

Digital Apprenticeship Program



A Guide for Mentors (Tech Buddy).

Digital Apprenticeship Program



What is the Digital Apprenticeship Programme

The Digital Apprenticeship program is an initiation by the UK- Kenya Tech hub implemented by [Eldohub](#) in partnership with [Thunderbird School of Global management](#) that will be running across Kenya.

The program places 40 Junior Tech Professionals(JTPs) in SMEs, Tech Startups, scaleups and traditional businesses looking to digitize their businesses. The Digital Apprenticeship Programme aims to provide practical work experience to junior technology professionals as well as expose tech and non-tech businesses to the benefits of digital enablement.

In this program, the junior technical professionals will be matched to either a digitally enabled start-up/scale up or a non-tech traditional business to deliver a specific agreed project which could include a website, business intelligence, a chatbot etc.

This programme was initiated out of the need to:

1. Provide practical work experience to Junior Technology Professionals (**JTP**) and
2. Expose non-tech businesses to the benefits of digital enablement.

An additional component of advisory/mentorship will be added to ensure the junior technical professionals get the support they require through a tech buddy network.

What does mentoring entail within the Digital Apprenticeship Programme

1. **Mentor Matching-** This entails matching one mentor to one junior tech professional. This will be done by Eldohub using the bio profiles of both mentors and Junior Tech Professional.
2. **Documentation-** This includes:
 - Mentorship guide- This contains all the information in regards to the programme and mentorship to help mentors navigate through the 3 month mentorship period.

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- Mentorship agreement- This confirms written and signed consent that the mentor has committed to mentoring a JTP for the next 3 months (January- March).
 - Weekly reporting template- This document that captures weekly updates of the mentor- mentee conversations, any deliverables and progress during the 3 month period.
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3. **Mentor Master Class & Orientation-** This will be a one hour virtual session between the digital apprenticeship team and mentor. We will go through:
 - Digital apprenticeship programme
 - Mentor role within the digital apprenticeship program
 - Documentation submitted to mentors
 - Q&A session
 4. **Weekly 1 hour mentoring sessions-** This is mandatory and can take place physically or virtually depending on mentor preference. By the end of the programme the mentor and mentee should have met for a total of 10 hours.
 5. **Weekly reporting on the 1 hour mentoring session-** This included meeting highlights, deliverables and updates. **The JTP will be responsible for filling and submitting this report weekly to info@eldohub.co.ke.**

Some questions should be reflected upon prior to committing to the relationship:

- **What experiences and learning can I bring to the mentoring relationship?**
- **What are my own expectations for the relationship?**
- **Are there any obstacles that could impede the relationship's development?**

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Key Mentoring Skills:

As you progress through the mentoring relationship, try to employ these skills whenever possible.

1. Listening Actively

Active listening not only establishes rapport but creates a positive, accepting environment that permits open communication. By listening actively, you will ascertain your mentees interests and needs. Examples include the following:

- Show interest in what he or she is saying, and reflect back important aspects of what is said to show that you've understood;
- Use body language (such as making eye contact) that shows you are paying attention to what he or she is saying; and
- If you are communicating by phone, reduce background noise and limit interruptions. Your mentee will feel that he or she has your undivided attention. When utilizing e-mail, answer within 24 hours if possible, and be sure your message is responsive to his or her original message.
- Reserve discussing your own experiences or giving advice until after your mentee has had a chance to thoroughly explain his or her issue, question, or concern.

2. Building Trust

You will increase trust by keeping your conversations and other communications with your mentee confidential, honoring your scheduled meetings and calls, consistently showing interest and support, and by being honest with your mentee.

3. Determining Goals and Building Capacity

As a role model, you should share your own career and personal goals when appropriate, with your mentee. It is also likely that he or she will ask you how you set and achieved your own goals. You can help your mentee identify and achieve his or her career and personal goals by:

- Assisting him or her with finding resources such as people, books, articles, tools and web-based information;

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- Imparting knowledge and skills by explaining, giving useful examples, demonstrating processes, and asking thought-provoking questions.
- Helping him or her gain broader perspectives of his or her responsibilities and organization; and
- Discussing actions, you've taken in your career and explaining your rationale.

4. Encouraging and Inspiring

Giving encouragement is the mentoring skill most valued by mentees. There are many ways to encourage your mentees.

- Comment favorably on his or her accomplishments;
- Communicate your belief in his or her capacity to grow personally and professionally and reach his or her goals; and
- Respond to his or her frustrations and challenges with words of support, understanding, encouragement and praise.
- Describe experiences, mistakes, and successes you or others have encountered on the road to achieving your goals;
- Talk with him or her about people and events that have inspired and motivated you; and
- Introduce him or her to your colleagues who can be additional useful contacts or inspiring models.

Reflecting on your mentoring practice, noting use of the key mentoring skills, observing progress made in the relationship, and requesting feedback from your mentees are excellent ways to assess whether you are employing these skills.

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Stages of Formal Mentoring Relationship

1. Building the Relationship:

During this phase, you will get to know each other and begin to establish trust.

You will discuss backgrounds, experiences, interests, and expectations. You will also make agreements about confidentiality and the frequency of contact. It is important to establish a schedule for communicating regularly, whether in-person, by phone, or e-mail.

Ask questions such as:

- Tell me a little more about yourself, your skills, your organization or community, the political environment, some key challenges you are facing, etc. (Begin by reflecting back a few of the key experiences and interests he or she expressed during your first meeting.)
- How have you benefited from other mentoring relationships?
- What are some of your goals for our mentoring relationship?

2. Exchanging Information and Setting Goals:

During this stage, you will exchange more information and set goals. Your relationship and trust will deepen. As the mentoring relationship unfolds, be attentive to practicing active listening and consistently expressing encouragement.

Helping Your Mentee Set Goals:

By exchanging information, you will gain insight into the goals your mentee hopes to achieve through the mentoring relationship. Mentors have provided their mentees with input and support on a great variety of issues and challenges. For example, your mentee may want to improve his or her skills in a particular area. Alternatively, he or she may need your guidance on a major decision.

Goals are helpful because they help the mentee see beyond the day-to-day demands of his or her position and help him or her gain clarity on how to get the most out of the mentoring relationship. Encourage your mentee to discuss his or her goals with you. Suggest that he or she complete the Goal Form and share it with you.

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Coach your mentee to refer back to his or her goals periodically as a way of re- focusing on goals and measuring progress. Referring to the goals regularly is also a good way for you to know if you are helping him or her achieve them.

3. Working Towards Goals/Deepening the Engagement

This stage is typically the longest, you will help your mentee work towards achieving goals through conversations, sharing written materials, trying various learning and development activities, and introducing him or her to other colleagues. This is a rich phase marked by openness, trust, meaningful discussion, and application of new insights and approaches.

This is a good point in the journey to reflect on progress toward goals and on the relationship itself. Consider discussing the following:

- What are the benefits of the relationship up to this point? How am I helping the mentee achieve your goals?
- What changes do you see in yourself and in the way you approach your work as a result of the mentoring relationship?
- What kinds of adjustments or changes, if any, are needed in your goals or in our relationship?

This is a highly rewarding phase of the relationship, but challenges may arise. Here are some examples of challenges other mentors and protégés have faced and resolved.

- Time and energy. The most common challenge by far is finding sufficient time to do all you want to do in the partnership. Despite good intentions, other priorities interfere for both of you.

Solution: Think small rather than large. Avoid promising more time than you can deliver. Check with your mentee to be certain you are both comfortable with the time you are spending and with the learning that is occurring.

- Building trust quickly. With only a few hours of contact each month, it is not easy to build the kind of trust you both would like.

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Solution: Other mentors have successfully used several strategies, such as the following: Listen very carefully, and remember what your mentee has said in the past.

Demonstrate your credibility. Keep your promises and commitments -- if any need to be changed, let your mentee know immediately and reschedule or renegotiate them. Admit some errors made and lessons learned. Avoid talking negatively about others. Above all, keep the confidences your protégé shares with you.

- Not being the “expert” on all your mentee’s needs. Many mentors find it difficult when they do not have all the answers.

Solution: Explain your role as “learning facilitator” early in your relationship. Tell your mentee that you will not have all the answers, and you are looking forward to learning together as well as seeking help from others who are more expert on different topics.

- Being sensitive to differences. Particularly in the beginning, it is tempting to assume that both of you are the same. In fact, you will share experiences. Explore and learn from your differences as well.

Solution: In addition to discovering all your similarities, work carefully to identify the differences between you and your mentee. For example, how do the specifics of his or her position differ from the role(s) you’ve played? What is occurring now for him or her that you did not face? If you are of different generations/ages, genders, races, cultural groups, or professional backgrounds, what different experiences have you both had? Assume a learning mode, and invite discussion about all of these topics. As Stephen

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Ending the Formal Mentoring Relationship and Planning for the Future

During this stage, planning for the mentee's continued success is balanced with bringing the formal mentoring relationship to a close. Work with your mentee to define the types of support he or she may need in the future. You may want to connect him or her with additional colleagues who can provide benefits other than those provided by you. This is also a good time to explore your mentee's own interest in one day mentoring someone.

Your final discussion should be dedicated to the following:

- Reflecting on accomplishments, challenges, and progress towards goals;
 - What will your mentee remember most about the relationship?
 - What challenges lie ahead for him or her?
- Exploring other types of support he or she may still need;
- Discussing whether the relationship will continue informally and how you will implement that; and
- Expressing thanks and best wishes!
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Mentoring Best Practices

1. Think of yourself as a “learning facilitator” rather than the person with all the answers. Help your mentee find people and other resources that go beyond your experience and wisdom on a topic.
2. Emphasize questions over advice giving. Use probes that help your mentee think more broadly and deeply. If he or she talks only about facts, ask about feelings. If he or she focuses on feelings, ask him or her to review the facts. If he or she seems stuck in an immediate crisis, help him or her see the big picture.
3. When requested, share your own experiences, lessons learned, and advice. Emphasize how your experiences could be different from his or her experiences and are merely examples. Limit your urge to solve the problem for him or her.
4. Resist the temptation to control the relationship and steer its outcomes; your mentee is responsible for his or her own growth.
5. Help your mentee see alternative interpretations and approaches.
6. Build your mentee's confidence through supportive feedback.
7. Encourage, inspire, and challenge your mentee to achieve his or her goals.

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8. Help your mentee reflect on successful strategies he or she has used in the past that could apply to new challenges.
9. Be spontaneous now and then. Beyond your planned conversations, call or e-mail “out of the blue” just to leave an encouraging word or piece of new information.
10. Reflect on your mentoring practice. Request feedback.
11. Enjoy the privilege of mentoring. Know that your efforts will likely have a significant impact on your protégé’s development as well as your own.

Mentor Sessions Calendar:

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Mentor Agreement:

I fully agree to commit to mentoring for months (January-March), meeting with my mentee for one hour each week (physically or virtually) under the Digital Apprenticeship Programme.

Signature:

Date: