



# Digital mentoring programme

Design and implementation how-to guide

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**Address**

Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 36 + 40  
53113 Bonn  
Germany  
T +49 228 44 60-0  
F +49 228 44 60-17 66

Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1 - 5  
65760 Eschborn  
Germany  
T +49 61 96 79-0  
F +49 61 96 79-11 15

**Editor**

Dr. Amina Steinhilber, Vanessa Dreier

**Responsible**

Björn Richter, Sector Programme Digital Development

**Design/layout**

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**Authored by**

Jigsaw Consult, London, United Kingdom  
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH  
Projects:

- New Perspectives through Academic Education and Training for young Syrians and Jordanians (JOSY), Amman, Jordan
- Sector Programme Digital Development, Bonn, Germany

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# 1. Overview

The following manual is presented as a step-by-step guide for designing and implementing a digital mentoring programme, comprised of lessons learned from a pilot implemented by the “New Perspectives through Academic Education and Training for young Syrians and Jordanians” (JOSY) project<sup>1</sup>. JOSY is a scholarship programme for Syrian refugees and socially disadvantaged Jordanian students that partnered with Kiron, a social start-up that provides online learning and higher education to refugees, to implement this pilot. The mentoring pilot was designed to improve job prospects and the future outlook of Syrian refugee and Jordanian students through matching students with mentors in their field and bringing them together via an online platform.

This guidance manual is framed within four phases (inception, design, implementation, and evaluation) and ten key steps for designing and implementing a digital mentoring programme. Learning from the JOSY pilot is drawn into relevant sections, and checklists for programme managers are included throughout the manual. The manual closes by offering concluding remarks and relevant resources are provided in Annex A.

# 2. Background

The digital mentoring pilot combines two emphases of German development policy: promoting refugee employability and digitalisation. The combination of these two areas potentially offers a scalable solution to address access and equity gaps in the provision of quality employability programming for refugees, and provides an effective approach to contribute to both lines of policy through simultaneous delivery. In 2017, the BMZ endorsed its digital strategy which sets out how challenges can be tackled and how digital opportunities can be leveraged. The topics of displacement and migration are important pillars of this strategy, particularly as forced displacement reaches unprecedented levels (65.3 million people worldwide<sup>2</sup>). This has created a significantly challenging environment to provide sustainable access to quality employability programming for young refugees. A wide range of digital initiatives have emerged with the specific aim to promote key employability skills for refugees that offer online or blended learning<sup>3</sup> formats to address this challenge. It is increasingly recognised that online and blended learning models offer a unique opportunity for refugees pursuing skills development to access quality materials and professional mentors, with increased flexibility for time, access location, and options to determine their preferred depth of interactions and learning within the programme. In addition, a greater number of programme participants can be reached, data can be monitored easily and used to make immediate improvements to the programme content and structure, and there can be substantial cost savings<sup>4</sup>.

1 The JOSY project is funded by the German Government through GIZ within the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) special initiative: ‘Tackling the root causes of displacement, reintegrating refugees’. The implementing partner for the digital mentoring programme is Kiron Open Higher Education gGmbH.

2 UNHCR (2016). Missing out: Refugee education in crisis. Retrieved from: <http://www.unhcr.org/57d9d01d0>

3 Blended learning is a combination of online digital media with traditional classroom methods.

4 Toolkit – Digitalisation in Development Cooperation and International Cooperation in Education, Culture and Media: <https://www.giz.de/fachexpertise/downloads/bmz2016-en-toolkit-digitalisation.pdf>

In this context, providing evidence of the outcomes of digital employability programmes designed for refugees becomes critical to inform the evidence base for 'ICT4Refugees'<sup>5</sup>. GIZ endorsed the Principles for Digital Development<sup>6</sup> in March 2018 and is therefore committed to a systematic process by which to ensure quality and rigour specific to digital programmes in developing contexts. Similarly, BMZ has a strong strategic approach to digitalisation in development partnerships, with the explicit aim to improve the digital inclusion of people in developing countries. To this end, the BMZ is committed to the increased use of innovative digital approaches and partnerships with social start-ups.

## JOSY digital mentoring pilot

### Overall pilot goal:

Improved job prospects and future outlook of Syrian refugee and Jordanian students.

- Syrian students develop alternative perspectives on the Jordanian job market or alternative intermediate goals.
- Jordanian students gain additional employability skills and build up competencies related to their individual vocational path.

### Target beneficiaries:

- Syrian refugees and socially disadvantaged Jordanians recruited from JOSY's student population and by Kiron
- Balanced gender ratio of 50/50

### Student number breakdown:

- 19 students completed the programme
- 21 students did not complete the programme

### Interventions:

- Mentee / mentor matching process
- eLearning
- IT platform
- Volunteer mentoring service
- Support services, FAQs and help desk

Online mentoring programmes have a number of benefits for the participants. The programmes can offer an opportunity for students to engage with a wider selection of professionals in their field of interest through the use of a computer-generated algorithm designed to appropriately match mentors and mentees based on values, interests and objectives. Online chat functionality offers a flexible environment for mentors and mentees to arrange meetings. With the use of an integrated mentoring platform with eLearning tasks, goal-setting, and support services, mentees can also have access to an individualised learning experience on their own schedule from anywhere they can access the internet.

The JOSY pilot aimed to build professional confidence, communication and interpersonal skills. The aim of this programme was for students to benefit from being coached by skilled professionals in their field, thus better preparing the transition from the academic to the professional world. Because of the fragile working context and uncertain employment futures for the students, the pro-

5 Mason, B. & Buchmann, D. (2016). ICT4Refugees: A Report on the Emerging Landscape of Digital Responses to the Refugee Crisis. GIZ publication.  
Retrieved from: [https://regasus.de/online/datastore?epk=74D5roYc&file=image\\_8\\_en](https://regasus.de/online/datastore?epk=74D5roYc&file=image_8_en)

6 The Principles for Digital Development (<https://digitalprinciples.org>) are nine 'living' guidelines to help practitioners integrate established best practices into technology-enabled development programmes. See Annex A for further information.

programme intended the mentors to encourage developing alternative and creative approaches regarding pathways to employment. This programme ran from November to December, 2017 whereby mentees could log onto the mentoring platform and complete eLearning exercises as well as set up individual mentoring sessions with the mentors they had been matched with.

The following manual draws on the learning from this pilot and presents guidance for designing and implementing digital mentoring programmes.

### 3. Mentoring programme inception to evaluation in ten steps

This section is framed within four phases and ten broad steps for researching, designing, implementing and evaluating a digital mentoring programme. The four phases and associated steps are interrelated and may often overlap. Considerations for these phases draw on the learning from the JOSY pilot, but activities within each phase will of course vary depending on the unique operating context of the programme.

Each step is described in detail below, and incorporates insights from the JOSY pilot through an analysis of pre- and post-programme data, course usage data, as well as interviews and focus groups with programme stakeholders. Relevant checklists for programme managers have been included throughout. While the timeline of these activities will vary depending on the programme context, a sample timeline for programme activities is included for each phase.

Inception phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Step 1: Map mentees, mentors and other stakeholders</li> <li>• Step 2: Understand the operating environment</li> <li>• Step 3: Explore other mentoring programmes</li> </ul>
Design phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Step 4: Define programme objectives and assess resources</li> <li>• Step 5: Design mentoring activities and platform</li> <li>• Step 6: Establish clear programme learning cycles</li> </ul>
Implementation phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Step 7: Mentoring platform facilitation and mentor coordination</li> <li>• Step 8: Maintenance and support</li> <li>• Step 9: Monitor and track progress</li> </ul>
Evaluation phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Step 10: Conduct post-processing</li> </ul>

### 3.1 Mentoring programme inception phase

The objective of the inception phase is to approach potential participants, mentors and key stakeholders, identify the learning needs and interests of the students, explore other programmes to learn from, and design the concept of the programme.

Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6	Month 7	Month 8	Month 9	Month 10	
Inception phase: <i>Market analysis, student &amp; mentor focus groups, questionnaire</i>										
		Design of content & platform								
					Implementation of pilot					
								Evaluation of pilot		

A participatory and iterative approach should be used from the beginning of the inception phase. Designing the programme *with* the beneficiaries and not *for* the beneficiaries is an element of design that will aid in making the programme components more relevant to user needs and more applicable to the operating context. Remember that the more involved key stakeholders are in the programme design, the more likely the outcomes are to be appropriate and sustainable. See resources in Annex A for further guidance on participatory approaches.

In addition, during the first steps within the inception phase, a steering committee should be formed to direct the programme and discuss challenges and areas of opportunity as a consortium. The JOSY pilot consortium found that having a steering committee ensures an accurate representation of perspectives when decision-making and defining the programme objectives and activities.

Indicators for this phase (as taken from the JOSY pilot) can include:

- A minimum of (insert appropriate sample size based on the programme) students, mentors and prospective employers participate in the needs assessment.
- A concept for implementation is developed.

#### Step 1: Map mentees, mentors and other stakeholders

The inception of a mentoring programme should begin by identifying the problem that the programme intends to solve. This will inform the target beneficiaries, the unique programme objectives, and the specific activities intended to reach those objectives. For digital programmes it is important that the problem comes first and not the technical solution. For a digital mentoring programme for refugees, this problem statement will likely consider ways to solve obstacles to future learning or career pathways. In addition, it may consider such problems as equitable access to mentors with relevant experience in their field of interest.

### Checklist A: Stakeholder mapping and analysis

- List stakeholders in a visual diagram that indicates their relationships, where applicable. While there may be many, focus on the most important. Include the mentors.
- Estimate the influence that each stakeholder may have on the programme (high, medium, low).
- Estimate the attitudes the stakeholders have towards the programme (positive, negative, neutral).
- Identify strategies for engaging with each stakeholder:
  - Determine who will make contact and how.
  - Define the messages to be communicated.
  - Decide on how follow-up will take place.

A stakeholder<sup>7</sup> analysis should then be conducted to identify targeted beneficiaries<sup>8</sup> and document each stakeholder group's interests and challenges or barriers. By identifying and analysing the stakeholders, this will ensure that the programme is aligned with their needs and capacities, creating realistic conditions by which to design a relevant and effective programme. This is also useful for planning the communications strategy. It should be noted that stakeholder mapping and analysis need not be limited to the research phase of the mentoring programme, but can be done frequently as part of the monitoring plan to track changes in stakeholder needs and attitudes over time. Further resources for conducting stakeholder mapping and analysis have been included in Annex A.

## Step 2: Understand the operating environment

Understanding the operating environment means exploring the unique needs of the intended beneficiaries, assessing whether the local environment is conducive to implementing a mentoring programme, assessing the current demands of the labour market, documenting risks and ways of mitigating them, and assessing the resources needed to effectively implement a mentoring programme.

### CONDUCT A NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The aim of the needs assessment is to explore the potential activities in accordance with:

- Student interests,
- Demographic data and educational background,
- Intended career pathways, and
- Applicability within the wider environment.

<sup>7</sup> From the IFRC guidance document on project planning (see Annex A for link), they define a stakeholder as a "person or group of people who have an interest in the intervention that is being planned".

<sup>8</sup> For the JOSY pilot, this consisted of refugees from Syria and disadvantaged Jordanian students, in line with previous approaches and implemented projects by GIZ.

**Checklist B: Questions for mentoring programme needs assessment**

1. What are reasonable entry requirements for a mentoring programme that target beneficiaries could meet?
2. Is reliable and affordable internet available for beneficiaries to access affordably and reliably?
3. What level of digital literacy do target beneficiaries currently have?
4. Would there be any cultural difficulties in arranging online mentoring sessions? I.e. would this present a problem to engagement in a culture that prefers face-to-face interaction?
5. What does mentoring mean to the target beneficiaries? Do they have any concerns regarding a mentoring relationship?
6. What support services would target beneficiaries need most?
7. What support services would mentors need most?
8. What language skills do beneficiaries have?
9. What language skills do beneficiaries need for this programme?
10. What is the best way for students and mentors to communicate with one another?
11. What accreditation for a mentoring programme is relevant to the needs of the target beneficiaries and applicable to local and international contexts?
12. What time constraints do the beneficiaries have?
13. Are there any psychological or family-related problems that may present as barriers for beneficiaries' participation in the programme?
14. Do male and female beneficiaries experience the same enablers and barriers for participation in the programme?
15. What career goals / aspirations do beneficiaries have? How can a mentoring programme help them attain these goals?

The needs assessment should investigate challenges students from the target group face in order to provide a basis for planning and implementing the components of the mentoring programme. This could be conducted via focus groups or questionnaires depending on the programme scope, and may result in the inclusion of specific help services, such as psycho-social support, or changes to the training for mentors depending on the results.

The JOSY needs assessment was administered through a workshop and a series of webinars to identify their preferences regarding mentors and programme structure. Following the workshop and webinars, an online questionnaire was also circulated, which was answered by 43 students and was also used for their registration in the programme. This questionnaire requested their demographic data (age, nationality, educational qualifications, work experience), their current level of access to devices and internet connectivity, and their mentor preferences including gender and field of expertise. The areas of specialisation the students wanted from mentors included:

- Engineering
- Healthcare
- English and Political Science
- Education
- ICT
- Mathematics

The responses from the needs assessment created a foundation from which to build a programme with relevant eLearning content and to recruit appropriate mentors. The needs assessment also ensured that Syrian refugee students were aware of the difference and specific challenges in their job integration opportunities in Jordan.

## CONDUCT A LABOUR MARKET ASSESSMENT

The inception phase should also involve a labour market analysis. This could take place in the form of a survey, as utilised for the JOSY pilot to assess labour market demands with participants from leading companies in Jordan such as Zain, Migrate and Arab Bank. The results of this survey identified a high demand in the financial sector, telecommunication, engineering, IT/tech, computer science, and technical support. This was incorporated into the design phase of the programme.

### Step 3: Explore other mentoring programmes

This step involves exploring, documenting and analysing relevant literature and programmes in order to understand what has already been developed in the way of digital mentoring programmes and what can be improved upon in future similar practice. In particular, literature and programmes aligned with the unique contextual considerations of the intended operating environment should be considered in order to ensure that the socio-cultural context is informing the design, as this plays a significant role in the ability to introduce technology infrastructure in a community. Experts and programme managers and staff of similar programmes should also be consulted.

If nothing is available in the target sector, the programme should explore what approaches are available in another sector and if they are able to contextualise them for their own purposes. Instead of designing something new, mentoring programmes should consider what they may be able to reuse so as to leverage the gains from previous projects, using their learning to improve practice such as with software, digital tools, content, data security protocols, etc. This should include an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the tool or approach. For digital mentoring programmes working with refugees, programmes should seek literature and other programmes on such areas as:

- Mentoring within the culture (e.g. face-to-face meetings over online).
- Considerations for mentoring refugees or other vulnerable populations.
- Best practices for distance-based professional (or educational, technical, or personal) mentorship.
- Key challenges for distance-based mentoring relationships (and ways to mitigate them).
- Key barriers and obstacles to learning and engagement in online and blended learning environments.
- Relevant accreditation.

Of course the context of the programme will lead to other areas to research during this step, as this list is not exhaustive.

## 3.2 Mentoring programme design phase

The design phase is intended to develop the mentoring programme goals and activities according to the students' needs and interests, and develop mentoring session content and recruit appropriate mentors.

Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6	Month 7	Month 8	Month 9	Month 10
Inception phase									
		Design of content & platform: <i>Measuring current interviewing and job searching skills, researching job trends, development of training modules, design of platform</i>							
					Implementation of pilot				
								Evaluation of pilot	

Indicators for this phase (as taken from the JOSY pilot) can include:

- Content and manuals are developed.
- Integration of material on IT platform completed.
- Training webinar is developed.
- (Insert sufficient number depending on programme scale) of mentors are recruited.

### Step 4: Define programme objectives and assess resources

#### DEFINE OBJECTIVES

Following the research phase, and in accordance with the results of the stakeholder mapping, needs assessment and drawing on learning from other projects and literature, mentoring programme objectives should be clearly defined and agreed on by all partners within the steering committee. Objectives should be clear, realistic, measurable and reflective of any constraints that emerged from the research phase. They should include learning goals and competencies sought from the mentoring activities. These objectives will be followed with the identification of associated deliverables and key milestones. For the JOSY pilot, the objectives were framed around improved job prospects and the future outlook of Syrian and Jordanian students through mentoring.

#### ASSESS RESOURCES

Cost-benefit and resource assessment should take place within both the research and design phases and be appropriately documented and evaluated throughout the lifecycle of the programme. This should result in a programme budget by the end of the design phase of the mentoring programme.

Assessing resources refers to determining the inputs needed and programme budget on the basis of the intended interventions. When considering the cost-benefit of a programme, it is not necessarily only about the amount of money or resources going in, but also whether the resources are being used responsibly. As such, the budget should be accompanied by a clear rationale for each ex-

pense. Digital programmes offer challenges for assessing cost-benefit because of the large upfront costs, so it is important to include components like scalability which may raise the value of the intervention. Support and capacity building activities, for example, should not be underestimated because they can offer longer-term cost savings through building local capacity. As mentioned in the previous step, it is also worth researching what already exists to save on costs. For a digital mentoring programme, this may mean leveraging available software instead of building it from scratch such as using a ready-made and trialled mentoring platform instead of creating a new one, as well as using communication channels students are already familiar with rather than developing new channels and forums.

#### Checklist C: Assess resources

- Identify project costs for the medium and long term.
- Identify resources needed for programme development and implementation. Include direct and indirect costs.
- Identify which interventions will be most beneficial with the resources available.
- Create a realistic budget agreed on by all partners that reflects different partner priorities.
- Ensure that partners understand and agree with what is required of them for resource distribution.
- Evaluate scalability within resource costs – e.g. mentoring platform costs are high but able to scale to x number of programmes in x number of contexts.

Expenses involved in delivering digital mentoring programmes for refugees may involve the following (although this list is not exhaustive):

- System set-up (installation of technology/server, development of mentoring platform, operations testing and training for staff, and integration of additional ICT/systems),
- Needs assessment,
- Outreach to students and mentors,
- Developing eLearning tasks,
- Communication and feedback, and
- Monitoring, data collection and progress reports.

#### Step 5: Design mentoring platform and activities

After the steering committee members have agreed on the programme objectives and budget, the structure and approach of the mentoring activities can be designed. Activity design explores which inputs and activities are most likely to lead to the programme objectives within the budget. This step should result in a clear programme plan that presents the timeline of activities and resources required, roles and responsibilities, key milestones, as well as risks and ways to mitigate for them. The following step is divided into developing recruitment criteria for students and mentors, and designing appropriate mentoring programme components.

## DEVELOP RECRUITMENT CRITERIA

The result of the stakeholder mapping will help identify the recruitment criteria for students and mentors. In line with the Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium (CLCC) quality standards<sup>9</sup>, entry requirements for mentoring programmes working with refugees should:

- Accept alternatives to official transcripts and documents when these are not available and recognise credits from other programmes,
- Be in compliance with national standards, and offer credits that are convertible to international frameworks, and
- Also offer the programme to host communities and / or other vulnerable or displaced communities as well as refugee students at nominal or no cost.

Student selection can take place in an online process like it did for the JOSY pilot, where students can be assessed for suitability. Students were selected based on gender, nationality, study motivation, previous study experience, level of English, and digital literacy.

A recruitment strategy will also need to be formed for mentors. This will likely include their background, area of expertise, current role, experience mentoring and working with vulnerable populations, location, and time available.

## DESIGN MENTORING PROGRAMME COMPONENTS

It is important to first define the *type* of mentorship that the programme aims to engage in, such as: educational mentorship with objectives associated with improving learning outcomes in the educational attainment of mentees; professional mentorship, which may aim to equip mentees with employability skills and insights into appropriate career trajectories; technical mentorship, which may focus on the development of specific skill-sets such as coding, programming, engineering, entrepreneurship, etc.; or personal mentorship, which may focus on the development of confidence, psycho-social well-being and life skills. It is important that all stakeholders agree on the most appropriate model based on the needs of beneficiaries.

A summary of guidance for designing digital mentoring programme components, with lessons learned from the JOSY pilot, is included below:

- Develop a mentor matching process that reflects the needs of mentees and mentors. The JOSY pilot used a proprietary algorithm that facilitated matches between mentors and mentees based on their values, interests and learning objectives.
- The mentoring platform should be designed (or adapted) to include: log-in protection to allow for the set-up of individual mentee and mentor profiles, communication channels such as virtual conference rooms with online video and chat functionalities, eLearning tasks such as goal-setting and relevant exercises to complete weekly, easily searchable job advertisements, and support services. See Figure 1 for the JOSY mentoring platform as an example.

<sup>9</sup> Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium: <http://www.connectedlearning4refugees.org>

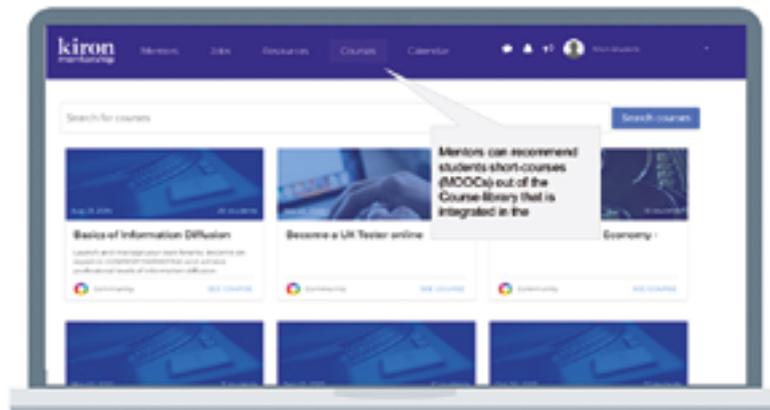


Figure 1: JOSY mentoring platform sample page

- Any software or other ICT tools designed should be appealing and intuitive to use, but often using ones that already exist that beneficiaries may already be familiar with are best. This is especially the case for communication channels for mentees and mentors to communicate with.
- Carefully assess the potential data protection risks at each stage of project development and implementation and take appropriate measures where required. Explicitly inform mentors and mentees what kinds of protection against potential risks can or cannot be guaranteed as an organisation.
- The programme structure should consider scalability and sustainability from the design phase by considering how the programme may be adopted later. This should explore which components may be applicable to different operating contexts, and learning should be documented throughout the programme lifecycle. This could be ensured through working with local technology partners when planning the mentoring elements, exchanging learning systematically with other projects and donors throughout the course of the programme, and evaluating different technical solutions.
- At the beginning of the programme, clearly stipulate how the mentoring and eLearning aims to improve the situations of students. JOSY pilot staff and mentors noted that the aim may have benefited from being refined at the outset to better understand how mentoring will lead to the intended project objectives, as there may have been a misalignment between the skills that the programme focused on and the jobs available in Jordan.

## Step 6: Establish clear programme learning cycles

Programme learning cycles should be documented and agreed on during the design phase to show how learning will be used to inform changes where necessary. This should include refining the programme objectives, and developing a clear Theory of Change and logical framework (log frame matrix) that documents indicators and how they will be measured, which is agreed by all partners. Programme learning cycles should also document how learning will be collected during programme implementation. Resources have been included in Annex A for how to develop a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework and system as well as how to write a log frame.

This should include the following steps:

- Identify indicators that will be used to measure the success of the programme (it should be easy to measure the indicator the same way each time),
- Identify the data source for each indicator, the frequency by which it will be collected, as well as who is responsible for collection and reporting, and
- Provide a clear outline of how beneficiaries' voices and opinions will be incorporated into the programme.

Assessment tools should be non-invasive and sensitive to the characteristics of students and contextualised to their environment. It is important that there is no overlap between surveys and interview requests from different partners. Systematic feedback loops should be put in place and account for feedback to come from off-boarding mentees or mentors who have dropped out of the programme. Lastly, all stakeholders should understand how their voices will be incorporated into programme learning.

### 3.3 Mentoring programme implementation phase

This phase involves implementing the programme plan created and agreed at the end of the design phase. The implementation phase is broken down into three key steps: implementing the mentoring platform and coordinating mentors, providing support services and systematically following-up with stakeholders, and monitoring and tracking the progress of students.

Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6	Month 7	Month 8	Month 9	Month 10
Inception phase									
		Design of content & platform							
					Implementation of pilot: <i>Ongoing delivery and facilitation of the programme, adding content, monitoring student plans, mentor relationships, address enquiries, platform management</i>				
								Evaluation of pilot	

Indicators for this phase (as taken from the JOSY pilot) can include:

- Network training.
- Participatory development of individual career plans / identifying next steps.
- Practice of application procedures (e.g. CV check, job interview, cover letter).
- (Insert appropriate percentage based on programme context) of students report that their mentor has been chosen appropriately to their interests and needs.

#### Step 7: Mentoring platform facilitation and mentor coordination

##### MENTORING PLATFORM FACILITATION

The facilitation of the mentoring platform will likely involve conducting mentor matching, ensuring communication pathways are established between mentors and mentees, providing eLearning exercises to mentees, developing and sending descriptions for each mentoring session with instructions to mentors, and providing job opportunities for mentees to review on the platform. Guidance regarding mentoring platform facilitation, including lessons learned from the JOSY pilot, is summarised as follows:

- Integrate eLearning courses, presentations and activities for mentees on the platform as well as tasks or goal-setting for them to complete. These should be engaging and contribute to the programme aims, as well as consider the amount of time available from students. Mentors should also be aware of these tasks to help motivate their completion, as requested by mentors in the JOSY pilot.
- Ensure that first contact is made between mentors and mentees and a plan is put in place for how and when future contact will happen. Communication remained a challenge for mentors and mentees during the JOSY pilot, with both mentors and mentees citing difficulties in establishing contact, and making and sticking to meeting times online.
- Regularly update job advertisements on the platform. Students from the JOSY pilot requested more online jobs to be listed more frequently on the platform.
- Ensure that support is accessible for how to use the platform. In the JOSY pilot, mentors recommended that further support be offered to mentees for how to use the platform, such as live chat support: *“Some mentees have difficulties with the platform and need more support for how to use the platform and how to set goals”* (mentor).

## MENTOR COORDINATION

Expectations, roles and responsibilities should be outlined for mentors at the outset of the programme and their voices should be included in the structure and design. During programme implementation, mentors should be supported at an operative and content level, and prepared for the learning sessions with webinars, trainings, and explanatory videos. Training should include the unique operating context of the programme, considerations for working with vulnerable populations, as well as background information regarding the contracting authority.

Structural considerations should be reviewed with mentors including the amount of time expected from them, the expected mentee attendance and other operational logistics, training for how to use the platform, recommended methods of communication, and a clear orientation as to the overall programme goals and objectives and how their mentoring feeds into these goals. The following is a framework for a mentor induction package:

- Chapter 1: Background on mentees, their educational levels, and challenges faced
- Chapter 2: Mentoring programme learning objectives
- Chapter 3: Defining the mentoring process in the context of this programme
- Chapter 4: Establishing the mentoring relationship
- Chapter 5: Why be a mentor? Mentor objectives and benefits
- Chapter 6: A mentor will... / A mentor will not... guide / ethical framework for mentoring practice

### Checklist D: Working with mentors

- Review expectations with mentors for their roles and responsibilities.
- Develop a user-friendly induction and training programme inclusive of programme aim and context as well as considerations when working with vulnerable populations.
- Provide guidance for each mentoring session.
- Provide a space for mentors to reflect on successes and challenges together, whether this be online or offline.
- Create clear avenues for mentors to follow-up regarding technical problems and pathways to report on concerns regarding mentees.

Further guidance that draws on the lessons learned from the JOSY pilot are as follows:

- The benefits of mentoring should be explained during the training and mentors should be given a clear idea of how much time will be required from them, and agree to this before beginning mentoring. For the JOSY pilot, Imtiaz (an implementing partner) described how navigating the relationship with mentors can be challenging because they are volunteering their time.
- It is important to provide support for mentors as well as for mentees. Mentors in the JOSY pilot explained this support as a large success of the project, with one explaining: *“Kiron [is] very supportive, open, kind and respond immediately. They reply immediately for any questions or concerns”* (mentor).
- Ensure that relevant curriculum and guidelines for interactions with mentees is provided, as well as a comprehensive overview of the context, structure and long-term targets of the programme. Mentors in the JOSY pilot described this as a challenge during the project.
- A space should be provided for mentors to reflect on successes and challenges together, facilitated by the implementing partner through online or offline pathways (e.g. chat functionality for mentors, Skype meet-ups, coffee meet-ups for those in the same region, etc.). In the JOSY pilot, the mentors requested more collaboration and knowledge exchange opportunities between mentors.
- It is not clear if any mentors and mentees in the JOSY pilot have stayed in touch as these findings were taken from the end of the programme implementation. It is recommended that programmes track this in future to explore the sustainability of the relationship.

## Step 8: Support and follow-up

This step involves offering accessible and relevant support services and systematically following-up with stakeholders to ensure that there are no barriers to participation that can be easily fixed by the programme team, and mentees and mentors feel supported to complete the programme. Support services can include the provision of immediate trouble-shooting for technical difficulties experienced on the platform, comprehensive FAQs, resource guides for students, and contact details for programme staff that beneficiaries can use for specific purposes. These lines of support should be provided throughout the programme and should be accessible and all students should be aware of them.

There should also be consistent communication and responsiveness towards students. This may include supporting the participants’ motivation throughout the programme since it can be difficult for students to remain motivated in self-led programmes and activities, particularly when they are faced with numerous competing priorities. This can include phone calls, e-mails, or alerts on the platform.

### Checklist E: Working effectively as a strategic partnership

- Select an appropriate contract.
- Form a steering committee.
- Develop clear communication pathways and a protocol that has been agreed within the contract by all involved parties, including consistent steering committee meetings.
- Identify the data that will be shared, defining how it will be used, when, by whom and in what form is necessary.
- Provide clarity to all programme implementers regarding what is required from them for reporting purposes.

Follow-up communication with stakeholders also includes follow-up within the steering committee and among programme partners. This may involve monthly or quarterly meetings to discuss a pre-set agenda or for responsible parties to present the progress of the mentoring programme. Expectations should also be consistently managed on the part of the partners regarding roles and responsibilities and partners should be aware of what updates or communication is required from them. A cooperative, open and transparent relationship is needed to develop and implement a programme inclusive of all partners' priorities and needs. In the JOSY pilot, partners felt that there was a good deal of collaboration and flexibility within the strategic partnership between GIZ and Kiron. They also agreed that the steering committee meetings provided an effective structure to their joint decision-making.

### **Step 9: Monitor and track progress**

Throughout the lifecycle of the mentoring programme, the structure and content should be routinely assessed for relevance, effectiveness and efficiency in accordance with the agreed monitoring plan developed in Step 6: Establish clear programme learning cycles. This involves monitoring programme activities, user response and change. The resulting progress reports will inform whether or not the interventions need to be changed or adapted as the programme evolves. This will document the responses from students and mentors from the previous step regarding follow-up communication and should take advantage of simple, cost-effective digital tools like online mini questionnaires to receive immediate feedback from beneficiaries about their experience in the programme. In particular, this should explore:

- Appropriateness and relevance of the mentoring platform and eLearning exercises for the unique characteristics of beneficiaries,
- The relevance and effectiveness of the mentoring relationship,
- Learning priorities, viewing the programme as a step in a longer trajectory of the student's career and personal goals,
- Usage behaviour on the platform, and
- Time or other constraints students may be experiencing, such as access to internet or language barriers.

Adaptations to the programme may be necessary as a result of the monitoring (e.g. developing more Arabic content or offering more study hubs), as well as available support. It is important that the responsible parties collect data carefully and document any challenges in reference to collection (e.g. students are not responding to surveys sent out by e-mail). The monitoring plan, like the entirety of the programme structure, may need to remain flexible and adaptive to the needs of the stakeholders.

### 3.4 Mentoring programme evaluation phase

The aim of the evaluation phase is to measure the impact of the mentoring activities on the beneficiaries and explore the appropriateness of the interventions against the identified barriers.

Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6	Month 7	Month 8	Month 9	Month 10
Inception phase									
		Design of content & platform							
					Implementation of pilot				
								Evaluation of pilot <i>Measure of mentoring pilot success</i>	

#### Step 10: Conduct programme post-processing

While it can be difficult to show direct impact in projects of this nature, monitoring and evaluation tools should measure the programme against the OECD DAC criteria<sup>10</sup>: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Samples for post-processing must be representative for the full population, and the evaluation should be as systematic and objective as possible.

Engagement and attainment, according to the programme indicators (e.g. self-confidence in approaching employers, relevance of materials for their future learning or career pathways), should be assessed against student demographics, considering data and anonymity restrictions. It is critical that data collection instruments be assessed for reliability and validity, and all data collection be explained well to participants and administered in a standardised and objective way. The perspective of the mentors should also be included during the evaluation, conducting interviews or focus groups where possible and ensuring that their insights are well documented. The results of the evaluation then complete the cycle and inform new planning processes, whether for the continuation of the same programme or the implementation of a new intervention.

Lessons learned from the JOSY pilot post-processing are summarised below:

- Develop a realistic, clear, and detailed logframe to apply to an evaluation with reasonable numbers for indicators (i.e. not too low or high) and clear language (i.e. steer clear of vague language and try to be as detailed as possible).
- Anonymise student data while not forsaking being able to track engagement across key demographics (gender, nationality, education level, etc.) and by each student. The JOSY pilot evaluation struggled with being able to disaggregate by demographics as these were not included in the data provided to the external evaluator.
- Do not over-communicate with the students by sending too many requests for feedback. There were concerns from staff and students in the JOSY pilots regarding this oversaturation of requests.
- Ensure there is enough time during the evaluation to adequately measure impact (i.e. it will have to be after the project closes). A challenge of the JOSY pilot evaluation was the timing since there had not been time for changes to fully manifest since the mentoring programme had not yet been completed.

10 OECD DAC criteria: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

## Concluding remarks

The above manual provides guidance on designing and implementing mentoring programmes, drawing on the learning from the JOSY pilot. This guidance is best used in conjunction with other materials, depending on the unique context of the intended programme. Because every programme is different with regard to its beneficiaries, objectives, timeline, resource allocation, etc., it is often best to consult a wide range of resources during the inception phase. This manual intends to provide a foundation of the key components of a results-based approach to programme design and development, and aims to aid in mitigating key problems and challenges digital mentoring programmes may encounter.

# Annexes

## Annex A: Further resources

While there are numerous resources available online for development programmes, the following provides a sample of resources relevant to the above sections. These resources serve as an example of what is available, but it is recommended that further scans take place at the conception of all projects.

<b>Refugee-related resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher Education for Refugees in Low Resource environments<sup>11</sup> (Jigsaw Consult): A landscape analysis and research study regarding refugee higher education.</li> <li>• ICT4Refugees<sup>12</sup>: A report on the emerging landscape of digital responses to the refugee crisis.</li> <li>• Landscape Review<sup>13</sup>: Education in Conflict and Crisis - How Can Technology Make a Difference?</li> <li>• Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium (CLCC<sup>14</sup>): A consortium that “aims to promote, coordinate, collaborate and/or support the provision of quality higher education in contexts of conflict, crisis and displacement through connected learning”</li> </ul>
<b>Digital development-related resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principles for Digital Development<sup>15</sup>: The Principles for Digital Development are nine ‘living’ guidelines to help practitioners integrate established best practices into technology-enabled development programmes.</li> <li>• General programme planning guidance:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to design a new programme<sup>16</sup> (tools4dev)</li> <li>• IFRC project / programme planning<sup>17</sup>: Guidance manual.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Toolkit - Digitalisation in Development Cooperation and International Cooperation in Education, Culture and Media<sup>18</sup>: Checklists to help project managers contextually plan ongoing or new ICT projects, to identify weaknesses in ICT projects and to generate awareness of the range of influencing factors that need to be considered.</li> <li>• Glossary - Digitalisation and Sustainable Development<sup>19</sup>: Terminology from the Digital World for Development Cooperation and International Cooperation in Education, Culture and Media.</li> </ul>
<b>Data protection resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The NGO Tactical Technology Collective’s Security-in-a-box<sup>20</sup>: Web-based toolkit on data security for activists and human rights defenders.</li> <li>• The Responsible Data Forum<sup>21</sup>: This is a network of different organisations that deal with ethics, data protection and security.</li> </ul>

11 <http://jigsawconsult.com/case/higher-education-refugees#.WvRQxtPwb-Y>

12 [https://regasus.de/online/datastore?epk=74D5roYc&file=image\\_8\\_en](https://regasus.de/online/datastore?epk=74D5roYc&file=image_8_en)

13 <http://www.ineesite.org/en/resources/landscape-review-education-in-conflict-and-crisis-how-can-technology-make-a>

14 <http://www.connectedlearning4refugees.org>

15 <https://digitalprinciples.org>

16 <http://www.tools4dev.org/resources/how-to-design-a-new-program>

17 <http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/monitoring/PPP-Guidance-Manual-English.pdf>

18 <https://www.giz.de/fachexpertise/downloads/bmz2016-en-toolkit-digitalisation.pdf>

19 <https://www.giz.de/expertise/downloads/bmz2016-en-glossary-digitalisation.pdf>

20 <https://securityinabox.org/en>

21 <https://responsibledata.io>

<b>Stakeholder mapping &amp; analysis resources</b>	<p>General guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ODI Planning Tools: Stakeholder Analysis<sup>22</sup>.</li> <li>• USAID - Annex A: Stakeholder analysis tool<sup>23</sup>.</li> <li>• Stakeholder analysis: A basic introduction<sup>24</sup> (Research to Action).</li> </ul> <p>There are also many online tools and interactive software for mapping stakeholders using interactive software, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group map<sup>25</sup></li> <li>• Mind tools<sup>26</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Cost-benefit analysis &amp; developing a budget resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget template<sup>27</sup> (tools4dev).</li> <li>• How to do a basic cost-benefit analysis<sup>28</sup> (tools4dev).</li> <li>• Developing a Cost-Benefit Analysis Tool<sup>29</sup>: Experiences and Lessons from Malawi and Mozambique. (Better Evaluation).</li> <li>• Cost-Benefit Analysis in World Bank Projects<sup>30</sup></li> <li>• Good practice review: Cost-benefit analysis<sup>31</sup> (chapter 18).</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring and evaluation resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to write an M&amp;E framework<sup>32</sup> (tools4dev).</li> <li>• How to create a monitoring and evaluation system<sup>33</sup> (tools4dev).</li> <li>• How to write a logical framework<sup>34</sup> (tools4dev).</li> </ul>

## Annex B: Contacts

For questions or concerns regarding this manual, please contact a member of the team:

Regarding...	Name, Title, Organisation	E-mail address
...the JOSY programme	Amina Steinhilber, Advisor, GIZ	amina.steinhilber@giz.de
...the Sector Programme Digital Development	Vanessa Dreier, Junior Advisor, GIZ	vanessa.dreier@giz.de
...Kiron	Markus Kressler, Founder & Head of Corporate Relations, Kiron <sup>35</sup>	markus.kressler@kiron.ngo
...the evaluation approach and methodology	Meaghan Brugha, Researcher, Jigsaw Consult <sup>36</sup> (lead author of external evaluation team)	m.brugha@jigsawconsult.com

22 <https://www.odi.org/publications/5257-stakeholder-analysis>

23 <https://www.usaid.gov/gbv/toolkit-annex>

24 <http://www.researchtoaction.org/2012/05/stakeholder-analysis-a-basic-introduction>

25 <https://www.groupmap.com/map-templates/stakeholder-analysis>

26 [https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newPPM\\_07.htm](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newPPM_07.htm)

27 <http://www.tools4dev.org/resources/budget-template>

28 <http://www.tools4dev.org/resources/how-to-do-a-basic-cost-effectiveness-analysis>

29 [http://www.betterevaluation.org/resources/guides/develop\\_cost\\_benefit\\_tool](http://www.betterevaluation.org/resources/guides/develop_cost_benefit_tool)

30 [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTOED/Resources/cba\\_full\\_report.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTOED/Resources/cba_full_report.pdf)

31 <https://goodpracticereview.org/9/monitoring-and-evaluation/cost-benefit-analysis>

32 <http://www.tools4dev.org/resources/how-to-write-a-monitoring-and-evaluation-framework>

33 <http://www.tools4dev.org/resources/how-to-create-an-monitoring-and-evaluation-system>

34 <http://www.tools4dev.org/resources/how-to-write-a-logical-framework-logframe>

35 <https://kiron.ngo>

36 Jigsaw Consult is a social enterprise that undertakes applied research studies and evaluations in the international development and humanitarian sectors: <http://jigsawconsult.com>



Deutsche Gesellschaft für  
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Registered offices  
Bonn and Eschborn

Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 36 + 40  
53113 Bonn, Germany  
T +49 228 44 60-0  
F +49 228 44 60-17 66

Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1-5  
65760 Eschborn, Germany  
T +49 61 96 79-0  
F +49 61 96 79-11 15

E [info@giz.de](mailto:info@giz.de)  
I [www.giz.de](http://www.giz.de)

On behalf of



Federal Ministry  
for Economic Cooperation  
and Development