

Mentorship Program

2021

This quarter saw the launch of the three-month DRL CoP Mentorship Program (MP) where Search for Common Ground (Search) paired together mentors and mentees from prime CoP organizations and their subgrantees, both local and international, across varying fields to build long-term relationships and fuel meaningful personal and professional development. The MP was a continuation of the annual initiative and brought together 21 individuals (eleven females and ten males) working on DRL-funded projects in the fields of democracy, human rights, governance, GBV, psychosocial, economic, and legal sectors. Six prime organizations and two subgrantees participated in the program, connecting in-person and virtually, to leverage each other's experience and expertise to enhance their respective programming.

After applying for the program, mentors and mentees were paired according to their skillset, expertise, professional seniority, and language. The program began with a virtual kick-off event to introduce participants to one another and outline the program guidelines. Search monitored the progress of each pair, and asked them to share their experiences and the overall focus of their sessions. . Some pairs reported that they were concentrating on developing skills such as CV writing, interviewing, program management, staff management, and how to have a work-home life balance. Other pairs reported discussions centering on GBV case management, policy and advocacy, political developments, and other sector-based knowledge sharing. At the end of the program, Search brought the participants together with other CoP members for an in-person event.

This in-person meet up enabled the participants to meet one another and also network with other members of the CoP.

Feedback from the MP was overwhelmingly positive and portends future collaborations. One mentee, Svana Zana Hassan from People's Freedom Organization, explained that:

“My nationality is Kurdish and my mentee was Arab, and we learned so many new things from each other. If I need help in central and southern Iraq, I will contact her.”

Hardy Shukir Mahmood, a mentor from the National Democratic Institute (NDI), explained that the cross-pollination of different backgrounds helped both him and his mentee develop their skill sets,

“My mentee was from a humanitarian background and I come from a development background. I think the discussions we had through the sessions broadened her knowledge and understanding about policy development, strategic advocacy, and decision makers engagement in a way that positively affected her efforts as a humanitarian and psychosocial support worker.”



Hardy's mentee, Serap from SEED, agreed,

“Thanks to Hardy, I really believe that I improved my capacity extensively on policy and advocacy...I believe that I will be able to use the know-how I have gained about policy and advocacy in the near future.”

All participants reported that they expected their relationship with their mentor/mentee to continue, with some pairs inviting their mentee to network with their colleagues, and agreeing to ad-hoc meetups. Many said that their partner had become a friend. Arbilina Polous, a mentee from Prosperity Catalyst, reported “my mentor had a lot of information and skills that I would still like to learn, so our relationship will continue in hopes of gaining more information and networking from each other.

