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Coaching and Mentoring for Leadership Development in Civil Society

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Executive Summary

Coaching and mentoring are popular capacity-building tools, especially in the area of leadership development. They are often mentioned in proposals and reviews as key elements of good capacity-building practice. Yet despite their current status, many of us are unclear what coaching and mentoring really involve, and where and when they work. We have a number of questions: What does a coach or mentor actually do? Is there any real difference between them? Where have these approaches come from? Are they really relevant to non-governmental organisations (NGOs)? When are these approaches effective? When are they not appropriate? This paper addresses these questions to demystify the concept and practice of coaching and mentoring with civil society organisations (CSOs).

Mentoring is an ancient approach to human development practised across continents, cultures and centuries. In the past 30 years the approach has been rediscovered by the private sector and applied in the form of executive coaching. In the past decade, coaching and mentoring have increasingly been practised within the civil society sector. These interventions have evolved in line with the trend towards ongoing capacity-building processes rather than one-off events. They are also informed by an increasingly people-centred and 'holistic' approach to capacity building.

There are some perceived differences between the two approaches. Coaching tends to be viewed as more task-oriented, skills-focused, directed and time-bound, whereas mentoring is more focused on open-ended personal development. Recently, however, there appears to be increasing convergence, making them less distinct in practice.

There are a variety of coaching and mentoring models to guide sessions. The model a coach/mentor chooses to use depends on their own context, style and approach. But there is emerging consensus about a number of key ingredients of good quality practice. Effective coaching and mentoring:

- Involve a learning agreement
- Include purposeful conversations
- Are holistic and empowering
- Create trusting relationships and a safe space
- Adapt to the context
- Are flexible in style and approach
- Encourage experimenting and observing
- Respond to culture and diversity
- Use resources effectively
- Use effective questioning and listening.

This paper examines a range of practitioners' experiences of using mentoring and coaching with leaders of CSOs in a range of contexts, including Kenya, Tanzania, Kazakhstan, Uganda, Bosnia, South Africa, Malawi and the UK. We found that coaching and mentoring were often 'inflicted' on leaders by donors or international organisations. In such cases, coaches had to work extremely hard with leaders to gain their trust and develop their commitment to the process.

The learning histories presented here illustrate a variety of approaches to coaching and mentoring. Despite the diversity of experience, a number of factors emerged that influenced the success or failure of the coaching and mentoring processes. These include:

- Commitment and interest of the individuals involved
- Sufficient resources and organisational support
- Taking a holistic, personal approach
- Embedding the process in the organisational context
- Skills and experience of coaches and mentors
- Recognition of cross-cultural issues
- Ensuring an enabling external environment.

Acknowledgements

List of Abbreviations

CBO	community-based organisation
CIPD	British Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
CSO	civil society organisation
INGO	international non-governmental organisation
INTRAC	International Training and Research Centre, Oxford, UK
NGO	non-governmental organisation
OD	organisation development

Contents

1   Introduction

'Coaching is arguably the most powerful method for developing managers' capacity for leadership.' [1]

Coaching and mentoring are on the A-list of capacity-building celebrities today. It seems you cannot read a review of good practice capacity building without coming across mentoring and coaching. Any self-respecting leadership development has coaching and mentoring present. Yet, despite their popularity on paper, we actually know very little about them. How do they work? Do they differ? Are they successful? What makes them work? When are they not appropriate? We talk about coaching and mentoring a great deal, but most of us do not know what they look like in real life.

> 'Coaching and mentoring should not just be seen as a 'luxury' enjoyed by a few managers in large, well-funded development agencies, but something that has genuine value at all levels and all types of CBO and NGO.'
> Hailey 2006:22

INTRAC's work over the past decade has increasingly used individual leadership coaching and mentoring to complement its organisation-wide capacity-building interventions. The trend is mirrored by other practitioners' experience of capacity-building, documented through INTRAC's Praxis Programme. For example, Praxis Note 14 described the importance of mentors and coaches in Malawian NGO leaders' change processes; Praxis Note 17 outlined how the Vision Quest approach to leadership development involved peer mentors throughout the course; and Praxis Note 24 focused exclusively on the mentoring approach to individual and organisational development of Barnabas Trust in South Africa. The recently published review of leadership development (Praxis Paper 10 by John Hailey) concludes:

'The increased interest and investment in mentoring and coaching is noteworthy. It is arguable that once senior mangers reach a certain stage in their career attending formal training courses has less impact, and that as a number of INGOs (International Non-Governmental Organisations) have found, including Oxfam and the Red Cross, personalised support through coaching has more value.' [2]

Coaching and mentoring are also seen as important tools in helping to develop female leaders. In many contexts, there is a significant shortage of female leaders in civil society, due to prevailing cultural and social norms. Coaching or mentoring is increasingly used in leadership development programmes for women, especially because they can develop confidence and self-belief.

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[1] Lee 2003: 7.
[2] Hailey 2006: 22.

This interest of civil society organisations (CSOs) in coaching and mentoring mirrors the trends in commercial sectors. Coaching and mentoring are said to be the fastest-growing industry in the USA, behind information technology. Recent research carried out with 900 companies concluded that coaching is a growing trend, rather than just a fad, as it is part of a new performance-led culture of employment in contrast to the traditional employment model of job security.[3]

The British Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) identifies several factors to explain the rise in popularity of coaching within organisations in Britain, including:

- Flexibility to fit into participants' own schedules
- Potential to see results quickly
- Participants receive one-to-one attention
- Isolated senior managers appreciate the space coaching provides to confide in someone and discuss issues
- Offers a pre-emptive chance to improve performance before it becomes costly to the organisation.[4]

Part of this interest also comes from a recognition that today's leaders, whether CSO or private sector, operate in a very complex and fast-changing environment. The particular challenges of working in a CSO environment mean that leaders are often isolated, overstretched and unsupported. Working in areas with high levels of HIV/AIDS or in volatile, post-conflict situations exacerbates these pressures. As John Hailey points out:

> 'NGO leaders often face extraordinary challenges – both at a personal and organisational level. They work long hours with limited resources in uncertain and volatile political and economic circumstances to help the most marginalised and disadvantaged members of their communities.'[5]

In such complex, fast-moving and vulnerable environments, self-awareness, trust and relationships between leaders and followers are paramount. Coaching and mentoring offer the opportunity for individuals (and organisations) to address such personal issues in a non-threatening way. Yet despite their popularity, it is still often not clear exactly what coaching and mentoring mean in practice. The easy-flowing jargon camouflages uncertainties and questions. This Praxis Paper aims to demystify the concepts through an exploration of the literature and practice of mentoring and coaching, specifically as they relate to CSOs.

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[3] CIPD 2004: 8.
[4] CIPD 2004: 6–7.
[5] Hailey 2006: 5.

The first part of this paper begins with a brief outline of the origins of mentoring and coaching. We then explore how recent trends have influenced their evolution, and go on to highlight some of the subtle distinctions and differences between coaching and mentoring. We argue that coaching and mentoring can usefully be seen on a continuum, with different styles being appropriate in different circumstances. Some of the foundational concepts and approaches are described, along with a number of other coaching models and frameworks. The first section concludes by identifying the core ingredients in mentoring and coaching processes.

> This Praxis Paper aims to demystify the concepts through an exploration of the literature and practice of mentoring and coaching, specifically as they relate to CSOs.

Part 2 examines how coaching and mentoring are implemented in practice within CSOs. While coaching and mentoring can be useful tools for anyone, at any stage of their career and in any organisational setting, this paper focuses on coaching and mentoring as tools for leadership development in the civil society sector. Drawing from the experiences of CSO leaders and mentors in contexts as diverse as Kazakhstan, Uganda, Bosnia and Malawi, the paper analyses the different coaching and mentoring practised. It goes on to explore the perceived impact on the individuals and organisations involved.

Part 3 highlights the key issues emerging and the factors that make a coaching and mentoring programme successful. But it also points out situations where coaching and mentoring are not appropriate. The paper concludes by outlining ways forward.

2   The Concepts of Coaching and Mentoring

Coaching and mentoring are two personal development methods that nurture a person's own abilities in order to improve behaviour and performance. The processes of coaching and mentoring are similar insofar as they are both a series of conversations (spoken or written) between two individuals.[6] However, there are subtle but significant differences in aim, emphasis and style. Coaching tends to be viewed as more task-oriented, skills-focused, directed and time-bound, whereas mentoring is more focused on open-ended personal development.

The reality is that there is considerable convergence and overlap between these approaches. To get the best out of mentoring and coaching, we need to start by exploring their origin, evolution and application to leadership development.

2.1 The Origins of Mentoring and Advent of Coaching

Mentoring has been practised in different cultures for hundreds of years. But it is only recently that mentoring has been (re)discovered by the private sector, and now by the civil society sector, as a mechanism for leadership development.

The origin of mentoring can be traced back to Greek mythology. When Odysseus left home to fight in the Trojan war, he placed an old, trusted family friend, Mentor, in charge of his household, thereby delegating responsibility for protecting and educating his son Telemachus.[7] A mentor therefore conjures up images of a wise and trusted advisor or counsellor.[8] Some African scholars make the point that such roles were commonplace in Africa long before ancient Greek civilisation. For example, in 'ancient Africa' when a child was born everyone in the village shared the responsibility of teaching him or her. But there was always one person, a non-family member, who would be assigned a special role in bringing up the child. This person was called *Habari gani menta* in Swahili, translated as 'the person who asks: "What is happening?"'.[9]

> Mentoring is not new. It has been practised in different cultures for hundreds of years.

Clearly, mentoring is not new. It has played an important role in ancient Greek, Roman, Chinese, Indian and African civilisations. The practice of 'apprenticeship' and transferring generational knowledge, so prevalent in craft societies of past centuries, draws heavily on the same concepts. And mentoring continues to be practised today in very different contexts and cultures. In Africa, for example, young Zulu tribesmen spend time with tribal elders as part of their initiation to manhood, so that the elders

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[6] Coaching and mentoring are not clearly distinct processes, so at times we use these terms interchangeably to refer to one-to-one personal development based on conversations, over an unspecified period and in the context of an organisation.

[7] See Homer's classic text *The Odyssey*.

[8] Parsloe 1995.

[9] www.mentors.ca/thementornews13.html, accessed September 2006.

can pass on their wisdom and insight. The elders in this case are providing direction and guidance to the younger, more naive Zulu community members.[10] In Asia, Whitmore describes: '*The Eastern mentoring relationship is more like a dance in the sense that it is an interaction between two actors. I make a movement, they make a movement and we move around. This differs from the traditional Western model where an older person passes on knowledge to a younger one.*' [11] This echoes a Buddhist notion that every person is simultaneously a teacher and a student – an approach that has influenced some contemporary, western mentoring models.

Japanese mentoring (the *senpai-kohai* relationship in particular) also emphasises the relational aspect of mentoring, rather than viewing it as a particular human resource strategy, as many organisations do in the West. The Japanese view of mentoring is characterised by informality and the organic growth of relationships, and is based on emotional bonds between senior and junior people within an organisation.[12]

Coaching has very different, much more contemporary origins. The increasing interest in developmental psychology in Europe and the USA over the past 50 years has led to its application within organisations. Organisational psychology emerged as a distinct discipline that concerned the application of psychological theories, research methods and intervention strategies to workplace issues. In attempting to address issues of culture change at an organisational level, as well as group behaviour and dynamics, life coaching and leadership coaching developed. Coaching, particularly management coaching, is becoming an increasingly popular part of the work of psychologists engaged in the field of organisational psychology.

Coaching had its origins in the world of sports, with coaches helping competitors to achieve success through structured and focused instruction and tutoring. In the 1980s, executives of major companies realised the potential a coaching-style intervention could have in helping them to work more effectively.[13] Such approaches also permeated the development world. In the 1990s the Community Development Resource Association (CDRA) in South Africa was using such an approach as part of its development practitioner formation programmes.

2.2 Differences between Coaching and Mentoring

The extensive literature on coaching and mentoring reveals no single definition of either term, but rather a collection of definitions that help form a picture of what the processes involve. Much of the literature explores different models that can be used and adapted by coaches and mentors, depending on their personal style and their situation. According to many definitions, while coaching and mentoring share the same principles, coaching is primarily focused on performance within the current job

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[10] Hale 2006.
[11] *APA Monitor*, 29(11) 1998.
[12] Bright 2005.
[13] Whitmore 2006: 8.

and emphasises development tools, while mentoring focuses on longer-term goals and developing capability.[14]

Defining Coaching

▪ *Primarily a short-term intervention aimed at performance improvement or developing a particular competence.[15]*

▪ *A process that enables learning and development to occur and thus performance to improve.[16]*

Defining Mentoring

▪ *To help and support people to manage their own learning in order to maximise their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance and become the person they want to be.[17]*

The main differences between these two methods are emphasised below.[18]

Coaching	Mentoring
▪ concerned with task	▪ concerned with implications beyond the task
▪ focuses on skills and performance	▪ focuses on capability and potential
▪ primarily line manager role	▪ works best offline
▪ agenda set by or with coach	▪ agenda set by learner
▪ emphasises feedback to the learner	▪ emphasises feedback and reflection by the learner
▪ typically addresses a short-term need	▪ typically a longer-relationship, often 'for life'
▪ feedback and discussion primarily explicit	▪ feedback and discussion primarily about implicit, intuitive issues and behaviours

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[14] Clutterbuck 2001: 26.

[15] Clutterbuck 2003 via www.tombattye.com/tools/performance-coaching.shtml, accessed September 2006.

[16] Parsloe 1999 via www.tombattye.com/tools/performance-coaching.shtml, accessed September 2006.

[17] CIPD via www.tombattye.com/tools/performance-coaching.shtml, accessed September 2006.

[18] Clutterbuck 2001: 26.

Contemporary thinking and practice in coaching and mentoring is leading to a convergence between the two, rendering this distinction somewhat artificial. For example, several specific aspects of mentoring are increasingly found in the coaching process – many coaches no longer emphasise their own feedback to the learner, but rather work to encourage feedback and reflection by the learner. '*The coach is just the passenger*', as one coach explained it, '*and the client is in the driving seat*'. Similarly, mentoring processes recognise the importance of being as well planned as coaching sessions[19] and are increasingly using coaching models.

2.3 The Coaching/Mentoring Continuum

Rather than seeing coaching and mentoring as distinct approaches, it may be useful to see them as different styles on a continuum. The most effective approach will be different in distinct situations. Therefore coaches and mentors must be competent in both styles of working, as either may be appropriate at any given time.

Coach-Mentor Continuum[20]

Coaching   Mentoring
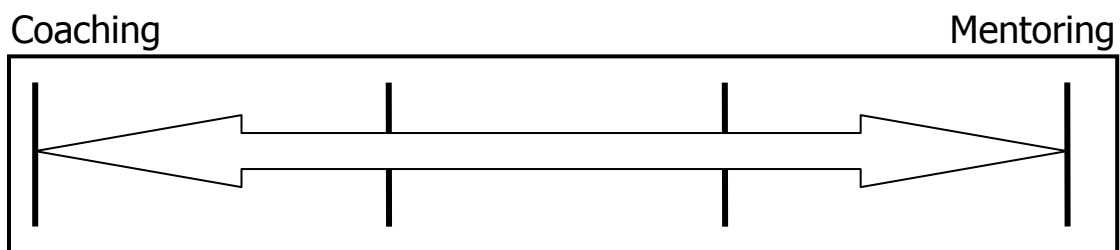
Main aim:
 Skills ⟵ Performance —— Potential ⟶ Personal

Objectives:
 Finite/concrete ⟵ Role/competencies ⟶ Complex/evolving

Style:
 Directive ⟵————————————————⟶ Non-directive

Duration:
 Shorter ⟵————————————————⟶ Longer

The most appropriate approach depends on the main aim of the intervention. These could be to:

- Develop their skills
- Improve their performance
- Maximise their potential
- Proactively become the person they want to be. [21]

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[19] Adapted from Clutterbuck 2001.

These different aims require different styles, objectives and duration of interventions. For example, skills development, with its more finite goals, would require a more 'authoritative' intervention associated with coaching, whereas personal development would require a more non-directive, mentoring approach. Coaches and mentors therefore should be able to use any style of intervention, whether the more directive coaching style or more non-directive life coaching/mentoring. To enable the coach/mentor to decide on the most appropriate style of intervention, Parsloe[22] suggests that they consider the CORE – the:

- **C**ontext
- **O**bjectives of the coachee/mentee
- **R**elationships with others – both existing and desired
- **E**xperiences.

2.4 Recent Evolution in Coaching and Mentoring

While coaching and mentoring always involve a close and nurturing relationship between two individuals, there has been a split in thinking on the purpose and style of mentoring resulting in the emergence of a US (or 'sponsorship') model and a European (or 'developmental') model. The traditional US model of mentoring emphasises the mentor's power, influence and authority. It is more of a 'psychological contract' involving 'an exchange of practical help and guidance from the mentor for loyalty and respect from the mentee. Age and elevated position are key components.' [23] In line with this, many US practitioners use the term 'protégée' instead of 'mentee' to encapsulate this hierarchical relationship.

However, this hierarchical US model sits uneasily with the ideology of self-reliance and self-development that is more prevalent in Europe. The US model was therefore modified to meet the particular needs of organisations and individuals working in the European context. The European model focuses on the mentee developing characteristics of self-reliance through personal growth. This developmental model now dominates current thinking across the UK and Europe, and to a large extent Australia and New Zealand.[24]

These differences in approach can be mirrored in the evolution of coaching and mentoring models. These have progressed beyond looking at performance and solutions to place a greater emphasis on people-centred, holistic approaches. Some of the models associated with these approaches to coaching and mentoring are described in the following sections.

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[20] Oxford School of Coaching and Mentoring, 2006, Internal POWERPOINT presentation.
[21] Oxford School of Coaching and Mentoring, 2006, Internal POWERPOINT presentation.
[22] Parsloe in private conversation with author (June 2006).
[23] Clutterbuck 2001: viii.
[24] Clutterbuck 2001.

2.4.1 Performance and Solution-focused Approaches

Performance coaching derives its theoretical underpinnings and models from business, and psychotherapy and sports psychology. It is an ongoing process where a coach guides or encourages continuous improvement of the individual's performance. One of the first performance coaching models developed – the GROW model – continues to be the most popular.[25] It is a simple yet powerful framework to guide coaching sessions. Coaches ask a series of questions relating to the person's Goal, their Reality, their Options and their Will.

The GROW Model of Coaching[26]

G – Goal. The person's goal should be as specific and measurable as possible, enabling the coach to ask:
- How will you know that you have achieved that goal?
- What are the expectations of others?
- Who else needs to know about the plan? How will you inform them?

R – Reality. The current situation the person is experiencing needs careful analysis. Sometimes, simply by seeing the situation clearly (rather than what was imagined), the resolution becomes obvious. Coaches can ask:
- What has been stopping you reaching your goal?
- Do you know anyone who has achieved that goal?
- What can you learn from them?

O – Options. Once you know where you are and where you want to go, the next step is to explore the options you have for getting there. Coaches can ask:
- What could you do as a first step?
- What else could you do?
- What would happen if you did nothing?

W – Will. To change and improve performance, motivation is necessary. The desired outcome from this stage is a commitment to action. The following questions can guide coaches:
- Where does this goal fit in with your personal priorities at the moment?
- What obstacles do you expect to meet? How will you overcome them?
- How committed are you to this goal?
- What steps do you need to take to achieve this?

The STEER model,[27] another well known model, like so many coaching models is an acronym: Spot, Tailor, Explain, Encourage and Review. Like GROW, the STEER model is task-oriented and derives from the world of sport.

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[25] Dembkowski and Eldridge 2003.
[26] Baker 2006: 70–71.
[27] See Appendix 1 for more details on the STEER model.

Solution-focused coaching differs from other approaches, which tend to focus on the problem. The OSKAR model[28] (Outcome, Scaling, Know-how and Resources, Affirm and action and Review) is one of the tools used to guide solution-focused coaching. This approach is designed to discover what is working well and to replicate this. It centres on bringing out the existing skills and capabilities of the person to reach their self-defined goals.

2.4.2 Holistic, People-centred Approaches

The holistic nature of professional development has increasingly been acknowledged in recent years. It asserts that people's behaviours are linked not just to their physical and intellectual abilities, but also to their emotions and beliefs. They see that assisting people to change their behaviour may engage with their emotions, deep-rooted values and even spiritual beliefs.[29] This is illustrated by the research on leadership change in Malawi described in Praxis Note 14.[30] This research found that leaders changed most fundamentally when they found out that their behaviour was at variance with their personal values. All but one described their leadership change as both an emotional and a spiritual process. Such findings resonate with many writers on leadership today. Popular authors on management and leadership[31] all emphasise the central importance of engaging with human emotions and spiritual beliefs in any leadership development process.

In line with such shifts, the focus of some coaching and mentoring has shifted from task-centred support towards addressing the personal and emotional aspects of the person's life. More holistic models for coaching, such as 'transformational' coaching,[32] have been developed to address these aspects of a person's life. It attempts to go beyond helping people perform better, getting to the source of people's behaviour and altering their frames of reference and thereby their ways of being.

2.5 Principles of Coaching and Mentoring Practice

Coaching and mentoring already take place on a daily basis within many organisations, although sometimes unconsciously. While the principles of coaching/mentoring are the same, the main difference between formal and informal processes is that the sessions are scheduled and structured in such a way that the purpose and roles are unambiguous.[33]

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[28] See Appendix 1 for more details on the OSKAR model.
[29] 'Spirituality is a relationship with the supernatural or spiritual realm that provides meaning and a basis for personal and communal reflection, decision and action' (Ver Beek 2000: 32).
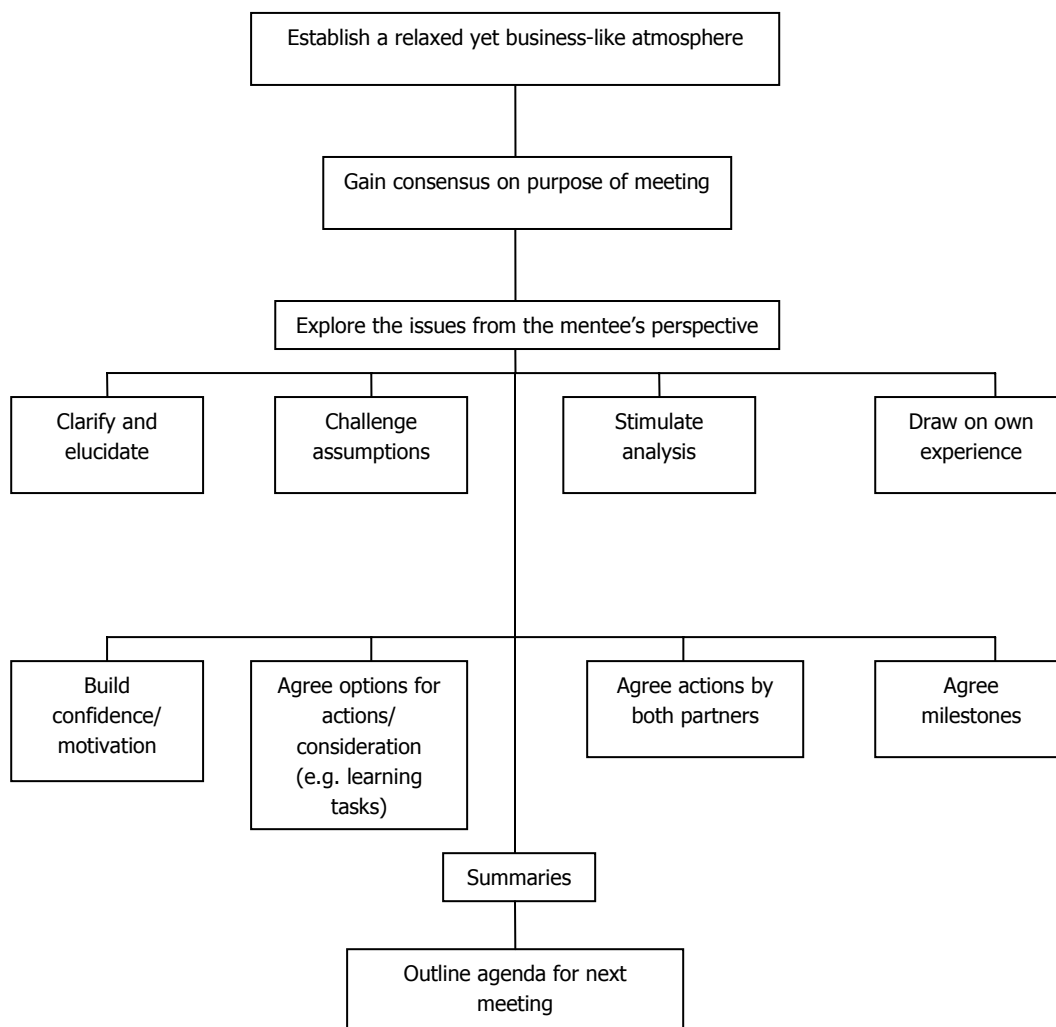[30] James *et al.* 2005: 5.
[31] Covey 1992, Blanchard 1999, Owen 1999, Quinn 2000, Adair 2002.
[32] See Appendix 1 for more details on transformational coaching.
[33] Whitmore 2002: 54.

Most coaching/mentoring processes involve a series of meetings involving focused discussions, steered by the agreed and specific goals for each session. Between sessions the person practices new techniques, methods and working styles. In each consequent session, these experiences are discussed and any arising issues are reflected on. There are an increasing variety of coaching and mentoring tools designed to enable coaches/mentors to organise their sessions. While many of the models appear complex, in essence they are all tools to initiate productive discussions to reach the objectives set by the person involved. For example, the following ideal mentoring session provides a basic overview of how a session should progress in terms of building a comfortable atmosphere, stimulating the person, and working with him/her to develop and reach his/her goals.

An Ideal Mentoring Session[34]

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│      Establish a relaxed yet business-like atmosphere │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          │
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│         Gain consensus on purpose of meeting          │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          │
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│      Explore the issues from the mentee's perspective │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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| Clarify and elucidate | Challenge assumptions | Stimulate analysis | Draw on own experience |

| Build confidence/ motivation | Agree options for actions/ consideration (e.g. learning tasks) | Agree actions by both partners | Agree milestones |

Summaries

Outline agenda for next meeting

The literature highlights an emerging consensus around important ingredients of good quality coaching and mentoring:

Key Principles of Quality Coaching and Mentoring

Has a learning agreement:
A learning agreement is useful in clarifying objectives and expectations. It also establishes ground rules to address ethical considerations.

Has purposeful conversations:
Structured, constructive and meaningful conversations (usually, but not always verbal) are the core of the process. These are *purposeful* conversations that articulate and reflect on the person's beliefs and practices.

Is holistic and empowering:
Coaches treat people holistically, taking into account intellectual, emotional and relational dimensions.
A good coach builds on the strengths and capabilities of the participant.
The person should take increasing responsibility for their self-development.

Creates trusting relationships and a safe space:
Good coaching is based on a trusting relationship. This includes creating a safe environment where the person feels able to talk freely and confidentially.
The coach must ensure ethical guidelines are agreed and adhered to.

Adapts to the context:
The coach should consider context, objective, relationship and experience (CORE) in deciding which style of intervention is most suitable.

Is flexible in style and approach:
The coaching model used and the coaching/mentoring style should be used flexibly and adapted to the particular situation.

Encourages experimenting and observing:
Good coaches assist the person to innovate, take risks, seek evidence from practice and reflect on learning.

Responds to culture and diversity:
The implications of any cross-cultural or diversity issues should be properly assessed from the outset and mutual agreement reached.

Uses resources effectively:
It is necessary to prioritise and protect the time for coaching in order to sustain learning.

Uses effective questioning and listening:
Good coaching uses open questions (such as What?, When?, Who?, How much?, How many?), uses active listening skills, summarises feedback, and pays attention to body language and tone of voice.

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3 Putting Coaching and Mentoring into Practice: Experiences from Civil Society

This review of the theory of mentoring and coaching provides a useful overview to explore how these methods are applied in practice. In writing this paper, we interviewed a range of individuals with hands-on experience of coaching and mentoring processes from different contexts, to document their learning histories. Eight people responded from Africa, one from Central Asia, two from the Balkans and two from the UK. Eleven had experience of mentoring, and four had experience of being mentored. The common feature of all the people interviewed was that they worked in the civil society sector.

3.1 Who Initiated the Coaching and Mentoring?

The case studies collected illustrate a range of experiences, from Northern donors requesting mentoring support for Southern partner organisations, to CSOs in the South initiating their own coaching/mentoring programmes. The source of the initiative for mentoring and coaching often plays a significant part in determining who 'owns' the process and who has the commitment to make it succeed. In some cases, the initiative for the mentoring and coaching process came from the person needing the support. One Malawian consultant related:

> 'I was asked by an international NGO to work with them on a tough OD [organisation development] assignment, which was relatively new for me. As part of my contract I was able to draw on the mentoring services of a very experienced international consultant, who provided one-to-one support to me and backstopping support to the OD consultancy.'

More typically, however, the initiative is from an external source – often from a higher level in the organisational hierarchy, or from the donor. The scenario described below is fairly commonplace:

> 'This Tanzanian NGO involved in youth issues was struggling. It had been set up by a European programme officer, but had recently been localised with leadership passing to a young Tanzanian. A coaching process was suggested and initiated by European donors, but using a local coach.'

One Kenyan respondent described a more extreme situation, where he was brought in as a coach to deal with a leadership crisis. He was approached by the regional office of an international NGO to provide coaching support to their Country Director. Staff had complained to the regional office of an adverse relationship with their Country Director, accusing her of nepotism, micro-management and flouting of

policies and procedures. Not surprisingly, she was initially very reluctant to engage with the process.[35]

Where coaching and mentoring are initiated externally and seen as a donor requirement, individuals are unlikely to give the commitment required for success. Coaches face the vital challenge of earning the trust and commitment of the person. In the Kenyan example above, Ogara describes how the:

> '*initial stages involved establishing a relationship of trust and confidence, focusing on the purpose of the coaching process and sharing of mutual expectations. The Country Director was initially unwilling to engage in the process. After a while, she did open up and shared a number of her frustrations, including accusations from staff sent directly to the Head Office, which she found threatening.*'

3.2 What was the Purpose of the Coaching and Mentoring?

From the learning histories, it is clear that coaching and mentoring are often used as tools within a wider organisational change process. The case studies illustrate mentoring and coaching being used to complement and strengthen organisational capacity building. Coaching and mentoring can be key methods assisting leaders to adjust their behaviour to give space for the organisation to change. Addressing perceived weaknesses in managing people is another common aim in coaching and mentoring initiatives.

Coaching and mentoring have also been used as stand-alone interventions in leadership development, particularly for female leaders. For example, recognising that women leaders are still under-represented in the CSO sector, the Aga Khan Foundation in East Africa uses coaching/mentoring as a method to challenge this.

Mentoring to Encourage more Women into Leadership Roles

The Aga Khan Foundation began mentoring as a component of its Young Development Professionals Programme in 2000. The programme involves recruiting young professionals from university to work placements with development agencies in East Africa, during which time they are attached to a mentor.

Mentoring can be a powerful strategy to encourage more women into leadership roles, which is very important as there is still a significant lack of women leaders in the CSO sector. Few formal opportunities exist for aspiring female leaders to learn from admired women in leadership. Mentoring can prove a useful method of engaging with them.

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[35] Ogara 2006.

3.3 What Approaches and Methods Were Used?

The learning histories illustrate a variety of approaches and methods of coaching and mentoring, applied in different ways. These range from adapting and using recognised models, to more flexible and emergent processes. Respondents defined coaching or mentoring in different ways – some felt strongly that they are separate approaches, and that they were using either one or the other. Others interpreted the terms more interchangeably and did not distinguish between them.

One example from an African consultant illustrates a structured approach to coaching that he undertook in Tanzania. He describes a process that follows a recognised formal model:

Coaching for Organisation Development in Tanzania

'The coaching process involved a diagnostic review, setting of agreed targets, regular coaching sessions, feedback, and a follow-up evaluation. This approach is summarised as the coaching ARROWE:

    A = Aims of coaching established
    R = Reality of the coachee's present situation analysed with coach
    R = Reflection on this reality
    O = Options of personal growth areas identified
    W = Ways forward
    E = Follow up necessary to evaluate and monitor change.'
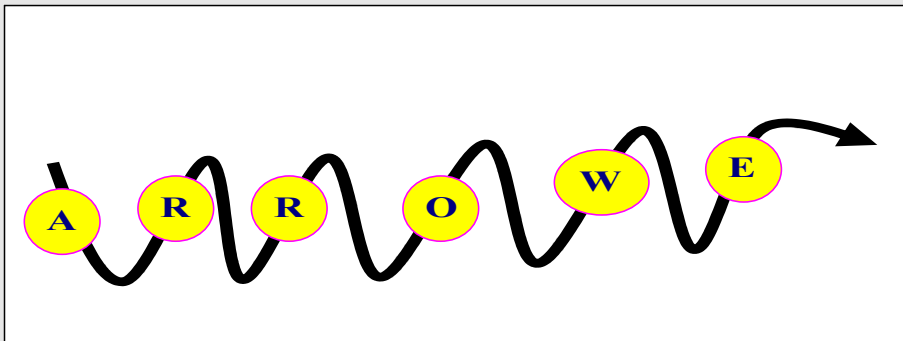
'The process involved staff analysing both their own behaviour and that of other staff. The self-analysis identified areas of growth for the individuals. The coach spent time observing communication patterns and interpersonal interactions within the organisation. The functions of a manager and role of the leader were explored in specific one-to-one sessions with the Director.'

In contrast, an example from Uganda described a more informal mentoring intervention:

There was general agreement that the use of models depends on the context, and it is important that the models should not hinder the experience. The majority of the learning histories indicated a preference for using informal, unstructured methods that are not based on recognised models. This allows the intervention to evolve according to the needs of the person – more akin to a mentoring approach. Respondents appreciated this emerging approach. One said: '*I enjoyed the fact that it was an informal, unstructured process.*' This can help encourage creative thought and analysis, and provide a space for open, honest discussion. But others also valued the benefits of taking a more structured approach that clarified objectives and action points, and added more sense of accountability.

Coaches used a variety of tools and techniques to stimulate reflection, analytical thinking and discussion. These included appreciative enquiry, Edward de Bono's Six Thinking Hats[36], reflective thinking, probing, brainstorming, and challenging and critiquing thinking and assumptions.

Some of the case studies illustrated the shift towards a more holistic, people-centred approach to coaching/mentoring, as discussed in the first section. One experienced coach noted the importance of recognising and working with 'sensitive moments'[37] when someone is receptive to feedback and advice, and the 'zone of proximal development',[38] meaning the coach has to offer something close to the individual's experience in terms of knowledge, ability and emotional interest, for them to understand and empathise with it. Another mentor noted that he adapted approaches from techniques in cognitive therapy, such as using 'what if' questions to

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[36] De Bono 1985; see Appendix 1 for more information.
[37] The notion of 'sensitive moments' was developed by Maria Montessori in relation to primary education, but can be transferred to other situations.
[38] Developed by Vygotsky, Soviet development psychologist (in private conversation with Maarten Bremer, Regional Director, SNV Balkan).

encourage the person to face up to a fear or anxiety over a course of action, to allow them to see that fears are usually baseless.

Respondents also described coaching interventions that were aimed at groups or community-based organisations (CBOs), as opposed to the traditional one-to-one relationship. This was seen as a particularly important approach for encouraging new styles of leadership, where such group-centred approaches are more culturally normal. Praxis Note 24[39] on Barnabas Trust's coaching work with community-based HIV organisations in South Africa describes this.

Group Approaches to Mentoring

The Barnabas Trust has found that, when working with CBOs in South Africa, it is more effective to mentor leaders in conjunction with either the core leadership group of three or four people, or the wider organisation, and only occasionally and informally with the leader alone.

The Barnabas Trust found that the individualistic approach at the level of CBOs compromised the mentor's neutral position within the group. Individual attention from the mentoring process created jealousy, distrust and tension in the group, but by working with the leader along with other members of the organisation, such potential problems can be avoided.

3.4 What Differences did Coaching and Mentoring Make?

Coaching and mentoring are long-term processes with often intangible outcomes. However, from the range of organisations and consultants who shared their learning histories, there was a clear perception that coaching and mentoring are effective tools for staff and leadership development. The experiences from CSOs highlighted a range of changes at individual and organisational levels.

3.4.1 Individual Impacts

All respondents indicated the impact coaching and mentoring can have on leaders, through increased confidence and self-belief. Coaching/mentoring can be a very motivating, inspiring experience. One respondent described how they changed:

> 'I now have a better understanding of myself and what my special contribution to the field of organisational capacity building will be; more self-confidence in handling complex assignments; enhanced image of our organisation; more local and international business; and better ways of working and managing my time.'

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[39] Praxis Note 24 can be downloaded at www.intrac.org/pages/PraxisNote24.html.

Another commented: '*The most important benefit has been stimulating positive energy, to help move forward in moments when you feel stuck.*' Coaching/mentoring can help encourage and develop creative thinking and problem-solving through reflection and discussion with an external person. Many respondents also noted increased management skills, such as better people skills and planning.

Coaching/mentoring also provide ways of helping individuals become aware of and responsible for their own actions – a core aspect of leadership development. Through discussions with his mentor on the excessive time spent by African organisations on hosting donor visits, one individual was motivated to take action and undertake some proactive research to try and convince donors to address these issues. As one NGO coach noted: '*The central element is capturing a spark of energy and helping people to take positive action themselves, and move towards what they want to achieve or become.*'

Another CSO leader noted that spending time discussing and analysing his role and actions has helped him to develop a better understanding of himself and his role as a CSO leader: '*He challenged me to think through my life priorities and what special contribution I want to make to development practice in general and organisational capacity building in particular.*' Coaching/mentoring can enable an individual to see the bigger picture and review their life and skills.

The following example of coaching at Oxfam GB illustrates how organisational investment and support for coaching can be useful in developing new leaders.

External Coaching was a Valuable Support Mechanism

'As a new senior manager at Oxfam, moving from a middle management role, various opportunities for leadership development were discussed with me and I decided to try coaching support. The process took place over a year, with a total of seven meetings and e-mail/telephone support in between. I found this to be a very valuable experience which greatly increased my confidence in my own ability as a leader. My coach was very affirming in reflecting back my strengths. I found the sessions very useful for solving particular problems and for developing a framework for prioritising, which is key in senior management positions. I also found it useful to learn how to separate the personal from the professional, which is particularly important in an NGO context, as many people are caught up in personal reactions.

Having an external person with no vested interest to talk to was a very valuable experience, as this allows you to be completely honest. Internal coaching can be very useful for more junior staff, but for senior positions it is very helpful to talk to someone external who is experienced in OD and understands the politics of leadership. Coaching helped me to learn to work effectively across the organisation in a leadership capacity, and to influence and negotiate more effectively.

Overall, I felt it was a very positive experience and I was sorry when it finished. I felt that the organisation was investing in me and valuing me. It was a very good support mechanism for me, and helped me to feel secure in the new and challenging role.'

3.4.2 Organisational Impacts

It is easier to identify the impact of coaching/mentoring on individuals than it is to observe and assess impact at the organisational level. The learning histories illustrate, however, that changes at the individual level can, and sometimes do, permeate more widely through the organisation through improved styles of leadership, management and communication. For example, one respondent outlined some of the organisational changes that arose from a leadership coaching intervention in Tanzania:

> 'Time management and planning are much improved. Individual staff are working on issues they felt were important for them, such as communication skills. Consciousness has been raised in separating issues from people, to avoid personal attacks and conflict. The Director has increased confidence in his role and feels motivated by the coaching process. Awareness has been raised of potential pitfalls in cross-cultural communication. Efforts are being made to develop and finalise policies, systems and procedures. The constitution and financial regulations are being developed.'

Another example from Kenya revealed that coaching had led to a number of organisational changes in structure and decision-making processes. It encouraged her to establish a senior management team that resulted in a major organisational shift. The leader commented: *'Earlier on, no-one would oppose me, and later on they would grumble... Now I don't do a lot of decision-making... it is all shared.'*

Another senior manager interviewed noted that a key change from coaching has been helping her to develop an understanding of internal staff politics and how to work effectively across an organisation in a leadership capacity, influencing and negotiating more effectively. Investing time and effort in learning through coaching/mentoring helps to encourage a wider learning environment within an organisation and to develop an appreciation of the importance of learning for organisational change and development.

While these changes may not always be easily visible, coaching and mentoring can improve management throughout the organisation. As an internal coach in a large UK NGO noted:

> '*Coaching managers to adopt a coaching style of management in turn strengthens their staff, and as a direct result improves the quality and impact of the programme.*'

Sustainability of management and leadership can also be improved through coaching/mentoring. The case studies demonstrated that managers, by investing in a long-term coaching/mentoring process, feel valued by their organisation and are therefore more likely to commit to it. This improves continuity within programmes and delivery, providing more stable leadership within a sector plagued by high staff turnover.

The supporting evidence for organisational change is still largely anecdotal, however. More effort needs to be put into establishing what organisational changes have taken place that plausibly can be associated with (but not necessarily directly attributed to) a coaching and mentoring intervention. We cannot simply assume that individual change always has an impact on the organisation. We need to learn more about how and when individual change is translated into organisational change.

3.5 When is Coaching and Mentoring not Appropriate?

Despite these positive examples, it must be stressed that coaching/mentoring do not always have the desired impact on leadership development, and are not always the most appropriate type of intervention. Coaching and mentoring are processes designed to enhance an individual's capacity and judgement and to encourage independent action. When seen as an opportunity to receive technical advice and solutions alone, they are more prone to failure. For example, an experienced coach noted:

> '*Sometimes people don't really want coaching but technical advice. Many issues, such as time management, are very personal and require individuals to discover solutions for themselves. People can come to coaching looking for set answers to these kinds of issues, but there are not solutions that suit everyone, and the coach can only make suggestions.*'

If the person is expecting the coach to provide them with answers, and is not prepared to challenge him or herself, then coaching is unlikely to encourage the development of leadership skills. Furthermore, if coaching is not something that the leader feels as a need, but has been inflicted by someone else, then it is unlikely to succeed.

4 Key Factors in Successful Coaching and Mentoring

The learning histories and interviews highlighted a number of factors that influenced the success or failure of the coaching and mentoring processes:

- Commitment and interest of the individuals involved
- Sufficient resources and organisational support
- Taking a holistic, personal approach
- Embedding the process in the organisational context
- Skills and experience of coaches and mentors
- Recognition of cross-cultural issues
- Ensuring an enabling external environment.

The following sections explore each of these factors in more detail.

4.1 Individual Commitment and Interest

The commitment and interest of the individual is crucial for the success of the process. In order for coaching/mentoring to have their desired impact, the person must value them as effective methods for leadership development, and invest energy and commitment in them. As one mentor noted, success largely depends upon '*the commitment and interest of the leader themselves and their own openness to personal change.'* This individual interest is recognised as a key part of the process in various coaching/mentoring models, such as the GROW model.[40] Where coaching or mentoring is 'inflicted' by the donor on a local CSO leader, it is difficult to gain their commitment to a personal process of change.

Respondents noted that having respect for your mentor as a professional and an individual helps build trust and increases the likelihood of positive outcomes. When mentoring is a component of a wider training programme, it is important for participants to have a say in selecting their mentor, as unsuitable matching can result in ineffective relationships.

4.2 Resources and Organisational Support

Extending this support and commitment to the organisational level is also vital to the success of a coaching/mentoring process. Organisational prioritising and planning for coaching and mentoring are essential, as otherwise they will often be sidelined, particularly in the under-resourced and over-stretched civil society sector. Lack of organisational support and space for coaching/mentoring are key factors leading to failure of the process. As an internal mentor in a large NGO commented:

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[40] The W in GROW represents the coachee's will and commitment invested in the process.

> *'Lack of support and relentless "task pressure" from above frustrates the [mentoring] process. Pressure to take on more tasks results in managers getting caught in an "activity trap" and taking no time for reflection.'*

Obtaining the support of the organisation, and the Board if applicable, is necessary to ensure coaching/mentoring are seen as valuable core activities, not optional extras. Investing sufficient resources in coaching/mentoring can be difficult for many CSOs already lacking funding, but this was recognised as a clear factor contributing to the success of the process. It is also important for an organisation to recognise that this is a long-term process, and not to expect immediate results. This is particularly applicable in situations of internal organisational conflict, which require patience and commitment to result in positive change.

4.3 Taking a Holistic, Personal Approach

There is increasing interest in adopting holistic approaches to personal development – viewing a person within the context of other areas of their life. The learning histories emphasised that taking this approach within coaching or mentoring increases success. One mentor noted that a key factor was: '*My interest in the leader as a person, not just an organisational resource – taking time to discuss their personal lives, fears and hopes.'* An individual's personal and cultural background affects their behaviour, so recognising these and working with them within coaching or mentoring will help the process to be more suitable and relevant.

Some of the examples illustrated the value of taking a personal approach to change. One respondent described how his initial coaching work with a leader shifted from simply dealing with internal management issues to eventually being able to discuss whether it was necessary to go for an HIV test. By being able to engage with the leader on a personal level, appreciating his responsibilities in his immediate and extended family and understanding the influence of his faith and beliefs, the coach was able to assist him to address a matter of 'life and death'.

Yet in taking a holistic and personal approach, we need to be aware of the inherent dangers. Much of the literature (including this paper) portrays a wholly positive image of coaching and mentoring. But there are cases of individuals becoming overly dependent on their coach/mentor. Mentoring can become manipulative. We need to establish and maintain clear personal and ethical boundaries. Key areas to consider in drawing up such boundaries are:

- Confidentiality
- Areas that the person wants to remain private
- Open and truthful two-way relationship
- Respect of each others' time and other responsibilities
- Either party able to dissolve the relationship

- Relationship should not be exploitative or in any way open to misinterpretation.[41]

4.4 Embedding the Process in the Organisational Context

Because leadership is essentially about the relationship between leaders and followers, leadership coaching needs to be firmly rooted within the organisation and its unique culture. The case studies illustrate that when a coach also engages with other staff members, this can enable any changes resulting from leadership coaching to be more accepted and sustainable. As one Kenyan consultant described:

> 'I realised that in order for the coaching process to succeed, other staff would need to be involved, to explore their understanding of the situation and establish how this conflict could be resolved. The staff were initially very passive and closed and it took some time for them to open up, but they did so once a relationship of trust was established and several meetings were held with the Management Team. I also spent time observing how staff related to each other.'

The benefit of coaching senior management, rather than just the leader, was also echoed by an example from Tanzania, in which the coach was brought in to clarify issues and resolve rising tensions. He narrates:

> 'The Director was only recently employed, in his first leadership role, and there was some confusion between roles within senior management. The senior management was struggling with getting systems and procedures in place. The coaching process allowed time for discussion and planning to combat some of these issues. Coaching was carried out with senior management individually and as a team.'

4.5 Skills and Experience of Coaches/Mentors

The quality of the coaching process is inextricably linked to the skills and experience of the coach/mentor. Coaches and mentors need a wide range of attitudes and skills to be effective – such as excellent listening and questioning abilities, sensitivity, empathy and understanding. They also need to be able to establish a relationship of trust with the person. Establishing a relationship based on mutual trust and respect is largely in the hands of the mentor.

But such skilled mentors are not common. It is often not easy to find people who have the time, ability and patience to mentor others, and this is particularly true within the resource constraints of CSOs. It may be important to provide support and training for coaches/mentors to enable them to be more effective. This is illustrated

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[41] Clutterbuck 2001: 90.

in the case of the Aga Khan Foundation's Leadership Development Programme in East Africa:

Providing Support and Training for Mentors

'At the beginning of the programme, mentoring was a very new idea. Senior staff were asked to act as mentors for the students, which involved establishing a relationship and meeting on a fortnightly basis, for career guidance and other advice. An evaluation carried out indicated that some students felt their mentors did not devote enough time and commitment to the process. The mentoring component has now been further developed and formalised, with training for mentors and agreed contracts establishing the relationship, with successful outcomes.'

4.6 Ability to Work Across Cultures

Part of what defines the quality of a mentor, particularly in the context of civil society development, is the ability to work across cultures. Diversity and cross-cultural coaching/mentoring may be more prevalent in the civil society sector, where consultants offering coaching support may be from Europe or North America. Issues of cross-cultural communication and management often cause misunderstanding and tension. Coaching/mentoring can be one method of helping to overcome these, providing a forum to discuss and explore them. In one Tanzanian example, misunderstandings between the European Programme Officer and other African staff were causing tension, and the coach spent time addressing this as part of the coaching process:

Resolving Misunderstandings and Tensions of Working Across Cultures

'The beginning of the process was very difficult, particularly due to a conflict of views between the Director and European Programme Officer. I spent time working with the Director, who acknowledged being confused as to what his role was in relation to the Programme Officer. I spent time with the Programme Officer, exploring her role in the organisation. I challenged her in terms of how the other staff and the Director perceived her, and she began to see some light as to how she came across to others. I spent time with the African staff and Programme Officer together, exploring cross-cultural challenges, which sharpened their appreciation of each other's world.'

Mentoring across racial and cultural divides, like cross-gender relationships, requires sensitive handling.[42] Cultural differences to be aware of include different perceptions of time, physical space, hierarchies, age and gender. As one respondent described:

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[42] Clutterbuck 2001: 132.

'I had my reservations about being white, female and English-speaking when working with people who share none of these characteristics. It is normally not a good idea to mentor like this, as neither mentor nor client can identify with one another. In mentoring, especially cross-cultural mentoring, relationship is key. Models are meaningless without a strong relationship built on trust and so lots of attention needs to be paid to the relationship, especially if language and colour are going to be an issue.'

4.7 Working within an Enabling External Environment

An external environment that enables coaching/mentoring to be carried out is also crucial to success. In some contexts, the external environment does not allow for this, which can reduce the impact. This is illustrated in the following experience from Macedonia, where the post-conflict environment is seriously constraining leadership development for CSOs:

Developing Leaders in a Post-conflict Environment

A Macedonian organisation involved in sustainable development work employed me as an OD consultant to provide support in developing its mission and programmes and moving forward as an organisation, and this included mentoring the Managing Director (MD). The organisation is undertaking strategic planning and recruiting a new Board, but on a timetable apparently without any end. Administrative and project commitments are hindering the process, and the OD work has been delayed indefinitely. The organisation is suffering from internal conflicts of interest and general discontent, and the MD is unable to work through these problems and motivate staff. The mentoring appears to be having little impact on developing her leadership skills, and she is retreating away from the issues. The situation is becoming increasingly frustrating as I feel my support is having little impact.

Many organisations in the region have no history of independence, having been part of international organisations previously. Therefore they often have competent managers and administrators, but not leaders. Similarly, in a post-conflict context, starting an organisation is often seen as a method of getting employment. Therefore leaders often don't possess the passion for the organisation that is needed to lead it effectively. Due to these issues, leadership is a major problem for CSOs in the Balkans, and coaching/mentoring offer one tool to help overcome this, but can prove ineffective in the context.

The complex context of the post-conflict Balkans is affecting the development of effective leaders. This example illustrates how the context can influence the effectiveness of coaching/mentoring. Context may well have a similar influence on other leadership development interventions.

5   Conclusions and Ways Forward

Coaching and mentoring can be useful leadership development tools for CSOs. The learning histories from CSOs' experiences indicate that coaching and mentoring are relevant and appropriate in sectors other than the commercial sector, and on continents other than Europe and North America. As one experienced respondent (who spends most of her time delivering to executives and senior management in the public and voluntary sectors) argues, '*the basic principles and working methods of the coach remain the same in any sector.*'

> The learning histories highlight that coaching and mentoring can make a significant difference in leadership and staff development.

The learning histories highlight that coaching and mentoring can make a significant difference in leadership and staff development. While this impact is more visible at the individual level, they show that the impact also permeates through to the organisation.

But coaching and mentoring are not always effective in every situation. They will work only if there is a motive to change. The person involved must have the will to change and the organisational support to do so. They will only work if they are well facilitated, particularly in cross-cultural settings. Coaching and mentoring are clearly demanding processes and require high-quality coaches and mentors. The case studies illustrate the value of taking a personal approach to coaching and mentoring. This may include engaging with wider issues of family and faith.

For coaching and mentoring to make a significant contribution to leadership development requires more mentors and coaches. Many capacity-building efforts that include a coaching and mentoring component fail simply because there are too few good quality local coaches on hand to provide follow up. There is a need to invest in the development of local coaches and mentors.

The range of experiences of coaching/mentoring within CSOs highlight various issues and considerations. Whereas the overriding principles remain constant, particular considerations relating to context emerged from our research.

From the earliest stages of designing coaching/mentoring processes, practitioners need to bear these considerations in mind to pre-empt particular issues that may arise.

> **Key Considerations for Coaching and Mentoring:**
>
> - The person has to be committed to change.
> - The person should be able to choose their mentor/coach.
> - All parties should prioritise and plan for coaching/mentoring.
> - They should be seen as a core activities, rather than an add-on.
> - The organisation and manager (if applicable) need to provide support for the process.
> - The organisation needs to allocate sufficient time and funds.
> - Patience is needed – especially with 'difficult' leaders and in situations of internal conflict: it is a long-term process.
> - Post-conflict situations throw up particular problems of weak capacity.

While enthusiastic, we must also remain realistic about mentoring and coaching. They cannot solve all problems in organisations and leadership. If the wrong person is in post, mentoring may not help; if the person is not committed to improving their own performance, coaching will not add value; if the person wants technical recommendations from outside, mentoring will be frustrating for all. In short, we first need to understand the context clearly, and then work out with the client the most appropriate capacity-building solution.

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Appendix 1: Common Coaching Models and Tools

These models are intended to assist the coach in designing and steering individual sessions and the long-term coaching process. The models differ in terms of emphasis, and individual coaches/mentors can adopt and develop those that best suit their style of working, the person they are working with, and the context.

Performance Coaching: The GROW Model

Performance coaching derives its theoretical underpinnings and models from business and sports psychology, as well as general management approaches. It is an ongoing process where a coach guides or facilitates the continuous improvement of the coachee's performance. The GROW model is one of the best known and widely used coaching models. Many coach training programmes use this model as the framework for developing the coaching relationship.[43] GROW is an acronym for Goal, current Reality, Options and Will.[44] The creator of the model (John Whitmore) designed it for sports people in his former job as a sports coach, before transferring it to the world of business following calls from clients who could see the potential. It is presented as providing a simple yet powerful framework through asking a series of questions during a coaching session or series of sessions:

The GROW Model of Coaching[45]

G – Goal. First the session must have a clear goal. The goal should be as specific as possible, and it must be possible to measure whether it has been achieved. So, once the goal has been identified, you can ask questions such as:

- How will you know you have achieved that goal?'
- What are the expectations of others?
- Who else needs to know about the plan? How will you inform them?

R – Reality. As well as knowing where you are trying to get to, you need to know where you are starting from: the current reality. It is surprising how often this is the key part of a coaching session. Simply by seeing the situation clearly (rather than what was thought or imagined to be the situation), the resolution becomes obvious and straightforward. This can include asking:

- What has been really stopping you reaching your goal?
- Do you know anyone who has achieved that goal?
- What can you learn from them?

O – Options. Once you know where you are and where you want to go, the next step is to explore what options you have for getting there. A useful metaphor for GROW is a map: once you know where you are going (the goal) and where you are (current reality), you can explore possible ways of making the journey (options) and choose the best way. Questions can include:

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[43] Dembkowski and Eldridge 2003.
[44] See Whitmore 2002.
[45] Baker 2006: 70–71.

- What could you do as a first step?
- What else could you do?
- What would happen if you did nothing?

W – Will. But this understanding in itself is not enough. You must also have the motivation, or will, to make the journey. Some authors have the W standing for What, Where, Why, When and How. But whatever is emphasised, the desired outcome from this stage is a commitment to action. The following questions can guide this:

- Where does this goal fit in with your personal priorities at the moment?
- What obstacles do you expect to meet? How will you overcome them?
- How committed are you to this goal?
- What steps do you need to take to achieve this?

The STEER Model

The STEER model (Spot, Tailor, Explain, Encourage and Review), like GROW, is task-oriented and also has its basis in the world of sport. But it differs from the GROW model, and from the other models detailed below, in that it includes the coach demonstrating how a specific task should be done.

The STEER Model of Coaching

S – Spot training needs
T – Tailor training content to meet the needs of individuals
E – Explain and demonstrate how the task should be done
E – Encourage the individual while he/she is learning
R – Review progress during and on completion of learning.

Solution-focused Coaching: The OSKAR model

Solution-focused coaching differs from other approaches focusing on the problem as a way of moving forward, by focusing instead on solutions. The OSKAR model (Outcome, Scaling, Know-how and resources, Affirm and action, Review) is one of the tools used to guide solution-focused coaching. This approach is designed to discover what is working well and to replicate that, rather than continuing to do what is not working well. It centres on bringing out the existing skills and capabilities of the person being coached/mentored to reach the goals that the mentee/coached person has set for him/herself. The questions that this model prompts the coach to ask are designed to create a sense of possibility and capability.

The OSKAR Model[46]

As with other models, the OSKAR model is a series of suggested questions to help guide both individual sessions and the overall process.

This model makes use of a scale (0–10) so that participants can visualise where they are, where they want to be, and with the support of the coach work out how they could reach where they would like to be on a linear image.

This style of questioning is designed to stimulate the coachee/mentee to analyse their own situation for themselves, and articulate how they can change according to their own experiences.

O- Outcome
- What is the objective of this coaching?
- What do you want to achieve today?

S – Scaling
- On a scale of 0–10, with 0 representing the worst it has ever been and 10 the preferred future, where would you put the situation today?
- Describe your position in life now (let's call it *n*) – what did you do to get this far?
- How would you know you had get to a better situation than you are at now (*n*+1)?

K – Know-how and resources
- What helps you perform at the level you are at now (*n* on the scale), rather than at the worst it has ever been (0 on the scale)?
- When does the outcome already happen for you – even a little bit?
- What did you do to make that happen? How did you do that?

A – Affirm and action
- What is already going well?
- What is the next small step?
- You are now at the position you just described (*n*), what would it take to get to a better situation (*n*+1)?

R – Review: what's better?
- What did you do that made the change happen?
- What effects have the changes had?
- What do you think will change next?

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[46] From Mentoring for Change website www.mentoringforchange.co.uk (accessed July 2006).

Transformational Coaching

The diagram below outlines one model, or questioning technique, to address participants' reference points about themselves. Here action coaching is the more task-based approach, whereas transformational coaching encompasses and moves beyond that to consider the participants' ways of thinking and views of themselves. The loop learning processes outlined below are useful in understanding the more general change that has occurred in coaching as techniques move towards addressing relationships and self. Whereas earlier coaching techniques focused on the first loop, more and more coaches now address terrain in the other arenas.

Transformational Coaching Model[47]
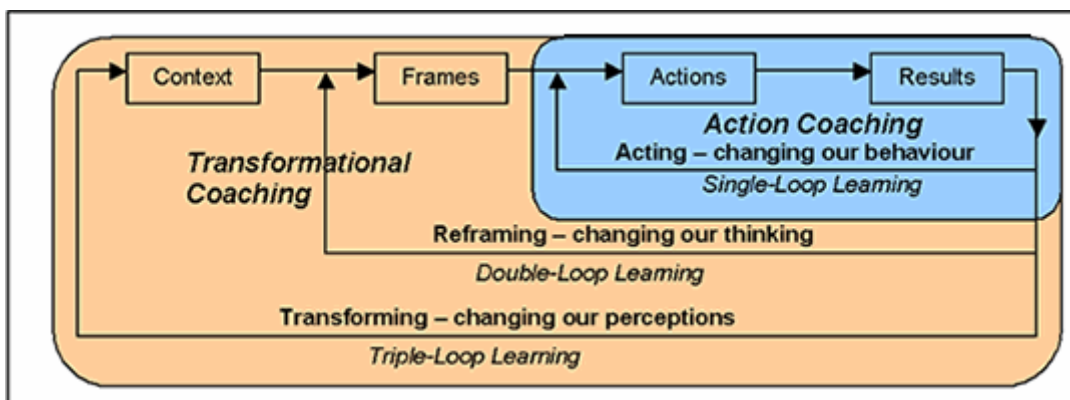
The methodology at the core of this approach is transformational coaching. This method seeks to go beyond helping people perform better (single-loop learning) to getting to the source of people's behaviour and altering their frames of reference (double-loop learning) and ways of being (triple-loop learning). Thus the three aspects of transformational coaching are:

- **Transforming who people are (triple-loop learning).** Empowering people to create a shift in their context or point of view about themselves with the intent of helping them learn, grow, and produce the results they truly desire.

- **Coaching people to learn to do new things (double-loop learning).** Enabling people to fundamentally reshape their patterns of thinking with the intent of helping them break through impasses and learn to do different things.

- **Coaching for incremental improvement (single-loop learning).** Coaching people to continuously improve their current practices or do what they are already doing better.

Transformational coaching uses story-telling as a method of inspiring participants to reconsider how they tell stories about themselves, in the belief that stories shape, limit and define a person's way of being. According to this technique, reframing stories about oneself is part of the process of reframing one's view of oneself.

The coach therefore works to transform stories by helping people realise that they are the authors of their stories, and that they can choose to tell stories that open up new possibilities for themselves and support them in fulfilling their potential.

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[47] Extract from Mentoring for Change website: www.mentoringforchange.co.uk (accessed July 2006).

POSITIVE Coaching Model

Newly developed models address the more psychological aspect of the coaching relationship. The POSITIVE coaching model is a framework that has recently been developed using such a more psychological approach: POSITIVE is an acronym for Purpose, Observations, Strategy, Insight, Team, Initiate, Value, Encourage. This model incorporates some psychological perspectives, such as the inclusion of social support and positive reinforcement.[48]

The POSITIVE Coaching Model[49]

Purpose: The coach encourages the client to gain some clarity as to what they want to achieve from the coaching relationship. The coach must build good rapport through techniques such as active listening, open questions, observation, encouragement, etc.

Observations: The coach encourages clients to think about what is happening around them. The coach's role in this phase is to help clients see their position with greater clarity and from a holistic viewpoint.

Strategy: Once it has been agreed that coaching is a viable option and the client has developed a sound understanding of their present conditions and environment, an end-state or goal can be considered. In helping to formulate a goal plan for the client to follow, 'SMART' goal-setting is a recommended technique to ensure the goals are clear, concrete, specific and realistic: SMART is an acronym for Specific, Measurable, Attractive, Realistic and Time-bound.

Insight: Here the coach encourages clients to consider their goal and what emotions the goal brings. This phase is to determine if the goal is indeed what the client wants, and if it is an accurate picture of the client's present and future aims.

Team: If clients can be made to feel they have a support network that they can turn to when experiencing difficulty, they are more likely to continue on their goal path. The coach is one member of the support team – but clients should be encouraged to recognise their network of friends, colleagues, family, etc.
Initiate: Here the coach encourages clients to initiate their goal by taking positive steps towards it, by executing the agreed goal plan.

Value: The coach should set weekly or short-term tasks that will lead clients eventually to their long-term goal. In this way, clients will receive regular feedback on their progress and can value and celebrate their advancement.
Encourage: The coach must help the client remain motivated, positive and on-track, not only during coaching sessions but between them.

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[48] Libri 2004.
[49] *ibid*.

GROW(ME) Model

As reiterated above, these models are suggested guiding frameworks to assist in mapping out individual sessions and the overall process. They can be adapted to the specific needs of the individual or organisation to allow for a more responsive and relevant coaching/mentoring process.

An Oxfam publication designed for use by geographically dispersed NGO training course facilitators who are in need of material (in this case explaining how to coach colleagues effectively in the workplace) contains a simple analysis of what coaching is and how it can be used.[50] It is particularly interesting that the specific coaching tool is explored is the GROW(ME) model for coaching – an adaptation of the more familiar GROW model.[51] By documenting its model, Oxfam GB has created shared understanding of it for staff working across the world.

The Addition of ME to the familiar GROW model

M and E – Monitor and Evaluate. It is useful to monitor progress towards achieving the goal and evaluate the success of the route taken in achieving that goal. This may result in a recognition that success has been achieved, or it may result in the goal being redefined.

In practice it is a less linear process, usually revisiting each stage several times; for example, exploring the reality of the situation often suggests more questions about the precise goal.

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[50] Baker 2006.
[51] See Whitmore 1996.

De Bono's Six Hats Exercise

Edward de Bono's Six Thinking Hats

The Six Thinking Hats methodology was developed by Edward de Bono to help people practise thinking in different ways. The central tool is a collection of six symbolic hats in different colours that represent different 'thinking behaviours'.[52] These hats are indicative of both frames of mind and emotional states. 'Wearing' a clearly identified hat during the exercise separates personal identity from expression and performance. The purpose of the hats is to direct thinking processes, not classify types of thinkers; people must be able and skilled to look in all directions and accept that all types of thinking are equally valid:

 White (informative): objective, asks questions, seeks information

 Red (intuitive): emotional and spontaneous, draws on gut feelings

 Black (cautious): considers weaknesses, risks, identifies difficulties

 Yellow (constructive): positive and optimistic, looks for benefits

 Green (creative): explores possibilities, new ideas, alternative solutions

 Blue (reflective): structures the thinking process, provides focus.

The hats can be used in a structured sequence for collective reflection, where a group wears one symbolic hat at a time. This is called parallel thinking, and provides focus and a clear direction of the thinking process. For example:

- Step 1: The relevant facts about the issue are explored (White)
- Step 2: Ideas are generated about how the issue could be addressed (Green)
- Step 3: The benefits (Yellow) and drawbacks (Black) of the ideas are listed
- Step 4: Intuitions and feeling about the alternatives are shared (Red)
- Step 5: The outcome of the process is synthesised (Blue).

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[52] This expression signifies the direct transition from reflection to action.

Praxis Paper No. 14

Coaching and Mentoring for Leadership Development in Civil Society

By Fran Deans and Louise Oakley
with Rick James and Rebecca Wrigley

Coaching and mentoring are popular capacity-building tools, especially in the area of leadership development. They are often mentioned in proposals and reviews as key elements of good capacity-building practice. Yet despite their current status, many of us are unclear what coaching and mentoring really involve, and where and when they work. We have a number of questions: What does a coach or mentor actually do? Is there any real difference between them? Where have these approaches come from? Are they really relevant to NGOs? When are these approaches effective? When are they not appropriate? This paper addresses these questions to demystify the concepts and practices of coaching and mentoring within civil society organisations.