DESIGN

This first stage lays the groundwork for a successful exchange. End-to-end planning begins with audacious goal setting, assessing the landscape and profiling mentors and mentees.[10] While gathering sufficient resourcing is a critical success factor, effective mentoring does not necessarily begin with this step. To have an effective design, good practices to include are:

1 **Reflect and detail what the role of the mentoring program will be and what success looks like**

Mentoring alone can be a powerful tool and can unlock solutions when done intentionally.

> **Mentoring is the glue that binds and amplifies the impact of it all together – skills, knowledge, access to capital, business training and networking. Mentoring unlocks the potential for all those other interventions.[11]**

However, a major risk is not knowing or losing track of the intentions of the program. Is there a clear sense of why this mentoring program should exist? What ultimate problem(s) is being addressed? What measurable outcomes will this mentoring program achieve? Having a compelling 'why' from the start allows for customization of supporting program components.

2 **Define effective mentoring elements using demand- and supply-side assessments**

It is important to intentionally assess the specific issues preventing the vision above from becoming reality. This could be testing whether mentoring is a suitable solution, and if so, which elements are critical to design. There are two popular assessment approaches: first, defining the challenges facing MSME leaders (demand-led) and then aligning with the mentor capabilities to address these challenges (supply-led), or vice versa.

Demand-led assessment
The four-step demand-led approach qualifies and quantifies the challenges affecting MSME leaders. It informs how profiles, personas, and/or archetypes of potential mentees are created.

First, it is important to clearly target the intended MSMEs to serve. This often means segmenting the wider market by the type of enterprise, maturity of the enterprise, a specific sector(s), and/or demographics of the MSME leaders (e.g. age, gender). Having a clear sense of who to support then allows for digging deeper into the challenges they are facing.[12]

Second, with a clear target population(s), it is then important to understand and map needs, to determine the right type of support they should receive. This analysis of needs and challenges facing MSMEs can be completed using systems change and traditional business approaches (e.g. SWOT, power/asset mapping).

Third, each element of the mentoring program should tie back to one or more of the needs and challenges above. This is especially necessary, given that mentoring, coaching, and advisory approaches offer different benefits and risks to supporting an MSME leader's needs. Including this assessment early on helps prevent mentoring from being used as a one-size-fits-all solution, when in fact a different type of support may be more appropriate.[13] The design of the mentoring program's activities, systems, and structures should accommodate these needs.

[10] YBI, 2018 , [11] Interview with Kathleen Bury, Mowgli Mentoring, 2020, [12] Interview with Oscar Artiga, TechnoServe, 2020,
[13] Interview with Matthew Guttentag, ANDE, 2020

Finally, the corresponding supply-led approach prioritizes defining the capabilities that mentors should offer that address the MSME challenges. The goal is creating a set of mentor profiles, personas, and/or archetypes. Are these identified mentors bringing the experience, skills, and/or resources that target MSME leaders need? If so, what should their roles and responsibilities be?

Supply-led assessment

A supply-led assessment begins with understanding the existing capabilities of a mentor pool first, segmenting the market and then profiling potential mentees. The market and potential mentees may exist, but the program can also create them.

DEEP DIVE: THE IMPORTANCE OF A VISION AND OF SETTING OUTCOMES ON MENTEE SELECTION

In practice, assessing the effectiveness of an MSME mentoring program depends on the ultimate vision and outcomes for the target population of mentees. Much of the effectiveness comes from achieving a mentee's learning objectives during sessions. However, based on desired measures of success, there are insights that may be informative in terms of what MSMEs to design for:

- Survivability and increased resiliency are often a result of mentoring.[14] Targeting micro-enterprises can result in these successes but not others (e.g. turnover).

- As opposed to supporting small firms to survive, research suggests focusing on growing SMEs with the potential to create a higher number of quality jobs.[15]

- Mentoring is often perceived to be most valuable during the early stages of any developing business. This is especially true for MSMEs given their limited systems, resources, and capabilities.[16] However, the evidence supporting this is mixed depending on the size of the mentee and their operating environment.[17]

- Larger growth results over time from mentoring may be most likely for MSMEs transitioning between different growth stages.[18]

- Research suggests that mentoring programs are most effective if focused on urban areas where it is easier for MSME leaders to access resources (e.g. a higher density of other businesses as clients, suppliers, and/or partners, internet penetration).[19]

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3 ## Design mentoring program elements from a needs perspective (e.g. systems, structures)

Structured parameters can be put in place, which help determine and set expectations for the recruitment, training, and matching processes provided by your mentoring program. The extent of systems and structures used provides guiderails to an otherwise free, undefined exchange between mentors-mentees that may or may not lead to the intended impact. From expert interviews, the structure(s) should be anchored in an approach that offers support, guidance, comfort and accountability to potential mentors and MSME mentees.[20] Formal mentoring programs typically provide support such as curricula, tools for monitoring outcomes, and guidance

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[14] Brooks et al., 2018, [15] Page and Soderbom, 2015, [16] Department for Business, Innovation, and Skills, 2013; Devins et al, 2005,
[17] Brooks et al., 2018; Bloom, Nicholas, et. al. 2013., [18] Greiner, 1998; Mowgli Mentoring, 2020, [19] Davidsson et al., 2002; Sleuwaegen and Goedhuys, 2002,
[20] Bury, 2020,

as needed.[21] Defining the use and role of technology is also critical, depending on how mentoring will be carried out. To increase the likelihood of an effective exchange, once matched, mentor and mentee should establish additional, context-specific parameters.

4 Collect and invest adequate resources into launch

With a clear sense of purpose for the program, target participants, and a framework for the support on offer, it is important to consider the resource investment required. Mentoring programs tend to fall apart due to underestimating staff, time, and money.

> People do not feel that they need to invest in mentoring, they think it should be for a cheap price or free. They believe anyone can do it. It really depends. You might be able to tell people what to do — but that is not mentoring.[22]

Taking the time to invest in a strong, well-resourced, intentional program from the start is critical to developing long-term mentoring effectiveness. Resources include time, staffing (especially a skilled program manager), money, networks, infrastructure, and technology.[23]

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[21] Guttentag, 2020, [22] Bury, 2020, [23] Bury, 2020