



INITIATIVE ON
NEXUS Gains

A Mentoring Relationship: Challenges and Gains

***Transformative Leadership Program for
Women Professionals in the WEF E Nexus.***

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My own mentoring journey

My Mentors

- Several in my own life, at different points of time, mostly women but a couple of men too
- They helped me tremendously when:
 - *Deciding about my first job – in a remote high mountain area in the early 90s – being the only female*
 - *Making job transitions later in life*
 - *Having conflicts with leaders in different spaces*
 - *Balancing different parts of life*

Being a Mentor

- Mostly younger colleagues in different organizations that I worked in – and mostly women
- A few young graduates
- Mostly professional issues, occasionally personal discussions
- The “*professional was personal*” for most women

My “formal” mentoring experience

- Opportunities given by the AWARD Mentorship Program:
 - *Introduction/reminder about Tools such as the Purpose Road Map; Communication and Active Listening, Conflict Management*
 - *Time and space for Mentors-Mentees to sit together, focus and share*
 - *Crafting an action plan to follow up on, post workshop*
 - *Follow up by the program – reminders and reporting*
 - *Got to know a young, serious, passionate professional*
- Developed a work/professional relationship with my “mentee”
- Challenges
 - *Very little “formal” time - post workshop*
 - *Inadequate grounds for a “Community of Practice” – particularly with the wider community*
 - *The “professional” relationship encroached on the mentorship process*
 - *Hence the need to create a “safe space” once again*

Taking the Learnings Forward

- Introduced a Mentorship element in the program:
 - *Developing Leadership Capacity for WEFE Nexus Actors in Nepal*
- Identified WEFE/GESI Experts as Mentors - all of whom volunteered
- Some were “specialists” others “generalists” (but GESI Champions)
- Gave participants three choices for potential mentors on our list and did our best to match them
- Due to limited numbers, some Mentors had two Mentees
- Only a few pairs actually worked together over the 6 month “training project” period

Reflecting on the Lessons Learnt

1/2

- Which pairs worked well? When:
 - *Mentees got their first choices*
 - *Mentors were “Specialists” with high profiles – government, INGOs*
 - *Gender differences did not seem to matter as long as the expert was in a “high” position*
 - *Mentors were proactive*
- Why did the Mentorship element not work so well?
 - *Mentees did not fully understand what a mentorship relation is; the potential of it and thus the value of it*
 - *Some Mentees did not know their Mentors at all, others not too well – thus issues of discomfort, trust, safe space?*
 - *Lack of time on the part of the Mentees, mostly!*

Reflecting on the Lessons Learnt

2/2

- For a good Mentor-Mentee relationship
 - *Demand driven rather than supply driven*
 - *Trust, confidence and access is the foundation*
 - *Mutual respect, co-learning and sharing helps it grow*
 - *Coaching and communication skills – is key – especially for Mentors*
 - *Questioning and sharing options rather than prescribing by Mentors*
 - *Unequal power relationship between the Mentor and Mentee needs careful handling – a mutual pact and mutual respect necessary*
- For women professionals, in particular
 - *The personal is professional, and vice versa*
 - *Sharing, caring and unburdening can build strength of mind and purpose – it is not a weakness!*



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