

Contributors of Success to the Youth Mentoring Program in Rwanda

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study was to explore the factors that contribute to the success of Youth mentoring program In Rwanda. A descriptive cross-sectional research design was adopted to study a sample of 181 youth selected from a target population of 330 beneficiaries of the youth mentoring programs. A purposive sampling technique was used for selecting respondents for the study while, questionnaires, interviews and observation were utilized in obtaining both primary and secondary data. Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to determine the actual factors related to the success of Youth mentorship programs in Rwanda. The results indicate that organization of the business environment with the correlation coefficient r of 0.961 was the main factor that contributed to the success of youth mentorship programs in Rwanda. On the basis of the findings the current study recommends that all youth mentorship programs and business ventures create a conducive and enabling environment in terms of structures and materials and resource persons with a view of attracting as many youth as possible.*

Keywords: Mentoring; Youth; factors

1. Introduction

Virtually every aspect of human development is fundamentally shaped by interpersonal relationships. So, it stands to reason that when close and caring relationships are placed at the center of a Youth intervention, as is the case in mentoring programs, the conditions for healthy development are ripe (Huizinga, 2012). Mentoring particularly skills-based mentoring and apprenticeship programs, prepares our future workforce by exposing young people the world and developing their life skills and vocational skills which are critical to success in today's economy. (É. St-Jean & Mitrano-Méda, 2016)

Mentoring has been used as a useful personal development tool globally, Mentoring has been practiced in different cultures for hundreds of years. But it is only recently that mentoring has been (re) discovered by the private sector, and now by the civil society sector, as a mechanism for leadership development. (Wang, 2014)

Globally, there are 74 million young people unemployed between the ages of 15-24 representing 40% of global unemployment. This figure does not account for those working in the informal economy. With earnings below \$2 per day, young people around the world struggle to work in insecure jobs. With an increasing number of young people entering the job market, there is great need to be prepared to meet the needs of the expanding labor force by creating around 600 million new jobs in the next 10 years. (Njati, 2013)

Yet many young people lack relevant market skills required for employment within the private sector – and there is a mismatch between the market supply and demand. Young people often lack the means required to start and grow their own businesses, and it is predicted that whilst 20% of young people have an ambition to start a business, only 5% actually do. (United Nations, 2011)

Many social, economic and cultural factors hinder progress for young people. Youth unemployment and

underemployment can predispose young people to other social problems. Dissatisfied Youth are often more likely than older generations to challenge their situation actively and become a socially destabilizing force. (SNV, 2016)

Africa is the youngest continent with children and Youth aged below 30 years constituting 70 percent of the continent's entire population. By 2050 according to predictions, 29 percent of the total world Youth population will reside in Africa. These young and energetic people of Africa, however, have the potential, ability, creativity, enthusiasm, and energy for achieving Africa's renaissance, as articulated by the continental leadership. Investments in their education and transition to employment, health, and social well-being are critical for the continent and Africa's global repositioning agenda. (Vance, LaLonde, & Zhang, 2017)

2. Literature Review

Mentorship is a process within a relationship or set of relationships which embodies elements of trust, reciprocity, challenge, support and control and which has the potential to empower the partners. (Haggard, Dougherty, Turban, & Wilbanks, 2011). This definition of mentoring relied upon three essential characteristics of mentoring. These characteristics are (a) mentors are more experienced than mentees as related to a specific task; (b) mentors provide individualized support based on mentees' learning needs; and (c) mentoring involves an interpersonal relationship as generally indicated by mutual benefit, engagement, and commitment. (Raposa, Rhodes, & Herrera, 2016) On a practical level, however, at least three possible aims for natural or program mentors are apparent: 1) preventing the emergence or continuation of psychosocial difficulties or problem behaviors; 2) promoting positive adjustment through the development of individual competencies; and 3) fostering integration with the community through opportunities for involvement. The function that mentoring is meant to serve may strongly influence what motivates

mentors, how mentoring relationships develop, and what they accomplish. (Raposa et al., 2016)

There is however, some consensus between continents that mentoring is a process that supports and encourages learning to happen (Ilieva-koleva, 2015) and that mentoring is an intense and powerful one-on-one developmental relationship that leads to skills development. When all this theory is stripped away, however, mentoring is still simply about a regular one- to-one meeting to support the learner in their desire to improve their personal situation or their business life. (Joubert & de Villiers, 2015) and as such it has some similarities to the other learning processes of coaching, guiding, counseling, tutoring, teaching etc. (MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, 2015)

(Ulvik & Sunde, 2013) found that having received mentorship has been linked with positive career outcomes. Yet, within the mentorship literature, there is debate on the effectiveness and optimal format of formal mentorship programs. Prior work suggests that the most effective mentoring relationships are those that occur organically via self-selection within the organization, and formal programs compelling participation are mostly ineffective (E. St-Jean & Audet, 2013).

Assuming that mentoring is intended to serve a helpful function in a Youth's life, that the mentor is motivated to support the Youth, and that developing a relationship is the mode of intervention, attention turns to the particular mechanisms by which the relationship may influence Youth development. (Campbell, Smith, Dugan, & Komives, 2012) As noted, Youth mentoring may vary in its aims and the context in which activities between mentor and Youth occur. (MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, 2015) Furthermore, mentoring is an individualized intervention, and every relationship is distinguished by the developmental needs, interpersonal capabilities, and social circumstances of mentor and Youth. Thus, in any given case, the mentor may contribute to an aspect of the Youth's development or may become involved in various life domains and exercise a broad and pervasive influence. (Poulsen, 2013)

Youth mentoring

United Nations' definition of Youth includes young people that are between the ages 15-24. According to the Rwanda national Youth policy, Youth is defined as the population aged 14-35. For this study, Youth are the project beneficiaries who are between the ages of 14 and 25. According to the World Bank Traditionally, policy discussions regarding Youth have assumed that Youth are in transition from childhood to adulthood and, as such, have specific characteristics that make them a distinct demographic and social category. This transition is multi-faceted. It involves the sexual maturation of individuals and their growing autonomy social and economic independence from parents and other careers. (Poulsen, 2013) The nature of the transition from childhood to adulthood has changed over time and is different from place to place. Children in developing countries become adults very fast because the evolution from school to work typically happens at an early age and is finalized in a short time. Poor young women face

the same problem as regards to marriage and motherhood. Most of the poor Youth cannot afford the transitional phase because they must survive and meet the livelihood needs of their households from a young age. (Njati, 2013)

The rural household is a joint venture, and the gender division of labor is such that full, individual control of the productive process is nearly impossible for women in many countries. Given that large percentages of rural Youth are dependent members of large extended households; they are largely reliant on their parents for their needs. As young people grow older, the autonomy of males increases, but contracts for females. Moreover, in most traditional and poorest populations in low-income countries, girls typically marry early. (Chen & Yan, 2014)

A clear separation also must be made between school-aged Youth and post-school Youth. The rationale why Programs related to young people do not attract Youth programming has attracted so little funding from governments and other agencies is that post-school Youth are usually considered adult and incorporated into the adult population in general. The implied belief is assumption is, consequently, that the Youth at this age, do not face any other problems benefiting the limited support services that are available for the adult population. The logical conclusion of this line of argument is that, given the limited relevance of Youth as a distinct and protracted transitional phase in poorest areas coupled with the heterogeneity of Youth, Youth may have limited usefulness as a social category around which major community development policy initiatives should be developed. (Wong, Cross, & Mueller, 2018)

One approach to increasing employment among Youth is to provide training and mentoring for young people to help them develop the skills they need to find employment or start new businesses. While rigorous research has not generally found returns to short training programs, longer or more intense programs with long-term follow-up may be more promising. Mentorship exists within several societies around the world as a positive mechanism of support for Youth in their developmental growth, and for adults in their professional growth. Many mentoring organizations release reports on the best practices for mentoring Youth of different identities (MENTOR 2009; 2016)

Many young people face considerable barriers in their lives that could prevent them from gaining employment successfully. Mentoring can be a critical component of successfully supporting Youth career engagement and workforce development in three important ways: improving Youth's employability by building the necessary skills and work experiences that allow Youth to succeed in a job and advance in a career path; facilitating continued academic engagement and achievement; and supporting Youth in the development of non-cognitive skills necessary for successful employment. (Bruce, M., & Bridgeland, J., 2014).

3. Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional survey. The population of interest in this study consisted of all the 330 beneficiaries who were enrolled in the Youth program.

Purposive sampling technique was applied to obtain a sample of 181 respondents predetermined using formula according to (Yamane, 1967). Data was collected using questionnaires and interview guides and was analyzed for both descriptive and inferential statistics.

4. Results and Findings

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 presents age respondents and indicates that out of 181 respondents, the majority of them were aged between 17-21.

Table 1: Age of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 2- 16	19	10,5	10,5	10,5
17-21	128	70,7	70,7	81,2
21-25	34	18,8	18,8	100,0
Total	181	100,0	100,0	

Table 2 presents gender of respondents and indicates that out of 181 respondents, the majority of them were female.

Table 1: Gender of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Female	108	59,7	59,7	59,7
Male	73	40,3	40,3	100,0
Total	181	100,0	100,0	

Factors that affect the implementation of the Youth mentoring program

Table 3 below highlights the factors that affect the current implementation of the YOUTH mentoring program Out of 181 respondents, 71.8% strongly agree that they are very hard-working young men and women in the area, 54.1% agree that the local authorities are very cooperative and

collaborative, 59.1% disagree that the Youth institutions have clear policies and procedures and 58.6% agrees that the business environment is very organized.

Table 3: Factors contributing to that successful implementation of Youth mentoring program

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Very hard-working young men and women in the area	8.3	9.9	0.6	9.4	71.8
Local authorities are very cooperative and collaborative	11.6	2.2	29.8	54.1	2.2
The Youth institutions have clear policies and procedures	7.2	59.1	12.7	3.3	17.7
The business environment is very organized	10.5	11	11	58.6	8.8

Correlation Matrix

The table 4 below shows that all independent variables affect the Youth mentorship program as following: At (0,961) ‘The business environment is very organized’ has proved to be the leading factor affecting the implementation of the Youth Mentoring program. At (0,750) ‘The Youth institutions have clear policies and procedures’ has proved to be the least factor affecting the implementation of the Youth Mentoring program.

Table 4: Correlation between independent variables and Youth mentorship

		Correlations				
		Youth mentorship	Very hard-working young men and women in the area	Local authorities are very cooperative and collaborative	The Youth institutions have clear policies and procedures	The business environment is very organized
Youth mentorship	Pearson Correlation (R)	1	.917**	.935**	.750**	.961**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	181	181	181	181	181
Very hard-working young men and women in the area	Pearson Correlation	.917**	1	.871**	.467**	.919**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	181	181	181	181	181
Local authorities are very cooperative and collaborative	Pearson Correlation	.935**	.871**	1	.585**	.895**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	181	181	181	181	181
The Youth institutions have clear policies and procedures	Pearson Correlation	.750**	.467**	.585**	1	.611**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	181	181	181	181	181
The business environment is very organized	Pearson Correlation	.961**	.919**	.895**	.611**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	181	181	181	181	181

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

5. Discussions

By summarizing the results, the study analyses and highlights the factors that affect the current implementation of the YOUTH mentoring program. The main components of the research analysis based on very hard-working young

men and women in the area, local authorities are very cooperative and collaborative, the Youth institutions have clear policies and procedures to ensure follow-up and management directives and the business environment is very organized.

Findings of this study provide support for the conclusion that the organisation of business environment is a strong factor that affects the implementation of Youth mentoring programs in Rwanda with $r = 0,961$ and the leading factor compared to other factors. The next factor is the cooperation and collaboration of the local authorities' ($r=0,935$) followed by availability of very hardworking young men ($r=0,917$) and lastly the Youth institution's clear policies and procedures. ($r=0,750$)

These findings coincide with the results from the interviews whereby Out of 181 respondents, 71.8% strongly agree that they are very hard-working young men and women in the area, 54.1% agree that the local authorities are very cooperative and collaborative, 59.1% disagree that the Youth institutions have clear policies and procedures and 58.6% agrees that the business environment is very organized. Both above findings rate the Youth institution's clear policy and procedures as the least affecting variable, this means that Youth mentoring is not very much affected by the clear policies and procedures of Youth institutions.

From an applied perspective, findings offer support for continued implementation and dissemination of mentoring programs for Youth. The strongest empirical basis exists for utilizing mentoring as a preventive intervention with Youth whose backgrounds include significant conditions of environmental risk and disadvantage (Raposa et al., 2016). The results support the previous meta-analysis done by (DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn, & Valentine, 2011). A meta-analysis is a multiple evaluation research that gives a broad overview of different findings. They found from 73 independent assessments of mentoring programs targeting children and Youth in 10 years (2001–2011); mentoring has a positive effect on academic performance, positive behavior, emotional intelligence, career success of mentored young people as a contrast of non-mentored Youth. This supports that one of the major factors that affect the implementation of YOUTH mentoring model is hardworking young men and women.

6. Conclusions

Findings of this study provide support for the conclusion that the organisation of business environment is a strong factor that affects the implementation of Youth mentoring programs in Rwanda with $r = 0,961$ and the leading factor compared to other factors. Youth mentoring programs have been providing positive role models and building social skills for more than a century. On the other hand, variety of Youth mentoring programs have emerged in Rwanda, but knowledge of the factors that affect their implementation remains incomplete. This study has therefore given a guideline of some of the factors affecting the implementation of Youth mentoring programs in Rwanda.

To facilitate attainment of desired outcomes, however, results indicate a need for programs to adhere closely to recommended guidelines for effective practice. Finally, by focusing on the findings from the views of interviewers, the research concludes that providing positive role models, mentors promote resiliency among at-risk Youth, mentors help to build Youth's entrepreneurial skills, community-

based after-school programs can provide safe havens where Youth can express themselves and receive guidance in engaging in business and job creation activities.

7. Recommendations

The study recommends that mentorship component be introduced and reinforced in the business environment as it has found in this research that implementation of YOUTH mentorship program is strongly affected by the organisation of business environment. The study further recommends that similar mentoring programs take advantage of the cooperation and collaboration of local authorities who support and allow the programs to reap more fruits. In addition the study recommends that other Youth mentorship programs should maximize the potential of the availability of hard working young men and women in the implementation area because they will help programs to achieve their goals.

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