Delivery of workshops for HEIs Mexico 2023

This training is aimed at Alumni Mentors (women in STEM) from the British Council Mentoring in Science programme who has already been trained as mentor, have already had a successful mentoring relationship and who have expressed an interest in setting up mentoring programmes in their organisations. Some of them have already gained organisational support and they now need a programme to help them develop mentoring interventions and develop systemic capacity and cross-fertilization across wider geographical areas, now possible with online methods.

Outcomes

1- Launch and speed up the process for staff to implement mentoring programmes.

2- Build newly formed contacts and networks enhancing their learning, building a community of practice in their HEIs and build research publications, perhaps about their mentoring in Mexico experience.

3- Build on the momentum following the MOOC, the mentoring relationships for mentors to build grass roots ownership of schemes with more potential for organisational cultural fit.

4- Enabled the groups to create and implement innovative mentoring programmes e.g. cross mentoring programmes amongst different institutions in Mexico; cross mentoring programmes amongst different faculties in the same institutions; developing international mentoring partnerships via accessing contacts in the UK and the networks of the European Association for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology (WITEC) who Inova represents.

5. Offers the potential to build adapted programmes around themes and organisational issues (e.g., leaky pipeline, attrition, gender equality) according to specific organisational needs or stakeholders.

How will we do this?

Inova will offer Action Learning Sets to workshop this unique method to help the mentoring co-ordinators implement their programmes through inquiry to consolidate knowledge.

The process of Action Learning is arguably one of the most dynamic ways of developing people and businesses. The processes involved in Action Learning were developed originally by Professor Reg Revans, who noticed that people learned better in groups and when their learning activities were more focussed around wicked puzzles, questions, and problematic situations from organisational life.

What does it involve?

Action Learning when applied to Mentoring is about "Learning" and "Doing". Participants work in groups who work through their problems/ opportunities together- This approach to learning therefore works very successfully, particularly for minority groups who can support each other through similar problems faced and solutions found. Our learning action workshops involve working with participants in focussed teams or groups to achieve successful learning outcomes to problems, issues, ideas, innovations & projects that can't be solved by the usual methods. Delegates use a questioning approach to facilitate understanding and to change old patterns and understand organisational dynamics.

We will offer 4 action learning sets (4 sessions) to participants. Each learning set takes place every two weeks to allow participants to work on their goals and implement the programme at different intervals.

- Learning sets will enable an individual to share their problems, issues, opportunities, and challenges with others.
- Learning sets provide a safe yet challenging environment where ideas and challenges to losing weight can be discussed in a friendly and confidential atmosphere.

- Possible options for action can be generated and discussed.
- The individual is helped to find the next steps forward in their journey towards setting up, developing, and continuing their programme.
- Encouraging development of self-reflection and self-belief.

There are also other benefits of participation:
- Opportunities to network with other people facing similar issues.
- Opportunities to make new contacts and expand their support networks.

Thus, the focus is on *questioning* rather than advice giving. Similarly, when completing exercises regarding self-development or self-reflection, participants are encouraged to question their responses and to support other group members in questioning why they responded to an exercise in a certain way. This process strengthens the development of self-reflection. The model below (Action Learning Process) is useful in further explaining the purpose and process of action learning. See Figure 1

Figure 1
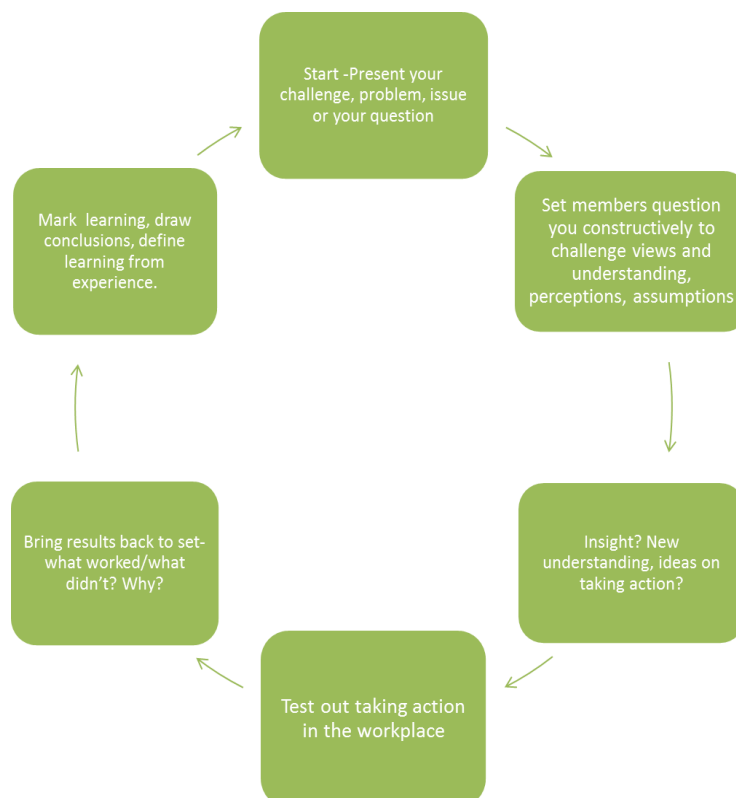
The methodology has strong principles of coaching thus participants will be encouraged and expected to implement their action points in between sessions with the support of the group and the expert facilitators.

See figure below for further clarification with regard to the timetable per action learning set.

Meetings Timetable per Action Learning Set

The main aim of the methodology is to ensure the group's sustainability by creating groups of support for the implementation/review and promotion of the mentoring programmes. The 5th session is expected to be managed by participants themselves with the support of Inova.

What is the learning process?

We would expect the learning process to feature some of the following exploration aspects for participants: Present issue- inquiry-form actions

- ●Exploration of what may cause particular conditions or consequences; reviewing decisions or actions and reveal how this has led to the current situation. Could problems have been avoided? What are the implications if a similar situation occurs in the future? What have they learned from this situation?

- Examining their own thinking that led them to believe something or act in a certain way. Is a decision built on fair assumptions? Have assumptions been tested?

- We can also *learn from mistakes*; Argyris (1993) suggests that learning occurs whenever errors are detected and corrected.

- The facilitation should also be *future + solution focused*. It is useful to assist members in predicting possible outcomes. Have they taken everything into account? What is the back up or contingency plan? Have they considered all the options in a situation?

- Facilitation will explicitly get people to *commit to goal and action plans*, report on their own progress, redefine goals and review outcomes.

- The facilitation should also involve awareness of *group dynamics and group process*; this may occasionally require that the facilitator may have to intervene to protect someone's time, to keep issues on track when challenges may be causing distress, when someone is perhaps using power inappropriately or behaving in a way that frustrates or blocks the group's learning.

- Encourage group members to be creative, to work outside comfort zones and to maximise opportunities.

- Contracting: defining an agreement with the set members about roles and responsibilities in order that a) you can best facilitate; b) they can get most out of the process in a climate which is conducive to learning. Agreements need to be revisited frequently and rules of operation need restating at the start of each session.

After each session, participants will complete an evaluation form and the facilitator will write up their working notes from the facilitator's perspective. The facilitator will keep all evaluation forms at the end of each session. Following the final session, participants will complete a final outcome evaluation form.

Timetable

Action Learning is a small group method; the enrichment and learning comes from sharing real problems in a safe and receptive space. Participants need time to explore issues and have their issues heard. Then the exploration phase leads to actions, more likely to stick and to be effective.

Programme A timescale (exact dates to be confirmed)

From Sep 2023 to Dec 2023 - Set 1 and Set 2

Programme B timescale (exact dates to be confirmed)

From Jan 2024 to Apr 2024 - Set 3   Set 4

Language

Sessions will be in both Spanish and English (for those interested in building their international language skills and with the fluency to participate in English.