mentors
- Provide input to assess and improve the Together mentoring programme
- Take advantage of other UN learning resources
- Track your development and career progress



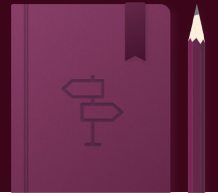
## 2.2 Phase 2 - Create an action plan (sessions 2-3)

Once you have gotten to know each other's expectations for the programme, you can help your mentee develop an action plan for the four-month mentoring period. The Together platform has an action plan feature called the Mentorship Agreement. You could encourage your mentee to fill it out and then review it with them and give feedback. You both could formalize the process by signing the document (typing your name onscreen).

Or your mentee may want to use another type of action plan document; this is fine too. On the other hand, your mentee may not be interested in developing a written action plan; this is okay too. You might remind them, however, that people tend to achieve goals and accomplish action items more often when they have written them down.

The Mentorship Agreement can be found by clicking on your mentee's name on the left-hand bar of the platform and then clicking “Mentorship Agreement.”

Contact [mentoring@un.org](mailto:mentoring@un.org) with questions about this template.



## 2.3 Phase 3 - Meet consistently and revise the action plan (session 3 onward)

The topics you discuss during mentoring sessions should be centered around the goals. If you have time, help your mentee track progress and reassess the action plan. Encourage them to adjust some actions if they are no longer useful and to add new ones that might serve their goals better.

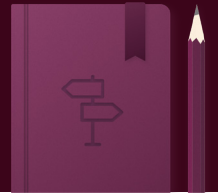
Of course, conversations tend to flow into other areas that can be equally useful and interesting. **As a mentor, try to remember that finding a balance between structure and flexibility can help ensure fulfilling meetings for both parties.**

Using exercises or activities during sessions can accelerate learning and growth. Take a look at the list below.

### Ideas for Exercises and Activities

- Situation-based exercises: discuss with your mentee how to best address past or upcoming situations they need help with
- Role Play: do they have a tough conversation or presentation ahead? Take time to talk through it and help your mentee prepare.
- Shadowing: ask your mentee to join you for an event or a meeting so they can learn from observation. This can work in a virtual environment too!
- Networking: think of colleagues that you can introduce your mentee to
- Peer Feedback: encourage your mentee to get feedback from someone they work with. Then discuss the feedback.
- Attend a UN webinar or event on a topic that interests you both and discuss what you have learnt later.

For more detailed descriptions of these exercises, please check the session agendas on the platform.



## 2.4 Phase 4 – Reflect on your experience and determine next steps (last session)

Your last session is approaching. Consider the following steps in this last phase.

### 1. Reflect



- Thank each other and acknowledge what your time together accomplished. What were the most useful exercises? What were the biggest takeaways?

### 2. Going forward



- Determine if or how you want to stay in touch. If there's more you can accomplish together, set up more monthly sessions!
- Share your success: as you make traction, update each other. Send an email when you have news to share.
- Spread the word: did you find the experience rewarding and fulfilling? Invite other colleagues to serve as mentors.

### 3. Feedback



- Respond to the survey from the Together pilot team. You can also share feedback with the project team through [mentoring@un.org](mailto:mentoring@un.org). Your comments will help the programme grow.





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**More information:** [hr.un.org/mentoring](https://hr.un.org/mentoring)

**Questions, comments or feedback?**

[mentoring@un.org](mailto:mentoring@un.org)

