

# Do Young People Need More Mentors?

By Pamela Uzoma



Image source: CLO Magazine

*“I have seen further by standing on the shoulders of giants.” – Isaac Newton*

## Introduction

Mentorship has been proven to aid personal and professional development in young people. For mentorship to work, collaborative efforts must come from the mentor and the mentee (protegee or individual being mentored). Mentorship, when optimized, can lead to positive development in young people<sup>1</sup>. This article highlights the need for mentorship programmes, especially in the social sector, with relevant examples showing mentorship as a contributing factor to the improvement of the quality of lives of young persons.

## Mentors VS Mentee: Key Benefits

Mentorship is synonymous with support, which young people need to excel. The more supportive and healthy the relationships formed between mentors and mentees are, the more beneficial it becomes, immediate and long-term. There are several benefits of mentorship for young people. Some of them include:

**Improved Interpersonal Skills** – Mentorship is one way to ensure upskilling for youth. In a mentoring programme, they are exposed to best practices and trusted methods of getting

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/mentoring>

## Do Young People Need More Mentors?

By Pamela Uzoma

things done.<sup>2</sup> This helps increase their professional development opportunities. Good mentorship can positively impact a person's work, soft skills, career, personality, and lifestyle.

**Better Transitioning Outcomes** – Without proper guidance, young people are inclined to make poor choices.<sup>3</sup> With mentorship, the young people can be nudged in the right direction and avoid the time-wasting and uncertainty that comes with making the wrong choices in their early adulthood.

**Higher University Enrollment and Educational Aspirations** – A [study](#) conducted in 2007 in schools with active mentoring programmes revealed that students who had mentors turned in higher quality class work, did better academically (especially in science and written and oral communication) and completed more of their assignments than their peers in schools without active mentoring programmes. They further indicated interest in higher education. According to research, students in mentoring programmes are 59% more likely to earn better grades, 52% less likely to skip school, and 81% more likely to participate in extracurricular activities.<sup>4</sup> This shows mentorship for young people provides a pivotal pathway to adulthood.

**Enhanced Self-leadership** – Part of the learning process during mentorship is that mentees view their mentors as leaders. Through mentorship, young people can hone leadership-related skills such as self awareness, self confidence, and emotional intelligence, among others. These enhance youth development outcomes, such as raising the competence of youth leaders.

On the other hand, mentors also benefit as well. With a quality mentorship program, mentors also experience a sense of accomplishment and increased supervisory skills. The mentors' benefits also include professional satisfaction, enhancement of professional reputation, an extension of collegial networks, influence and rejuvenated careers.

---

<sup>2</sup> Jennifer O. in the article <https://www.trvst.world/work-skills/mentoring-young-adults/>

<sup>3</sup> Cavell, T., DuBois, D., Karcher, M., Keller, T., & Rhodes, J. (2009). *Strengthening mentoring opportunities for at-risk youth*. Retrieved from [http://www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring\\_1233.pdf](http://www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring_1233.pdf)

<sup>4</sup>

<https://www.ioundream.org/news.html/article/2021/08/18/why-youth-mentoring-is-important#:~:text=Accord ing%20to%20research%2C%20students%20who.to%20participate%20in%20extracurricular%20activities>

# Do Young People Need More Mentors?

By Pamela Uzoma

## Mentorship Within the Youth Space

Now more than ever, the need for mentorship has become a critical focus for youth programmes. This is because young people require adequate guidance to drive their passion. For the article, relevant secondary data was obtained to bolster critical points made by two organizations - Dream and LEAP Africa. It is imperative to note that these organizations, among many others in the ecosystem, have proven the need for mentorship for young people.

[Dream](#) is a nongovernmental organization (NGO) that expands opportunities for at-risk youth by providing positive role models, experiences, and assistance. Dream has been able to achieve this through its after school programme, mentoring programme and sports programme. With this, Dream's *Becoming A Man* team mentoring programme matches college educated, professional, male mentors with at-risk young men.

Mentors and mentees work through a strengths-based curriculum, which includes decision making, accountability, self efficacy, and strategic goal setting.

[LEAP Africa](#), a youth-focused NGO, also inculcates a mentorship component in its programmes. It uses one-on-one mentorship or group mentorship to impact the youth positively. LEAP Africa's Social Innovators Programme (SIP) comes to mind for one-on-one mentorship. The SIP provides a formal structured one-mentor-to-one-innovator relationship. The mentorship helps to link the fellows to expertise, essential information, services, and opportunities that spur their business growth and development. While analyzing some of the evaluation reports from the programme, the fellows mentioned that they made the most progress under the mentorship phase of the programme. This is especially true for those whose mentors had relevant experience in their focus sectors.

For group mentorship, the Youth Leadership Programme (YLP) is a concrete example. The Youth Leadership Programme has equipped young undergraduates in tertiary institutions with the skills and support for Personal Leadership, Community/Sustainable Development, and Active Citizenship. The YLP organizes relevant webinars/expert sessions for young people in the programme where past alumni speak to them about being active citizens

# Do Young People Need More Mentors?

By Pamela Uzoma

within their communities. Participants gained relevant insights from the mentorship sessions and applied lessons learnt in implementing their give-back projects to their communities.

## Conclusion

As stated in the introduction, this article has explored benefits and highlighted the need for mentorship in the youth space. Following these benefits, it is essential for relevant bodies such as governmental and non-governmental organizations and religious bodies to effectively incorporate mentorship within their programmes as this will yield better positive outcomes that will drive appropriate change. Furthermore, young people should actively seek mentors willing to impact their personal and professional development positively.