

Mentoring school leavers

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

1. What areas might we discuss, or might a student want help with?

Our aim is to help young people develop into well-rounded citizens, so they may wish to discuss and seek guidance on:

- Career options
- Social and communication skills
- Job applications and CV writing
- Preparing for an interview
- Appearance and presentation
- Values and attitudes
- Relationships
- Financial management

However only offer guidance or support in areas that you are comfortable with or feel able to help with. It is ok to say, "I'm sorry but I can't help you in that area". You may be able to refer them to someone or an organisation better placed to help.

2. How long am I committed for?

Mentoring is about building a trusting relationship, so we'd like you to commit to a period of at least six months. At the end of that time, we'll check in with you and the student to see if they need on-going support and if so, whether you wish to continue. Many mentors have remained friends with students they have supported even after the 'formal' mentoring relationship has ended.

3. What will it cost?

It is ok if you wish to buy the student a coffee or soft drink when you meet, but please don't feel that you have to. After all, you are giving them your time.

Please DO NOT give the student money.

Students must learn to provide for themselves. This includes good financial management.

If they ask for money, please advise them that they should begin to save regular small amounts, so they can invest in their own future, either for further training, equipment (like a laptop), or tools or stock for a business venture.

Students should explore all funds available locally, such as those through community programmes or for studying through HELB and TVET.

The Red Rubber Ball Foundation does have a small loan fund which is available in some cases where sponsored students wish to continue their studies or set up their own venture and HAVE ALREADY SAVED towards this. In these cases, they can apply for a small loan to cover the balance – it is interest free, but is a loan, so is repayable within the agreed timescale.

It is important that a student has taken the initiative and shown that they have the dedication to save before we can consider offering them any loan.

4. What other support can we recommend?

Social Entrepreneur Kenya - is a free training programme running at Kibera Town Centre. It runs in June and July and provides guidance on how to start up a business and business management.

And the Red Rubber Ball Foundation can provide work experience at the Field Centre farm in Butere. Students can volunteer to work for between one and three months. Accommodation and food are provided. Students are not paid; however, they benefit from the proceeds of milk sales. These funds are set aside and are available for them to use on further training or business ventures.

There are other community groups and clubs that can be a way to learn new skills and make new friends and useful contacts. These include Rotaract for students - part of Rotary International. Mentors may also benefit by joining Rotary.

5. Where should we meet?

We suggest that you meet somewhere that's public and convenient for you both. This might be a coffee shop, restaurant, club etc. Once you have established a relationship, you may wish to invite the student to your place if work.

You are also then welcome to visit their home if invited - but only if you feel comfortable with this.

We recommend that you Do NOT invite them to your home.

6. What if the student does not reply to my messages?

It is important that they are equally committed, and a life skill for them to learn, is to become reliable - to reply to calls and messages, and attend arranged meetings. If this does not happen, please feel free to contact us and we will remind the student of their commitments. After all, we cannot help them if they do not respond or attend.