

CASE STUDY: EDUCATION MENTORS IN SCIENCE

MEXICO



Area

Education Partnerships

Activity

Higher Education

Location

Mexico

Funder/client

GPF

Total value

“I thank the British Council for having accepted me in this programme and my mentor for the time she dedicated to me. It was very enriching, and I am taking many things with me for my path in science, as a scientist and as a woman.”

Participant mentee of Mentors in Science programme, Mexico

CASE STUDY: EDUCATION

MENTORS IN SCIENCE

Vision

- Mentors in Science / Mentoring in Action is an initiative of the British Council Mexico – with the support from UK consultant Innova Consultancy. This program seeks to train female scientists/researchers who are part of the National System of Researchers as mentors and provide them with tools to accompany young female researchers in their professional career and share good practices that allow them to reach leadership positions and access financial support for their research projects.

Life cycle

2021-2023

Situation

- The participation, permanence and recognition of the women have progressively increased in science. However, gender roles and stereotypes remain permeating the erroneous idea that science is a space reserved for men. In Mexico, although the data on the participation of professors in research projects are encouraging, since they represent 40.8%, still it is necessary to promote the participation of women in science and ensure they have support to follow a long-term career path in STEM.

Mutual benefit

- The Mentoring in Action - Women and Girls in STEM programme is contributing to improve the chances of Mexican female researchers to pursue and establish a career in STEM and is supporting the UK ODA Contribution as the programme is aligned with SDG No. 5 (Gender Equality), specifically framed in a scientific environment.

Implementation

- There have been 3 generations of mentoring pairs who for three/six months actively met for at least 12 hours of mentoring and developed a strategy for the professional and personal advancement of early career Mexican researchers. The programme so far has reached 180 mentors who have received 15 hours of training in mentoring and took 5 online modules on the subject. Hence, becoming certified British Council Women and Girls in STEM mentors and who have supported more than 500 mentees over 6 months.
- As a consequence of this programme, a network of Mentors in Science was implemented for follow up sessions and promote further opportunities for all participants.



Value to the UK

The programme is helping to position the UK in Mexico as a key ally in the support of women researchers in STEM. As a result of this programme, there has been a publication on the website of the government of Jalisco state which was written collaboratively between a mentor and a mentee, and which foregrounds the importance of women working together in science and highlighting the support they have received from the British Council as women in STEM

Impact

A preliminary report (Cohort 2) showed that when asked about how they felt about meeting the goals they had set for themselves and their mentoring process, 90% of the mentees stated that they had met them to a large extent (46%) or they had totally met them (43.9%). 94.4% of the mentees believed their mentors totally (68.8%) or to a large extent (25.5%) helped them develop and/or achieve the skills and behaviours needed to pursue their career goals. The areas in which the mentoring had the most impact was on their understanding of what they needed to achieve professional satisfaction, and in helping them reach important decisions regarding their careers and professional plans. These two main areas support the concretisation of the mentees' awareness of the professional skills they must develop to follow their career goals (as stated in the M&E framework). Said outcome is also supported by the mentees' perception on the abilities they developed the most during the mentoring. 23.2% of the mentees managed to identify new professional goals, while 22.7% of them are strategically seeking professional growth opportunities. 85% of mentees stated having developed a new level of understanding of their professional satisfaction, and 83.9% of them declared having made important professional decisions as an outcome of the mentoring. Despite the challenges faced by the participants, 99.4% of the mentors stated that the experience inspired them to continue mentoring, and 95.4% of the mentees said they had been inspired to become mentors in the future. When asked if they had considered implementing a mentoring programme in their institutions, 49% of the mentors stated that they are already planning it, 6% of the mentors are already implementing it, and only 15% of the participants had not thought about it. This means that in the near future, hundreds of early career researchers will have some mentoring guidance that would help them navigate the first steps of their career as researchers in STEM.