

WMF

منتدى مساندة المرأة Women Mentor Forum

WMF Mentorship 1 | 2018 Case Study

Sharing aspirations and inhibitions, connecting and creating a sense of solidarity and community to overcome barriers and move forward.



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First meeting between mentees and mentors



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Mentors' training session



About the Women Mentor Forum

The Women Mentor Forum (WMF) is a for-purpose organisation with a vision to increase the number of women in leadership positions in the private sector. WMF's mission is to provide a developmental program for both women entrepreneurs and corporate women that include knowledge-sharing forums, networking opportunities, mentorship programs and data collection and dissemination.

WMF was launched in May 10 2016 through its first forum 'WMF Forum I: Sustainable Entrepreneurship' followed by another forum in November of that same year, 'WMF Forum II: Up the Ladder'. In 2017, WMF ran the first 'Pilot WMF Entrepreneurs Mentorship Program'. The findings of the pilot program are presented in this case study report. The findings will be used to develop the WMF Mentorship Program for both women entrepreneurs and corporate women.



Foreword from the Founder & President

Besma Al-Qassar

The idea for WMF came to me out of my personal experiences in a corporate career. I became frustrated with making unnecessary mistakes that I later realized would have been easily avoided had I had a mentor that guided me. I later became alarmed when I realised that the lack of access to mentors had not only affected myself and my career but continues to be an issue for many young career women. I constantly come across young career women making unnecessary career mistakes and not knowing where to go for the right guidance.

As I moved forward in my career, I began noticing less and less women in executive and leadership positions. That is when I began to realize that my chances and the chances of many corporate women to move up the ladder were limited because of gender. I learned that the gender issue needs to be tackled by every organisation and in every sector and that women should be supporting from the beginning of their careers and throughout.

During my recent years in the corporate world, I had been exposed to several regional women forums and conferences and was part of a global initiative managed by the IFC that tackled the issue of women in the workplace. Through this experience, I gained awareness on women's economic empowerment and women leadership as global issues that corporations and countries around the world are discussing and finding means to solve. Here I realized that the issues I am facing are not unique to me and Kuwait, and that the

issues of gender equality, diversity and inclusion are real, serious and global. But while these issues are being addressed globally, I found it lacking in Kuwait and made it my mission to bring awareness to these issues in Kuwait and create and deliver solutions for Kuwait's private sector.

I began working on WMF in 2016 and presented two forums in which we invited career women to share their experiences. The response from the participants and the audience was very encouraging. At the end of that year, I immediately set to work on developing the pilot mentorship program that I ran in 2017. It was a great experience from which I came out with solid findings and recommendations that will go into both the WMF Entrepreneurs Mentorship Program and the WMF Corporate Mentorship Program. I present to you here the Case Study Report on the Pilot WMF Mentorship Program that I hope you will find beneficial and insightful.



Mentee: Hawraa Maqseed

The Program

Buzzwords Repeated by Participants: Community, Strength

Five out of the six mentees attended the introductory workshop. Aimed at on-boarding the mentees into the Program, in addition to sharing the ground rules for the Program and relationship between participants, the workshop incorporated introductions by each mentee and goal setting for the mentees as a group and individually. Below were the comments made about the introductory workshop by the participating mentees.

"It was fun and very informative. I loved that we were a group of women with different businesses and goals and that it felt like a community. It is something that we can never take lightly. It sparks ideas and gives a sense of solidarity. It gives us more strength. The group dynamics were very good. I wish we had more of these group meetings." - **Aloa Al-Terkait, Writer**

"I enjoyed it a lot! It helped us narrow down what we want. It helped, and it was good for me. It was also nice to hear what the other participants deal with and what their challenges are. As a result we were more aware of different business issues and aspects." - **Aseel Al-Yaqoub, Visual Artist**

"It helped me. It established between us (the participants) a sense of vulnerability that we connect with. The community sense was one aspect, the feeling was mutual between all of us. On the business level, the workshop made us feel that we are all in it together. It was therapeutic, like having a listening ear." - **Dana Al-Jouder, Interior Designer**

"Helpful! The workshop made me question myself and my business. I got answers as to what I was doing wrong with my business and what I need to change to improve." - **Hawraa Maqseed, Industrial Designer**

"The workshop was nice and I wished it was longer and had more of it. It was a really nice session. And we felt we wanted to be really interactive. It was fun!" - **Noura Al-Ajmi, Chef**

The Program

Number of Meetings

Most of the mentees said that four meetings were sufficient. One mentee wished to have more meetings and suggested monthly to benefit more.

Two mentees were happy with one or two initial meetings and follow-ups by email. They expressed that it was easier to continue by emails or calls, due to busy schedules. And that it was still efficient.

On the other hand, two of the three mentors said that four meetings was not enough and suggested at least six meetings in order for them to follow the mentees' progress. One mentor believed four was sufficient, but that each meeting needs to be followed up by emails. The outcome is that all three mentors believe that mentor-mentee contacts in any form with mentees for only four times a year is not enough. They believe that mentees would benefit from several meetings with shorter time spans between them.



Mentee: Noura Alajmi

The Program

Recommendations to Improve the Program

The mentees' perspectives

All the mentees that attended at least one workshop or group meeting, expressed their wish for more group session. Most suggested focused group consultation session on different business aspects such as: legal, marketing, PR, branding, presentation skills, negotiation skills, influential skills and dealing with clients. In addition, one mentee suggested including one event during the program where all mentors and mentees come together to share their experiences and strengthen the sense of community. One mentees suggested doing webinars.

It was also suggested to have more than one mentor for each mentee. The idea is to benefit from different mentors with different from different fields. Although, the concept of having one mentor follow a mentee's progress remains important. Two mentees has expressed their wish to have women mentors from an older generation.

One mentee described the program structure as very manageable, because she was in control. But another mentee suggested that the project manager should set more regulations. She suggested that the project manager set the one-on-one mentoring meeting dates so participants are obliged to clear out their schedules and have their meetings as per the program structure. She expressed her belief towards the power of the mentorship program. She believes that it is important for each participant to benefit from it. She went to explain that being part of the program was a privilege and should not to be taken lightly. This is why she feels that the Program manager should set the meeting dates for participants.

One mentee felt that while she respects that the program was very professional and the relationship between herself and her mentor was kept professional, she would have liked it to be a little more personal. She felt she had wanted at times to reach out to her mentor for emotional or moral support.

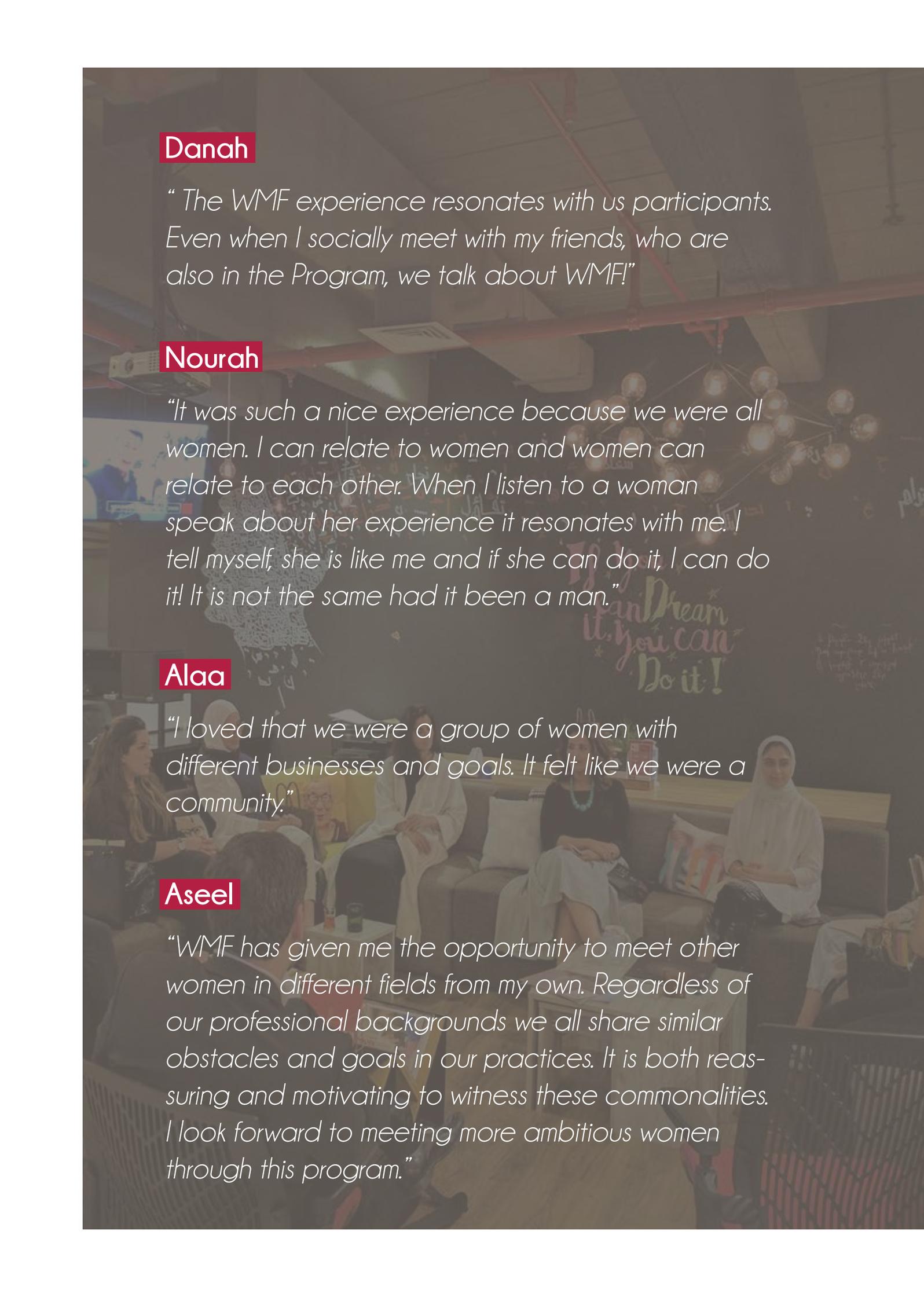
The mentors' perspectives

While two of the mentees believed that having two mentees was manageable, one mentees believed she could manage having four mentees.

Regarding the training they received at the beginning of the program, two mentors believed that they would have benefitted from a more in-depth training in order for them to carry out their responsibility as mentors in the most effective way possible. Two mentors suggested that in addition to the initial training, that mentors would benefit from a mentors' support sessions during the course of the program to share and discuss their mentoring experiences and the knowledge they gained.

To improve the program, one mentor suggested to design the program around a more structured format. She believes that the program would be more effective if the end goals are set at the beginning. This would help the mentors focus on achieving the expected outcome for the mentee. This would also help in setting individual goals for each session and help the mentor focus each session on a defined goal. This in turn would dictate the number of meetings needed to meet all the individual defined goals that would lead to the mentee's expected outcome. With this suggestion, she posed the question as to how would a mentee or mentor define the end goal and success.

She added that the program format could be flexible enough to accommodate individual needs. Women who may already have their plans and know what they want might not necessarily require one-on-one mentor-mentee meetings and may needs to be in group focus sessions to learn about specific aspects of business. In addition, she suggested mentors-mentees group sessions. And possible have mentor-mentee rotations in order for mentees to benefit from diverse experiences.



Danah

“The WMF experience resonates with us participants. Even when I socially meet with my friends, who are also in the Program, we talk about WMF!”

Nourah

“It was such a nice experience because we were all women. I can relate to women and women can relate to each other. When I listen to a woman speak about her experience it resonates with me. I tell myself, she is like me and if she can do it, I can do it! It is not the same had it been a man.”

Alaa

“I loved that we were a group of women with different businesses and goals. It felt like we were a community.”

Aseel

“WMF has given me the opportunity to meet other women in different fields from my own. Regardless of our professional backgrounds we all share similar obstacles and goals in our practices. It is both reassuring and motivating to witness these commonalities. I look forward to meeting more ambitious women through this program.”

Nourah's Story

"I attended WMF's first Forum 'Sustainable Entrepreneurship'. Up until the day before the Forum, I had fears of starting my own business. I knew that to start a business, I had to invest so much of my time, effort and money and that scared me. After hearing the speakers, who were all women like myself and of the same age group, I said to myself why should I make it difficult for me and why shouldn't I just start. The WMF Forum gave me the push I needed.

The speakers' stories motivated me. I felt that the WMF Forum was more focused on sharing knowledge and experiences and encouragement. WMF was about real stories of real women that I can relate to. Those real stories are what gave me the power, confidence and courage to start my business.

After the forum I came out with clear business goals. I began the business process beginning of 2017. At that time I also joined the WMF Mentorship Program. I was matched by the Program manager with a mentor that provide me with guidance on both a personal and professional level.

WMF impacted myself and my business. Both the Forum and the Mentorship Program helped my business because I was exposed to diverse experiences and learned of business matters I was not aware of. The session with the legal business consultant that was provided through the Mentorship Program answered many of my legal questions about contracting and agreements. I also benefited from the other questions posed by my fellow participants.

Through WMF, I learned that the personal values that we live by should be the same values upon which we do business. Personally, I have always been comfortable with admitting to my own mistakes and acknowledging the fact that I am not knowledgeable in any given area. But due to having worked in a male-dominated industry and work culture, I was made to believe that we are not to reveal to others our mistakes or weaknesses. When the women at the Forum openly and confidently spoke about making mistakes and learning from them and as a result their businesses grew and progressed, that made me reflect upon my beliefs and values. So I decided that I should apply the same personal values I live by as my business values.

Also, through the forum I learned that it is ok to ask for help or hire help to manage business areas I am not knowledgeable in. I should not have to claim to know everything, nor should I attempt to do everything myself. Rather, I should focus on my core operations and hire support to manage the business support services.

I opened my restaurant in December 2017. I have also set clear personal goals for myself. I want to gain a culinary degree and to invest in myself and my learning more so I can develop my products and services. My main focus is not on financial returns, but on the quality of the product I want to serve. I am not aiming for rapid growth, but on maintaining sustainability.

My participation in the WMF Mentorship Program was a really beneficial experience. I believe it is such a strong program. I was so happy to be part of it and have the chance to network and meet other women entrepreneurs. It was really nice because we were all women and we can relate to each other. I am able to relate to a woman speaking about her experience because she is a woman like myself. So it makes me think that if she can do then I can do it too. The experience would not have been the same had the mentors been men.



Noura has joined the Cordon Bleu in London following the WMF Mentorship Program

The Business Experience

All mentees confirmed that the WMF programs impacted their businesses in some way or the other. Five out of the six mentees witnessed growth in their business. One out of the six mentees, closed her business; however it was through the mentorship that she realised that the business concept was not right for her and as a result was able to set new and clearer business goals that she can pursue and commit to.

Two mentees had attended the WMF Forum I 'Sustainable Entrepreneurship' in May 2016. At that time, both were corporate employees. But both had fears of leaving their jobs, even though one of them felt her job wasn't rewarding. After attending the forum and listening to female entrepreneurs their same age and with similar background as themselves, they were both empowered and inspired enough to quit their jobs to work on establishing their own businesses within only a few months from attending the forum. In addition to benefiting from the Forum, they also benefited from the mentorship program. So while the Forum, inspired them and motivated them, the mentorship program helped with the business aspects. Now, they are both running their businesses successfully and are generating their own incomes and reached their financial targets. Also, through their businesses they are now able to provide job opportunities to others.

One of the mentees started the program the year she launched her business. As a startup, she was barely covering overhead costs and at one point she had considered getting herself a day job to support herself. However, she

decided to take the challenge and dedicate all her time for her business and she was able to persevere. She was seeking new revenue streams for her business and her mentor kept encouraging her to do so and was always very helpful with brainstorming and drawing from her own personal experience to help relate to her. Her team doubled in number and she is continuously being approached by other freelancers to work with her brand for the reputation she has built for herself and her business brand. This means that she has not only come to support herself financially but has succeeded in providing sources of income for other women.

In general, the program helped the young women entrepreneurs to see themselves as business owners and think with a more professional and business oriented mindset. From legal contracting, company registrations to marketing even using business tools such as business banking to outsourcing business support services, all are important business aspects that the mentees learned to incorporate into their businesses. With a strong business mindset, the women were able to develop their businesses, whether develop stronger more sustainable business concepts or grow their revenue.



Alaa Alterkait

"Having a neutral mentor give me unbiased advice, helped me make the business decisions that were right for me."

"My mentor helped me become assertive, speak my mind and be transparent."

"My mentor helped me discover what I truly want to be. She gave me the courage to follow my passion to become a writer and learn more on how I can make it rewarding - personally and financially."



Danah

"Attending the WMF Forum, listening to the stories of the young women entrepreneurs and gaining awareness on women and business from the statistics that Besma shared, inspired me enough to leave my job and pursue my own business."

"Attending the WMF Forum and listening to young women my age talk about how they built themselves from scratch inspired me."

"Listening to Besma's speech and the statistics she shared on women and business motivated me towards being a business owner."

"After attended the WMF Forum in May, I was so inspired and motivated that I immediately began working on a business concept and logo and by June I resigned from my job. By October I was networking and by January I had my first project and began hiring a part time consultant."



Hawraa

"I was happy to be part of the mentorship program. I liked having a mentor available for me whenever I needed advice and support."

"I love the feeling of being part of a support group, and have connections and relations with people that I can learn and benefit from."

"WMF made me open my mind to business matters I wasn't aware of such as legal contracts and issues related to business."



Nourah

"Before attending the WMF Forum, I was scared of opening my own business because I knew I had to invest so much. After listening to the young women entrepreneurs, I said to myself why should I make it difficult and why shouldn't I just start! The forum gave me that push I needed."

"The WMF Forum wasn't a PR or advertising platform for speakers. It was about real stories shared by young women entrepreneurs that I can relate to and that gave me power."

The Personal Experience

Buzzwords Repeated by Mentees: Inspired, Motivated, Confidence

Mentees' experience

Four out of the six mentees expressed experiencing personal development through the program. Three mentees specifically benefited from a major increase in self-confidence, a key component to starting a business. Others expressed benefitting from being inspired and motivated by the mentors, which are key factors that help in persevering and growing a business .

An interesting result is that the program brought awareness to the mentees in terms of setting realistic visions and being honest with themselves. This awareness is very important in setting realistic and achievable goals and for plan-setting and defining success.

One of the mentees had been working for many years in a male-dominated sector. Before joining the WMF program, she was under the impression that it was not right to acknowledge one's mistakes or ask for help. She learned from the male-dominated workplace that both were signs of weakness. When she attended the WMF Forum, she listened to the successful women entrepreneurs speak about the mistakes they have made and how they have learned from their mistakes and as a result achieved self-growth. That resonated with the mentee. It helped her self-reflect and go back to her true self. On a personal level, she was comfortable with taking ownership of her mistakes and viewing it as an opportunity to learn and grow and was very comfortable with asking for help. Through WMF, she realised that she would benefit from applying this same personal value on the professional level. As a result, she learned to feel comfortable asking for assistance to run different business aspects. She also has learned that through outsourcing business support services, such as advertising, marketing or accounting, she can focus on her core operations and develop and grow her business.

A key insight that came out of the mentorship experience for mentees is being inspired to pursue further learning and hone their technical skills. As all of the mentees pursued crafts and creative based business, towards the end of the program they set goals to elevate their skills in their crafts.

Another interesting insight, is that the mentees began seeing themselves as business women upon joining the program. Before the program, to most of the mentees, the concept of business seemed aggressive and money-focused. This can

be very intimidating to a young woman with only a passion to create and deliver a product or a service but with no business background. Furthermore, they used to view their passions as something that would remain as a side job, almost as a hobby. Through mentoring, and business-focused sessions on goal setting, marketing and legal contracting, most mentees were able to turn their passions into stable and sustainable forms of income from which they gain financial independence.

The key finding here, is that personal development is very important for professional and business development. In fact, it is key to invest in one's personal and self skills to ensure one's professional and business success and sustainability.

Mentors' experience

Self-development and Learning

On a personal, self-development level, the experience differed between the mentors.

For one mentor, being part of WMF was a learning experience. The mentoring experience at which she met women entrepreneurs with diverse businesses and experiences is something she enjoyed and added to her self-development. It was of great interest for her to know of and get involved in the mentees situations. She also mentioned how she had also benefited from all the experiences shared by her co-mentors at the WMF Forum at which she herself was a speaker. She added that the experiences that the women at the Forum shared resonated with her.

For the second mentor, the mentoring experience was reflective. In order to empathise with the mentees, she felt she had to take herself back to the time when she was just starting her own business. She felt she had to remember how she started, her initial mindset and where she was at that time. As a result, the experience took her back to conceptualising. She reflected on the initial inspirations that drove her to start the business and that was a positive experience for her. As to self-development, she experienced a rise in her confidence once she realised that she has solid, beneficial and diverse experiences to share.

The third mentor believed that she would have benefited more from an increased number of mentoring meetings to

The Personal Experience

Buzzwords Repeated by Mentees: Inspired, Motivated, Confidence

develop her mentoring skills.

Self-Discovery

The first mentor found her strength to be more in giving general guidance and emotional support. She believes that the foundation for starting a business is to get to know oneself and that she can coach and guide women discover themselves before starting a business. She finds herself competent in convincing, influencing and motivating others.

The second mentor discovered her strengths - her versatility and curiosity. Both traits were fundamental in leading her to develop and grow her diverse business. She also realised that her business experience was as diverse and that she has a wealth of unique experiences to share even with those that are advanced in their business.

Based on her self-discovery, she decided that she wants to build on her strengths. She decided to remain curious and keep trying new things even if they may seem the least interesting to her because she now knows that is how she expands and grows her business. As to mentoring, she discovered that she is more interested in working with younger mentees. She realised that with the resources she has, she can guide young women to discover their passion and help them with the exploration and brainstorm process.

The third mentor discovered that she is very generous with her time when helping others. She gains great self-satisfaction and would even want to give more of her time to help women succeed in their businesses. She believes that being a woman, she can understand and relate to women's emotions and fears. As to mentoring, she discovered that she wants to develop her mentoring skills to a professional level adding that to her consultancy services, granted that an external party would manage the mentorship program.

All three experiences prove that it is essential for those that want to become mentors to first test themselves through practical mentoring experiences to understand where their strengths lie and what the capabilities are when it comes to mentoring. It is also about discovering where one belongs in order to present themselves as mentors.

The Experience

All three mentors enjoyed the experience of mentoring and want to continue doing it on both an individual, one-on-one

basis and for groups. It was an experience from which they learned a lot about themselves on both a personal and professional level giving them greater confidence in their potentials.



Alaa Alterkait

"Before joining the mentorship program I used to be emotional and irrational in my thinking. My mentor taught me to be reflective and take my time before coming to decisions. As a result, I gained confidence and began to trust my opinions and decisions."

Hawraa Maqseed

"The mentorship program inspired me to further develop my technical skills and learn new things in the business of design."

Noura Alajmi

"I set a goal to invest in myself so I can develop my products and services."

"WMF taught me to focus on the quality of my product, rather than on financial gains. Instead of rapid growth, I learned to work on maintaining business sustainability."

Findings and Recommendations for an Effective Mentorship Program

The Program Structure

Goal Setting Workshop

Mentees benefit greatly from an initial workshop where they are coached into setting their goals for the program. Goal setting and defining success is crucial at the individual level for mentees. This allows for setting the goals for each mentor-mentee meeting and the number of meetings required to meet all the goals. This also helps mentors focus on guiding the mentees towards their goals.

Psychometric Testing

It is highly beneficial for mentees to undergo psychometric tests in order for them to know their strengths and weaknesses. This helps them define the skills they want to focus on during the program; in addition to becoming aware of how they can work and what they can excel in.

Number of Meetings

A minimum of six mentor-mentee meetings within a one year program allows for more focused mentoring and adequate follow-ups.

Group Sessions

The program is more effective when incorporated with group topic-focused sessions. For example, an entrepreneurs program would include sessions for different business aspects: marketing, PR, accounting, customer service, negotiation, etc. Group sessions proved to be a successful approach on different levels. The participants gain business support knowledge and at the same time their confidence and motivation is boosted. The group dynamics has a great effect on participants' morale. It allows them to meet others that are going through the same phase and that creates a sense of community and support system.

Leadership Workshops

A leadership skills workshop focused on communication, presentation, influencing, self-branding, etc. would be highly beneficial for mentees as it gives them the skills they need to move forward in their career. In addition the group workshop provides a networking opportunity, and creates a supportive bond between mentees.

Flexible Approach

The program could be flexible enough to allow mentees to choose to benefit from either both the one-on-one mentor-mentee meetings and the group topic-focused sessions, or only the group sessions and workshops. Choosing to join the group session only would be possible for mentees that know what they want and how to achieve it, but only require to benefit from knowledge on certain business aspects. Choosing to have only mentoring meetings without the group sessions is not a recommended option, as the participant would miss out on the networking and the support platform that the program offers through the sessions and workshops.

First Meeting

The first meeting, after the goal setting and psychometric testing, needs to be more of a 'listening session', where the mentor asks questions and listens to the mentee more than give advice. This allows the mentor to gain the mentee's trust by showing a genuine interest in the mentee's aspirations and fears. It allows the mentee to get comfortable while the mentor gathers enough information and knowledge about the mentee and her personality in order to continue with an effective mentoring relationship.

Women to Women

A women to women mentoring program is a highly effective one as it creates a safe zone for women to meet, connect and support. The key to this is because women can relate to women.

Findings and Recommendations for an Effective Mentorship Program

Program Management

Goal Setting Workshop

Managing meetings and workshops

It is crucial for the program manager to closely manage the meetings and workshops to ensure the program's success for all participants, mentors and mentees.

Selecting and Training Mentors

The program manager has a responsibility to select and train mentors that would add value to the program and monitor their performance.

Program Assessment

Assessments throughout and at the end of the program is critical to continuously review and improve the program.

Meeting Venues

While the program manager may provide or suggest a safe and professional venue for meetings, the mentors and mentees can feel free to meet at any public place that is convenient to them such as a coffee place. However, it is not recommended for meetings to take place at either the mentors' or mentees' workplaces.

No-Fault Break

Mentees and mentors need to feel safe and comfortable enough to express their wish to discontinue a mentor-mentee relationship at any time and for any given reason. In such cases, the program manager informs both parties and provides the mentee with an alternative mentor.

Findings and Recommendations for an Effective Mentorship Program

The Mentors

Training

Mentors require in-depth training on both mentoring and coaching to become effective mentors.

Practical Training

After training, new mentors to the program would benefit from "trial mentoring" where they get to experience mentoring several mentees. The new mentors would be assessed by the mentees as well as undergo a self-assessment to define what suits her and what she can offer in terms of mentoring.

Assessment

Mentors need to be assessed periodically to give them the roles that they can fulfil. For example some mentors are better suited for group coaching rather than one-on-one coaching. Others might be better suited for mentoring on a specific area rather than general guidance. It is the program manager's responsibility to find out the strengths of each mentor and assign them the right mentoring responsibility.

Roles

The strengths and capabilities of each mentor must be defined and made clear to participating mentees. Diversity - Different mentees have different preferences when it comes to mentors. It is best to have a diverse group of mentors in a program. The diversity is also important to bring in different perspectives. The diversity would be in terms of years of experience and business backgrounds.

Follow-ups

Periodical follow-ups with mentors from mentoring and coaching trainers are required to give mentors support and advice.

Meetings

Holding a mentors' meeting, at least once during the program, is crucial to follow-up on the mentors and allow them to share and discuss their mentoring experience.

Sustainability

It is wise to invest in the first generations of mentors in order to have them train and mentor the coming generations of mentors. This way we ensure having a sustainable and expanding network of experienced and competent local mentors.

Conclusion

Mentoring - does it help women?

When I set to begin working on the pilot program, my goal was to answer one main question. Will mentoring help young women succeed in their careers? Now and after completing and assessing the Pilot WMF Mentorship Program, the answer came loud and with great confidence - Yes! Mentoring helps young career women develop not only on a professional level but also on a personal level. Through mentoring and the accompanying workshops and sessions, participants are equipped with the essential personal skills and professional knowledge they need to succeed, whether as entrepreneurs or as corporate women.

Because of the length of the program, which is one year, the impact that it has on the participants is more profound than the impact that training courses or workshops, which are usually a few days long, have. The long-term nature of the program allows for the mentees to absorb the learning and development at a longer but a more sustainable pace, yielding more impactful and long-lasting results.

There is also the psychological aspect involved. When a young woman knows that a more experienced woman that can relate to her is there for her to listen to her, guide her and support her, it gives her great comfort and confidence - a key ingredient to success.

A pleasant surprise was the impact that the group meetings and sessions had on the young women. Women benefit from a support group of like-minded women. When women meet

and openly share their aspirations and inhibitions they connect and create amongst them a sense of solidarity and community that they need to overcome barriers and move forward. The key reason here is because we as women can relate to each other, firstly as women and secondly as career women. This is something I have personally experienced and benefitted from through the Lean In circle that I have been a part of since 2017. Not only have I developed my 'essential skills' needed for leadership, but I have thrived on the support I receive from my circle peers that keep cheering me on. Without a support group, women may be left feeling alone in their fears and dreams.

With the findings of the WMF Pilot Mentorship Program, I look forward to advancing the WMF Entrepreneurs Mentorship Program and the WMF Corporate Mentorship Program that I aim to present to aspiring young career women that want to grow and thrive in the private sector. With the support of our Partners, we aim to reach our vision that is to witness a rise in women leaders, benefitting our economy and our national well-being.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank all the wonderful and brave women that participated in the the WMF Pilot Entrepreneurs Program.

Thank you to the inspiring women entrepreneurs that took part in this new experience: Farah Al-Humadhi; Dalia Al-Gharabally and Danah Behbehani.

I am proud of the aspiring young women entrepreneurs that chose to begin their journey to success as mentees in the program: Aseel Al-Yaqoub; Hawra Maqseed; Noura Al-Ajmi; Alaa Al-Terkait; Danah Al-Jouder. I am equally proud of the participant that wishes to remain anonymous.

Forever grateful to Dr. Emma Langman for delivering the training for our first generation of WMF Mentors and facilitating the goal-setting coaching session for the mentees.

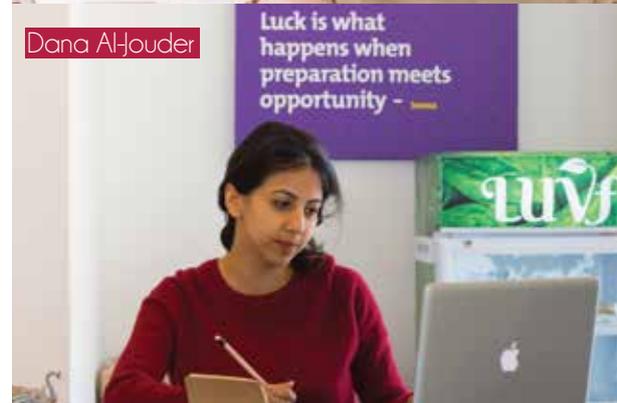
And a big thank you to the strong women that continue to support me and the WMF vision.

Thank you Alanoud Al-Sharekh. Thank you Leslie Mouawad. Thank you Fudha Aboukhamseen.

Alaa Alterkait



Dana Al-Jouder



Hawra Maqseed



Aseel Al-Yaqoub



Noura Alajmi





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