

A Guide to Peer to Peer Mentorship in Science Journalism

Lessons from the SjCOOP Project

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SjCOOP,
the name of the peer to peer mentoring project of the World Federation of Science
Journalists is short for **Science journalism COOP**eration

Foreword

In April 2006, the World Federation of Science Journalists (WFSJ) embarked on a three-year journey in peer to peer mentoring.

Through Project SjCOOP (Science journalism COOPeration), 16 experienced science journalists from 15 African, Arab, European and North American countries became companions to sixty of their colleagues in 33 African and Arab countries for two years. It was essentially a mentoring project at a distance, across multiple cultures, across countries and continents.

The SjCOOP project led to the creation of seven associations of science journalists and made African and Arab science journalists true partners in the international community of science journalism.

In this Guidebook, Kathryn O'Hara, who gave the initial training in mentoring to the SjCOOP mentors, shares the lessons learned in the mentoring process and looks into the complex mentor-mentee relationship which is always full of surprises. Each mentor-mentee dyad is unique; this is the essence of mentoring. Nevertheless, there are some approaches and experiences that can be shared.

Ask the SjCOOP mentors. They were an extraordinary group. They knew a lot. But they also learned a lot.

This booklet is dedicated to these wonderful individuals who gave the best of themselves, and more ... and to the science journalists who will have the chance to live a mentoring relationship.

It is also an opportunity to thank our donors: the International Development Research Centre (Canada), the Department for International Development (United Kingdom) and the Swedish International Development Agency (Sweden) for their exceptional support and interest in this project.

Jean-Marc Fleury

Executive Director

World Federation of Science Journalists

BellGlobemedia Chair in Science Journalism, Laval University, Québec (Canada)

Preface

Why science journalism?

Science journalism is no different from other beats, except that the facts are not as easily understood in the first place, the scientific establishment is harder to penetrate and the journalist needs to work harder to make sure the story is free of jargon and yet accurate, accessible and interesting.

Scientists are sometimes eager to talk about their research but often they can be ineffective communicators.

These conditions and the skills required to persuade editors or producers to value science stories in the first place, can be daunting. Journalists who want to break into competitive global markets need to have strong samples of their work and need to know how to build their professional resumes and networks. Understanding how journalism values and principles apply to science coverage is fundamental to good journalism practice and if you also understand journalism to be an art of democracy, then cultivating the artful coverage of science is a valuable pursuit.

Why mentoring?

Science journalists working in industrialized countries face daily challenges but none so formidable as those confronting journalists in developing countries. These reporters work with limited technical resources, diverse audiences, political volatility and different standards of press freedom. Despite more Internet accessibility, technical and professional networks remain weak.

What could help strengthen science journalism? How do science journalists work for a common good? What kind of training would help them improve both their skills and the local coverage of science and its social impact?

Jean Marc Fleury, the executive director of the World Federation of Science Journalists (WFSJ) sees a possibility for change. *“Mentoring would not only break their isolation but would raise the status of these journalists by linking them to an international network of colleagues; this would help them get recognition by the scientists who often refuse to be interviewed because of bad previous experiences. It would give them credibility.”*

Journalists in developing countries are often expected to be versatile, not covering one beat but many. A mentoring commitment would help reporters build the skills and confidence they need to cover science.

The combination of distance mentoring combined with yearly face-to-face meetings and a designated interactive web site was an innovative approach for overcoming the isolated experiences of journalists in Africa and the Middle East while improving the coverage of science and society in their home countries.

A mentoring guide

This guide is based on SjCOOP WFSJ's first mentoring project in hopes that you will find it useful for your own purposes. You'll find examples of the themes we worked on, the exercises and tools we used, including practical advice for a training program. DO's and DON'Ts of mentoring and troubleshooting advice for common relationship problems is an ongoing chapter.

Serving the needs of radio and television reporters was hard to do in this first distance mentoring but we have found ways to use new and ever improving tools.

And at the very end, to save you the trouble of reinventing the wheel, you will find the assorted questionnaires, surveys, reporting forms, contracts and letters you will need to keep your project documented and up to date. Feel free to adapt them as you see fit. We did.

Part one: Training the mentors

“The purpose of this workshop is to get us all working from the same page, confident in the process we have agreed upon for building trust and expertise with our mentees and imparting best practices and principles of science journalism while understanding that great mentoring comes with a highly individualistic sense of style and empathy”.

Kathryn O’Hara, science journalism professor and trainer

Mentoring can be done within a city or across continents. It can be done on a very small or a very big scale.

If the mentoring is part of a managed program and if many mentors and mentees will be involved, mentors should be trained.

In particular, if the mentoring involves mentors and mentees from different countries and cultures, training should be compulsory. Mentors should spend a few days together with trainers to learn the basics of mentoring¹.

Training of mentors should revolve around three main themes:

- the need to explore the parameters in the **mentor-mentee relationship** and develop working agreements that define limits while building trust and commitment within the peer mentoring process;
- the need to agree on **science journalism values**, ethics and best practices for evaluation purposes; and
- the need to understand and discuss the **methodology for evaluating** the progress of the mentorship. Outcome mapping, developed and used by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is suited to evaluating innovative projects where constant learning is part of the process. See how it works at http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-26586-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

Building the Mentoring Team

In the opening session, the following exercise is particularly effective in getting people, especially journalists, acquainted with each other.

Each person writes their name on a place card. The trainer collects them and a volunteer shuffles the names into pairs. Each pair then has the job of interviewing each other and reporting back to the group. Allow thirty minutes for the interviews. After a break, each member of the pair introduces the other based on the details from the

¹ See Annex I for announcement to recruit mentors

interview. This form of biography is a very effective icebreaker and a good way to begin to understand peer to peer practice.

Tools: notepads or voice recorders.

Advice: works best if pairs choose a space outside the meeting room for the interviews.

Mentoring is, by one definition, the sharing of successful experience and knowledge accumulated over many years. As it is only one form of adult education, the mentors though in training themselves, do have a lot to offer. This is precisely why they were chosen to be mentors.

Training mentors should then provide opportunities for mentors to share what they know. The following sessions are good ways to make mentors actively participate in their training. Each theme below helps focus the sharing of the mentors' experience.

Discussion theme one: Past Experience

What are your own experiences with mentoring? Who influenced you in your early career?

This session is very important in understanding the ways the mentoring relationship can happen without formal guidelines. We all have a story to share that helps crystallize for the group how that person, whether a teacher or editor or colleague helped them become a better journalist, a stronger writer or a better person.

Discussion theme two: Essence of Mentoring

What are the qualities you need as a mentor for science journalists?

This exercise calls on the participants to think about what mentoring is and what it is not. For example, a mentor is a coach rather than a teacher, a guide more than a guidance counselor. Even though mentoring encourages lifelong learning, there needs to be a time when the individual mentoring relationship ends. Friendships after that time are possible.

In the beginning the mentor-mentee relationship needs to build trust, awareness and a path for future opportunities. Thinking like a journalist, for example, is not necessarily thinking like a mentor. Explore some of the differences?

Discussion theme three: Mentor

So what is a mentor?

The purpose of this exercise is really to look at beliefs or cultural differences about the role of a teacher or a champion or a parent in the learning process. A mentor is none of these and yet each of us, in our own way, brings an element of mentoring from these

other roles and from our own experience of being helped along the way. Many journalists have worked with interns for a few weeks or months. How does this role differ from peer mentoring? How do we ensure that our cultural experiences do not override the peer to peer position?

A mentor can be a facilitator, a guide, a coach. Although mentees may learn from their mentor, the main role is different from teaching or counseling. The P2P relationship implies equality.

For that reason there is no disciplinary aspect to mentoring unlike teaching or parenting, yet there is a commitment and a responsibility to help the mentee realize his or her full potential as a journalist.

Encourage the group to explore why becoming a mentor is a valuable.

It could be for the following reasons: because mentoring allows us to share feelings about science and culture; to strive for empowerment; build bridges, combat isolation and learn diversity.

Mentors can help mentees find a voice and inspire them to find their role in society's development of science in the national agenda. Mentors can also help each other and engage in lifelong learning.

Discussion theme four: Mentees

What are you looking for in the mentees?

This exercise enables the group to envision what a mentee would be like and what the relationship would accomplish.

Ideally, mentees should be journalists, regardless of age, who are engaged, hard working, ambitious and passionate about improving their skills in science reporting. In international mentoring, you should also look for men and women who are able to speak English besides their mother tongue and are already trained to work with available equipment in print, radio, TV or online. And ... yes, they should be internet-connected!

Discussion theme five: Standards and values

What are the values you want to embrace as science journalists in ethics, best practices, and style?

Ethics

Use a short statement to start the discussion about ethics. The code of ethics on the website of Society of Professional Journalists available in several languages at <http://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp> is a good place to start.

The idea is to recognize areas that may be ethically problematic: issues like 'envelope journalism', plagiarism and lack of attribution or the difference between public relations and journalism. Journalism ethics and the means to deal with ethical issues should be built in from the start of the project.

Best practices

What is the job of the science journalist? There are several possible roles: educate the public; translate scientific research; inform the public about new developments in science; engage audiences in discovering what science and technology means to their lives; help the public to make those connections meaningful? Come up with your own terms and then exchange stories on ways that mentoring program can devise practical guidelines for doing good work.

Style

While admittedly more difficult to do well, crafting articles and scripts that use acknowledged storytelling or narrative techniques like characters, plots, a dramatic arc, elements of surprise and suspense are well suited to making science stories more accessible and tantalizing.

Have a discussion on the pros and cons of narrative journalism, define a style guide. Take a piece of journalism and comment on its effectiveness based on the kind of criteria each group member tacitly sets for his or her own work. See if 'well written' is similar for all the mentors in the group. If not, work out a way of defining style that makes it easier to have a consensus.

Discuss the different levels of skill required to do good straight news reporting, narrative journalism and editorial/commentary work. Use examples of good and not so good work.

All the mentors need to take part in brainstorming these core values. This is highly important for forming a consensus. All comments and ideas are listed on a white board. Agreement by the group on the most relevant of these contributions leads to a refined list, which in turn leads to more discussion.

Make sure everyone contributes, especially if it is to agree or disagree. Go for short concise sentences that best capture the idea and the sentiment. Review these again with the participants. Then transfer them to a PowerPoint slide for review and revision then next day.

Tools for above exercises: white board, tape or magnets, markers, laptop and projector for PowerPoint or Keynote.

Advice: Keep a final list to review at the end of the training workshop.

Role-playing Scenario

This exercise is important in pulling together the week's work. This example of a case study, below, is a role-playing scenario based on anecdotes from mentors.

The purpose is to highlight a hypothetically challenging situation for the mentor and examine ways of dealing with the problem. The different roles are typed on cards and given to selected mentors who will act out these situations.

Here's an example of a card given to a mentor:

Your mentee works as a reporter in the national radio newsroom and has been able to produce more short science features of late, with encouragement and guidance from you.

These two to three minute insights into science news are conversational in tone. Your mentee has worked hard to script the science in plain language. He/she finds a local scientist to interview and then edits the story so the scientist's clip is short and succinct.

This format is beginning to be popular with the audience. Your mentee is getting some good feedback from the manager of the radio station. And the editor of the local paper, who is a colleague of yours, wants your mentee to do a monthly version for the weekend paper.

But the supervisor of the news department is not so happy. Although your mentee has taken on this work in addition to the regular newsroom hours, the supervisor suspects she is being short-changed. Science is not a particular interest on the supervisor's agenda. Other reporters are also being a bit cool towards your mentee as well. Is it professional jealousy or something more?

You have suggested your mentee might attend a two-day medical science conference on Friday and Saturday because it will gather scientists from across the region as well as foreign scientists. It will be a good way for your mentee to interview a number of scientists for further stories, plus cover the conference as news. This conference is about a four-hour drive from your mentee's workplace. The station would normally cover the travel expense.

It appeared that the plan was in place; at least your mentee told you it was a go. But at the last minute, the supervisor has assigned another newsroom reporter for the task.

Your mentee is upset, discouraged and hurt.

You don't know the news supervisor but you do know the station manager.

How do you deal with this situation?

15 minutes prep time, 7-10 minutes for presentation by each group. 20 minutes discussion

Mentors take turns being the role-playing mentor, the mentee and the recorder. Improvise the conversations.

What are the possible outcomes?

The reaction and response ranged from the philosophical to the practical and generated lively discussion.

Advice: create fresh scenarios based on the experience of mentors-in-training.

Evaluation

Evaluation is essential for several reasons. First, agreeing on criteria for success at the outset of the mentoring project goes a long way in clarifying what the project is about. Second, implementing an evaluation and monitoring methodology from the beginning provides an early warning system to detect potential problems and make corrections.

Prepare evaluation forms for the progress of mentors, mentees and project coordinators. Discuss the forms that mentors will have to complete on their mentees, the ones mentees fill in on their mentor, and mentors on project coordinators. Discuss the current formats and questions. Determine if the template is workable. See annexes VII to XII.

Make sure the mentors-in-training also fill in an evaluation form about the training workshop before they leave. After training, whether for two days or a week, the mentors should leave with a sense of ownership of the project.

Training Sessions for mentors

Getting started

- Participants introduce themselves; interview each other and report back to group
- What is mentoring? Mentoring goals
- What is a mentor? Importance of mentor-mentee relationship
- Overall presentation of the planned peer to peer program
Welcome Dinner can close the first day

Mentoring

- Discussion of past experiences: who mentored you?
- Group exercise: impact of mentoring or lack of it on individual careers
- What is mentoring? Building trust, awareness, developing rapport and commitment
- Criteria for selecting mentors and mentees
- Mentors' contracts
- Explanation of monitoring and evaluation methodology: reporting sheets

Technical Issues

- Explanation of available technologies for use in mentoring,
- Skype, dedicated web site, and demonstrations
- Familiarization with broadcast edit programs for audio and video files
- Who's the Help Desk?

What to tell mentees: or more and better science journalism

- Science Journalism 101: sources, narrative science journalism, best practices
- Core journalistic values
- Cultural differences in science journalism practice
- Identifying gaps in mentees' skills
- Dealing with editors
- Mentor-mentee role-playing

Mentoring in Science Journalism

- Competencies needed in the mentor/mentee relationship
- Good science journalism mentoring: handouts, how it works, expected challenges
- Frequency of contact, assignments, evaluation forms, and guidelines reviewed
- Summing up the session and next steps
- Distribution and collection of evaluation forms

Part two: Mentees

You have mentees!

Mentoring requires major commitment and investment of both time and energy. A good mentor is usually a successful busy person. Her time is precious. For a peer relationship to work, the journalists who are chosen to be the mentees should also be equally committed. Otherwise it is a waste of valuable time and resources. It is crucial to invite only truly interested individuals into the mentoring scheme.

Organizing a competition can be a good way of finding good candidates for mentees. As with any competition, you need to

- establish the criteria for acceptance,
- identify a means to disqualify candidates who don't cut it,
- define ethical criteria for the members of the judging panel,
- appoint chairperson and judges, and
- devise procedures for notifying successful candidates as well as unsuccessful ones.

You can then ask candidates to write an essay on their interest in science journalism, submit a CV and two samples of their recent journalism.

Do these candidates meet the other criteria that the mentors discussed in training? Are they hard working and passionate about journalism? Are they able to commit the time to work on a schedule and deliver samples to their mentor? Are they published journalists? Are they freelancers, or contract workers? Do they have a working command of English – for an international program? Are they already working on science stories if not, do they show a desire to learn?

We do not recommend accepting students. Mentees need to be active in real work environments. Internships, of course, are possible within their own mentoring process.

As much as possible the mentees are matched up with mentors who have the most appropriate media experience and availability. Broadcast mentors may have difficulty getting access to radio and TV files, so printed scripts become, by default, the main working material. See box Radio at the beginning of Part Four.

In an international mentoring scheme, mentors are not normally paired with mentees in the same country. Although this has some drawbacks it also has benefits. The network expands, competition is not an issue and face-to-face meetings, when they happen, are highly productive.

Etiquette for First Mentor-Mentee Encounter

Unrealistic expectations and mismatches between mentors and mentees are two potential problems that can be worked on at the very start or at least early on in the program.

Expectations must be clearly defined so that mentees don't demand too much from the mentor. It is important that the mentor understands the mentee's own time constraints, working conditions, and cultural differences. These can and do play a part in the quality of their science journalism on offer and can be challenging. If a mismatch is identified during the first 6 months, changes can be made so that there are no hard feelings on either side.

These guidelines for mentors should help you manage the first e-mail introduction or Skype call to your new mentees. The idea is to outline aims, working arrangements and obligations in as smooth a manner as possible. See annexes V to VI.

For starts, ask about the mentee's goals and expectations. Discuss what mentoring means and what it can (and can't) achieve. You need to explain that you will not be acting as an editor but providing constructive criticism, not will you be doing job placement. Both of you need to get a sense of the constraints the mentee is facing in his or her situation. You really want to discuss workable goals, but first you may need to get the bigger picture.

Some typical questions:

- What are the main challenges science journalists face in your mentee's region?
- Is there a dedicated science reporter working at the local newspaper, radio station, or in television news?
- Do any of these outlets have a regular science page or science program?
- What areas of science interest you (the mentee) most?
- This is also a good chance for mentors to share their own experiences with the mentee.

Next, you'll need to set up contact times and determine a system for exchanging work samples and critiques. During the first 6 months of the relationship, mentors and mentees communicate at least once a week, and after that twice a month. E-mail, on line discussion and Skype calls all work for this purpose. On average you should spend one to two hours a week with each mentee's work.

At this point, you should offer some thoughts on the mentee's sample journalism, highlighting strengths and pointing out weaknesses.

Ask your mentee if he or she would like to see some of your work and send along an article or script along with your picture. Ask about Internet access and computer availability. If you implement a dedicated web site where mentees can upload their

articles, recordings or videos for mentors to comment, explain how to access the web site and how you'll want to use it. Ask the mentee for technical feedback on using the web site, or any online resource, and work to resolve any problems right away.

You should also talk about the need to keep contact records, which could be as easy as documenting your e-mail exchanges and time spent on exercises. Also discuss the overall schedule for the whole duration of the project to help with your long-term goals.

But before you end the conversation you should make sure you have outlined some short term goals that you can commit to. Keep SMART in mind, an acronym for goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, result-based and time-lined. Be positive about these goals.

Understand the political situation in your mentee's country. How critical can the media be of the status quo without jeopardizing whatever press freedom exists?

In no way would you want to encourage your mentee to risk safety for a story. Look for creative ways to promote serious science journalism.

Considering content

Science stories are not hard to find, there are thousands of studies published weekly in journals that cover all aspects of the scientific enterprise.

Selling the stories to editors and producers, finding the scientists to clearly explain the study, understanding the context for new research and finding local connections and relevance to your audience are much harder to do.

"I had to explain how science writing helps people understand their world, improve their lives, understand the universe, the natural or environmental changes that happen all the time ... Science is broad. It is not limited. So I begin step by step, I do some environment, some health, some sport medicine, and some science news. After six months, I begin to teach them what is the difference between news and reportage, a subject, and a feature."

Mentor Mr. Hatem Sedky, Cairo (Egypt)

Storytelling or narrative techniques are far more engaging than 'A study published today in the journal X by scientist Z shows results Y'.

Face to face Meetings

Arranging for at least one face to face meeting along with the distance mentoring is crucial.

“Our working relationship only really started in Nairobi. I didn’t want to tear their work completely apart. It was much easier to talk after we had met, know that I really wanted to help. Before that, even the slightest criticism could be misinterpreted and affect their self- confidence. After meeting face to face it was easier for them to say: yes, I can see you are right (laughs).”

Mentor Ms. Dagmar Roehrlich, Bonn (Germany)

Advice: make sure mentees are able to travel and get visas well in advance of any face-to-face meeting. If the face to face meeting coincides with a science conference or event – which you should aim at -- encourage mentees to research the science conference before hand to make the best use of their time.

Mentors should use the opportunity to help prepare their mentees for covering world conferences. This is a good chance for mentees to produce on the spot work for mentors to critique. An ongoing blog from the conference can give all mentees a chance to work as a team and ensure that for once, that access to technical equipment is uniform.

“It is very difficult to work at a distance. Although there are many things you can learn with on line communication but meeting face to face lets you work together as a team on common problems.”

Mentor Ms. Dagmar Roehrlich, Bonn (Germany)

“It takes time to form a bond. There were 3-4 e-mails that my mentee was having trouble getting to do the assignments ... family things were mentioned. By the time he finally told me what the problem was I was seeing it on TV, the floods, his house was gone his family uprooted. It took 6 e-mails before he mentioned this fact. He didn’t want to talk about it. Mentoring taught me how to listen.”

Mentor Mr. Hans-Joachim Neubert, Hamburg (Germany)

Notwithstanding, you might want to consider these points which can trigger conflict regarding the workload of mentors:

1. Mentors should include the time spent in conversations with mentees as well as the time critiquing their work when tallying weekly hours.
2. Mentors need to remember that it is not their job to edit the work of their mentees but to offer constructive criticism. Comments and feedback should relate to the individual mentee. Mentees need to ask relevant questions and not get used to the mentor fixing their stories.

Part three: Mentoring

"I learned a lot from my mentees. There were many things I forgot working behind a desk. Working closely with them reminds me of the things I can do better in my own work."

Mentor Ms. Raghida Haddad, Beirut (Lebanon)

Peer to peer mentoring doesn't mean that the mentor and mentee are equal in all respects.

The mentor is hugely familiar with crafting science stories and has experiences and contacts to back up this skill. The mentee has the potential to become better versed in all these areas. The main link between the two levels of expertise is generosity.

Both mentor and mentee are willing to share their time and expectations and to give and receive constructive criticism. This best approach, to borrow psychologist's Carl Roger's phrase, is one of 'unconditional positive regard.' Keep that in mind and you'll cultivate a virtual working space big enough for new growth and greater vistas.

Good mentoring rapport is based on a level of trust that requires complete openness and diligence. There will be times when all is not going according to plan.

Don't ignore a problem in hopes that it will solve itself. This seldom happens.

Often mentoring relationships are strained because the mentor or mentee has unrealistic expectations, anticipates faster results, better communication or fewer hours of work. Frustrations, disappointment, self-pity can all kick in at some point. Working together to get at the heart of an issue while acknowledging the emotional detonators usually gets results. When you reflect on the problem, toss out a number of possible ways of looking at solutions and let the mentee make the final choice. This way you have a better chance of resolution.

Tips for mentors

DO's and DON'Ts

Over the course of the project mentors and mentees have shared their stories. Some of the spirit of their successes and failures are captured in these simple tips.

- ❖ DO understand that both of you will be learning from each other and your experiences and that includes both successes and failures.
- ❖ DO try and learn new things about each other in each exchange
- ❖ Find out what areas of science journalism are most familiar and where the weak spots are?

- ❖ DO find out what kind of journalism training has been the most successful, ask yourself the same question.
- ❖ DO help find conferences, workshop and seminars that would be helpful for your mentee and give advice on applying for travel grants.
- ❖ DO make sure that your critiques of your mentees work are not personal. Reinforce the fact that your criticism is directed at the stories and the mentee should view this in a detached way to best work on improvements.
- ❖ DO find ways to help your mentee develop a list of reliable sources both locally and internationally
- ❖ DO ask your mentee about other demands on his or her time and tell your mentee where you are able to make time for additional contact, or to rework your existing agenda.
- ❖ DO listen actively to what your mentee tells you, ask questions, and expect and encourage your mentee to DO the same for you?
- ❖ DO sum up the conversation so you have a clear understanding of what was said, write it down and e-mail it immediately to the mentee to make sure you have agreement. Clear up any misunderstandings right away.
- ❖ DO be sensitive to your mentees past experiences and make a point of learning about their culture
- ◆ DON'T get discouraged if your mentee isn't showing improvements: identify recurring problems in story selection, focus, structure, grammar and style. Work together on solving them one by one. Bad habits die hard.
- ◆ DON'T let false pride get in the way of improving your skills as a science journalist. The best journalists are continually learning. That's one reason why journalism is a compelling profession.
- ◆ DON'T worry too much about political correctness; strive for honesty and trust and of course 'unconditional positive regard'.
- ◆ DON'T compare your mentee to other mentees or mentors to mentors. Each relationship is unique and needs to build on its own strengths and recognize its weak points.
- ◆ DON'T edit your mentee's work. Offer constructive criticism. Your mentee needs to know how to spot structural and factual problems and not get used to someone 'fixing' his articles.
- ◆ DON'T assume that your comments are understood. Ask open-ended questions

about your mentees reactions to your criticisms and allow them to do the work in answering them. For example, if you comment that the story loses focus at this point, you need to ask how the mentee focused the story in the first place, how could he or she have chosen a different focus, and how might the story have looked in that case? What are the essential elements of the story? What facts distract from the essence or focus? Can you write a one-sentence summation of the story? What does that tell you about the way you have written this article? These are Questions that guide the mentee to find Answers that shed light on the writing process and the need for clarity.

- ◆ DON'T be an advocate for your mentee with his or her editors or producers. You are neither an agent nor a teacher. And if your mentee asks you to talk to the boss, explain why that can't happen.
- ◆ DON'T buy equipment or supplies for your mentee, subsidize travel, lend money or help with immigration or other legal issues.
- ◆ DON'T give up.

Troubleshooting relationship problems for mentors

My mentee can't speak English even though she said she could?

If your mentee doesn't normally work in English, she may not think it is necessary to speak or write English for general reporting. And it isn't. But English is the language of major science conferences and most scientific journals. The specialist reporter is at a big disadvantage if she can't read studies and must rely on translations of press releases for information. You need to convince her to develop a proficiency in English and although this is not one of your responsibilities, it is possible, for instance, to use the translation of the online course in practice sessions or work with her on translating short English science news pieces. Remedial English classes are offered practically everywhere and local science writers' associations could help organize lessons for their members.

My mentee does not own a computer and has limited Internet access?

Technical problems can play an aggravating role in new mentoring relationships. The access to the internet is very uneven in different countries. Power grids are also a problem. Urban areas are better served than rural ones. Freelance journalists have more trouble getting on line than those working for media houses. While the technology is improving continually, you may be faced with times when IT fails you. There is always snail-mail as a backup. And mentees within the same country can be helpful to each other in spreading the word about reliable computer facilities and internet cafes. If money is an issue, discuss this with the project's coordinator.

My mentee is a broadcast journalist and I work in print?

Print journalism is definitely easier to deal with in any distance mentoring exercise. Sending audio files and video files via the Internet may be improving all the time but learning the basics of science broadcast journalism still requires more hands-on training. Your mentee may be somewhat frustrated by not being able to have you comment on her broadcast work. But if the script is written for radio, for instance, the story should be there for you to see. In fact writing for radio is a very good exercise in covering science as it keeps the story simple. Online journalism, pointing out how stories are written for the web is also a good way to approach print with more versatility. And remember many of the problems in doing science journalism are not confined to any one medium.

My mentee plagiarized a story but denies he did so when I confronted him?

Cutting and pasting information from an online press release is all too easy to do and your mentee may have got away with it in the past. Even if this sample is the first piece of work that is obviously lifted directly, i.e. whole chunks verbatim from a press release, you are right to voice your concern straight away. This is a serious problem! Equally unethical are reports that one reporter lifts verbatim from foreign press sources and present as their own work, i.e. without attribution.

If you have proof that your mentee did either of these things, present it to him right away. If he does not see that the stories are too close for comfort then you need to explain that plagiarism or lack of attribution are career-ending moves. If this happens once because of genuine ignorance, then be extra vigilant. If it happens twice, then there is no reason for this person to practice journalism.

My mentee is convinced his journalism skills are superior; after all he has a job. But he still has a lot to learn. How do I get him to understand what good journalism is all about?

Ah, tough job. The ego is such an obstruction. You may not be able to accomplish much here unless you send his stories to other critics, particularly his peers in the mentoring program. Let them read his stories, anonymously and offer comments. Then you can pick up on a thread that points up his problem, be it sources or style or structure.

Advice: one way to initiate a discussion on the quality of the production is to ask the mentee for permission to submit an article of her choice to an editor for potential freelancing. The article should then come back with comments. Comments from a third party by then initiate a plan to correct weaknesses identified. See next question.

My mentee wants me to help her find more freelance contacts but I think she is not good enough yet?

This is a situation that requires tact and additional time to steer navigate without causing any damage to the relationship. The fact that your mentee wants to expand her markets is a good thing and you should acknowledge that. You also need to explain how competitive the freelance marketplace is and how you need to present your very best work, first impressions being the strongest.

Go over the qualities and the caliber of the work that most editors look for in a freelance piece. Analyze a freelance story that you find in a newspaper or magazine, one that your mentee aspires to. Ask the mentee to comment on its strengths. Ask her if she thinks her latest article could stand up to the same scrutiny. If she thinks it can, and you know it can't, then point out the problem areas. You can help her prepare a pitch, for starts, and then see if the article delivers what the pitch proposes. If not, this is a good sign that the article is not ready for prime time. At that point, make an extra effort to work on the weak areas with the mutual goal of getting a good pitch and an equally good piece of journalism ready for the international freelance market within six months.

My mentee does not keep our weekly appointments? I always have to chase her down?

Unless there is a particularly good reason, (no electricity, internet down, family or professional emergency,) this is really a breach of contract. It goes against professionalism and is also inconsiderate. Once is excusable, twice requires a serious discussion and a commitment to a solution and three times comes with a warning that there may not be a fourth time. This is obviously the sign of a deeper problem. Make every effort to find out what the real trouble is? You may want to consult the coordinator if you cannot reach the mentee. Always try and get a way of contacting your mentee like a mailing address, work number or alternate cell number when setting up your initial contact information.

As one mentor put it: *"There is a lot of excuse hunting and it damages the mentor-mentee relationship. It really is more fun to just do the work."*

My mentee has a science degree and thinks articles about science should sound scientific? Consequently his work is very dull.

This 'dry science' style won't get him very far in the journalism world. He may think he is being true to his scientific training but that won't get his stories published. Remind him that only the editor gets paid for reading a story, not the reading public.

Science stories that merely sum up studies or report on a conference without going deeper into the social context are not filling a social need; they are merely filler. Narrative journalism uses a human face and good journalism uses more than one source, i.e. not only the study author. This method takes more work on his part but ultimately makes for a more interesting and relevant story. As science communicator Steve Miller wrote: *Science journalism is more about journalism than it is about science.*

My mentee is asking me for a letter of recommendation for a scholarship but I'm hesitant to oblige as he still has much more progress to make?

This is a similar situation to the one described earlier. While it is important to encourage your mentee to apply for scholarships and bursaries, it is equally important to make sure skill levels are appropriate for the particular award. You obviously think your mentee needs to work harder to qualify for your approval in such a formal manner. By no means should you write a letter of recommendation if you have these doubts about the current capability of your mentee. Readers of this half-hearted recommendation will detect

problems with a letter than is anything less than enthusiastic. So in that sense, you are not doing your mentee a favor by agreeing to write a reference letter at this point.

Find some samples of award-winning journalism and analyze them. Explain that competition is stiff and rather than apply for the scholarship now, why not work on a few more articles and really get some stronger samples ready for the next round of applications. Make that a goal that you both can achieve and make sure that your mentee understands why it is better to wait

I think my mentee is ready to publish her work in a foreign freelance market but magazine editors are not answering her queries?

You can help in this case simply by forwarding the mentee's e-mail directly to the editorial address. This way if there is a question of its legitimacy the editor can reply back to your address. You don't need to endorse the article; you simply need to state that it is the work of a legitimate reporter who you know is working in that country and that this journalist is part of a bigger mentoring program.

I have just found out that my mentee finds me too tough and is sending his work to another mentor, what can I do?

Two things come to mind. First of all, you need to ask yourself if you have framed your critiques in a positive light, so that your mentee feels he can discuss this with you. Have you asked your mentee about your criticisms for instance or even argued about them? Are you aware that you have alienated your mentee? Do you honestly think he is capable of doing better work?

In any case, it does not do much good for another mentor to take on your mentee until these issues are worked out. The mentoring scheme's coordinator should talk with both mentor and the mentee to see where the problem originated. If you are happy to let another mentor take over, then you should be honest about this as well.

If possible, take the initiative and create opportunities for mentees to work together with another mentor on specific topics. Or make them work as teams of mentees and help each other rather than look for another mentor.

I don't think this can work out logistically. How can I change my mentor or mentee?

The first few months are the ideal time to work out any rough spots in the mentoring process. In some cases, the mentee's or mentor's language skills may be too big a barrier to overcome in the available time for mentoring. Other times, there are serious scheduling problems. If there is a real personality conflict and this can happen, you can try and switch mentees. As long as this happens at the start of the mentoring process, it should cause few new problems. Again the coordinators are in a position to see who has the most flexibility for change and determine whether or not this move will solve the problem at hand.

And finally, my mentee is sending me articles regularly but she is still not making any progress after a full year of mentoring. What should we do?

This is a discouraging situation all around. You are not getting the satisfaction of seeing improvements and the mentee is not likely getting any benefit from all the time invested in his work.

First of all, review which areas you have worked on the most and which the least: finding stories, engaging experts, interviewing techniques, story focus, structure, basic news or more skillful narrative style. Have you tried to look at different kinds of science stories, medicine, environmental, agriculture, space, and geophysics? Where is the lack of progress most evident? And what efforts have you both made to work this out in the past? Are there any circumstances that are affecting your mentee's ability to work well? Have you discussed this impasse with other mentors on the discussion board or through Skype to see if they have similar problems and have tried other solutions? Is your mentee lacking motivation or skills or both? Is it a language issue?

If your mentee is really trying but just doesn't get it, can you think of any other sort of instruction that might help remedy the problem outside of mentoring? And if all these avenues are exhausted, check with the coordinators. It may be time for her to leave the program.

Troubleshooting relationship problems for mentees

My mentor doesn't know the first thing about journalism in my country

Many mentors are extremely good journalists but have not worked or traveled much outside their own country. This is an area that you can be most helpful in improving his or her knowledge.

DON'T be afraid to tell your mentor about the culture and makeup of your audience, what your work situation is like, how you relate to your bosses and what is considered acceptable behavior for a journalist in your country. Gender or ethnic issues need to be discussed frankly. Remember too that unless you fill your mentor in on your access to computers, Internet, and cell phones, there is no way for the mentor to gauge how you can work.

My mentor hasn't commented on my last two articles yet?

You need to remind the mentor that you really need the feedback and that you have kept up your end of the agreement. In some instances, your mentor may be traveling or busy with other assignments. In this case he or she should give you notice of any difference in the scheduled online meetings.

Make sure you have contact information for your mentor apart from e-mail, like a Skype number or a cell phone number. It can happen that e-mails do not get through on both ends. It is always better to check first to see if the problem lies in the technology, rather than commitment to the project.

Check with the other mentees as well to see if this is a common occurrence or a rare one. Mentors are often under deadline pressure themselves but this should not interfere with their contractual obligations.

Part four: Mentoring Radio and TV journalists

Newspaper or print reporting dominates journalism practice everywhere. At least, that was the case until very recently. Now the electronic media is ascending and journalism standards, still vital, can be applied to a wider range of formats.

Although radio is a hugely important medium both for its affordability and range, sending radio files can be tedious because of technical limitations and internet accessibility. Likewise mentors with expertise in radio value any opportunity to train for this versatile and valuable medium.

Mentoring in radio and TV must resolve some critical technical issues. The following paragraphs are, therefore, a bit technical:

Radio

Radio reporters need the use of a microphone, voice recorder and an editing program to produce science news or feature interviews and documentaries. Reporters working for a radio station normally have access to studios and equipment. Freelancers may need to find ways and means to borrow and eventually purchase a recorder and a microphone.

Equipment

We recommend using an Olympus WS line for the best trade-off between quality and cost. There are more and greater professional-quality machines in the \$400 range, but the little WS-321M sells for about \$100 and is more than adequate. Any Olympus WS model from 100 on up would be fine for most work, though the higher you go in model numbers, the better the memory and the model numbers ending in a "1" and not a zero, like the 321 and 331 have a better sound chip with a slightly better frequency response.

The newest model of Olympus -- the WS-500M -- has improved sound quality and retractable USB port and sells for less than \$100. The Olympus (or a similar digital voice recorder) is highly compact and includes a USB port that can feed directly into a computer-editing program like the free download Audacity.

Likewise a voice-over track can be recorded directly onto the computer with a microphone plugged into the mic input, and the two tracks edited and saved as one file. A good microphone is still needed; the least expensive is the SONY FV100, which sells for around \$50. Headsets to monitor recording are also needed. Inexpensive ones will do.

Feeding files

A mentee can send a sound file by downsizing the file to mp3 (from 64 to 32 k) on free software like <http://www.dbpoweramp.com/>

and then upload the file with an FTP (File transfer protocol) application like Filezilla which works for both Windows XP users and MAC users. This is a webpage that you can share with your mentee. It's a simple easy solution to sending audio files. Because you are uploading your voice file to a web site there is no problem with capacity in Internet cafes. If you can get onto the web you can make your audio file listenable.

“TV is a powerful medium that can reach people who are not going to read newspapers. SjCOOP should make a real effort to accommodate broadcast journalists.”

Mentor Mr. Gilles Provost, Montréal (Canada)

TV

TV presents tougher challenges than radio for broadcast mentees and mentors. Mentees could digitally scan their video reports themselves on their computers using an operating system like Windows XP. To do this, it would be necessary for the computer to have a video scan card that can connect directly to the analogue output of a professional videotape recorder which they would normally use in their work. Such cards are easily available.

The mentee would be able to use Media Player, an application that is fully integrated into Windows XP, to transfer the video report onto a format WMV that is readable whether or not the computer on the other end is using Windows XP.

The program should automatically compress the file to adapt to the speed of the Internet connection, 56K up to the highest speed. The beauty of this format is that files can be extremely compressed without compromising the quality of the image too much. Or alternatively you can use freeware that let you edit and resize videos like <http://www.avidemux.org/>

If the image is set at low resolution, the mentees should be able to then transfer their files even from an Internet café, to a designated web site. This further reduces the risk of technical difficulties. Incidentally the mentors don't need the highest quality visual images to comment on the content and structure of the story! Or try uploading to this free player where you can view almost any video format; <http://www.videolan.org/>

TV technical issues are solvable but ...

Another problem might be intractable and put a full stop to any exchanges of videos between mentor and mentee: the TV station employing the mentee can object to any exchange of its programs and usually does. You could then try to negotiate an official arrangement for strictly non-broadcast quality copies. Good luck.

Part five: Supporting material

The WFSJ online course in Science Journalism

“When you have studied journalism for four years, as some mentees have ... you know they think why do we need this? But you do forget, you should always remind yourself of the tools and techniques. The course is especially useful for those mentees who didn’t study journalism.”

Mentor Ms. Raghida Haddad, Beirut (Lebanon)

The World Federation of Science Journalists has produced an 8-lesson online course in science journalism which is available free at: <http://www.wfsj.org/course/>

The WFSJ online course exists in five languages: Arabic, English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. And Chinese was to be put on line in the summer of 2009.

This can be a very helpful tool in connecting the work of the mentors and mentees. Experienced science journalists wrote the lessons. Some were part of the mentoring program, and others worked with SciDev.net.

A guide to using the 8-part course, complete with assignment sheets is also available. PDF versions of the lessons are online.

“The online course is very good, very helpful when we interview our sources, good in a very practical way. I admire it and always read it with my mentee.”

Mentor Mr. Hatem Sedky, Cairo (Egypt)

As an exercise you might want to divide the lessons among two or three groups of mentors with mentees, have the mentors describe the content to the group, then have the mentees research and write a local story based on that particular lesson. Compare and discuss the results.

Skype

Skype, a voice over Internet protocol (VoIP), is user-friendly and allows people to talk to each other for free if they are connected to the Internet. It is also possible to have long text conversations with several people at once and to have conference calls.

Skype (www.skype.com) is very simple to install and configure. You need an Internet connection, a microphone, a headset and if using video a built-in or mounted camera. Skype is also available in multiple languages.

Skype-out also lets the user make cheap phone calls on line to regular telephones. This is a great feature on a limited budget. There are other similar VoIPs but so far, Skype is the most stable and efficient.

“Skype has been a big help in cementing relationships.”
Mentor Ms. Christina Scott, Cape Town (South Africa)

Mentors can use Skype to meet with their mentees and hold news conferences. Coordinators can call chats to keep in touch with mentors and other mentees.

“We hold Skype meetings every Wednesday...we exchange ideas, we learn form the experience of others, the mentees support each other, we are a team. It makes for good relationships. The Wednesday meeting is sacred.”
Mentor Ms. Raghida Haddad, Beirut (Lebanon)

Evaluation and Monitoring

How do you measure success? What does better science journalism look like?

What is a reasonable outcome for two (three?) years of dedicated mentoring and hard work?

The annexes at the end of this Guidebook include some questionnaires that were used in the SjCOOP project. They can be adapted for your own use Nonetheless, at the outset, you should agree on benchmarks that are reasonable, but challenging:

- quoting sources, explaining science and using narrative style,
- being responsible for science pages, science beat,
- being promoted,
- freelancing, nationally, internationally,
- winning awards,
- becoming active members of their association
- continuing their education
- becoming trainer in science journalism

“As a reporter you have to invest in yourself, no one else is going to do that for you.”
Mentor Ms. Christina Scott, Cape Town (South Africa)

Certificates are a good way of recognizing that mentors and mentees agree that progress has been made, benchmarks achieved. Giving out certificates creates an opportunity for a ceremony, photos, a document, a party. A certificate also proves to the mentees' employers or engagers that the journalist completed the mentoring.

“My mentee’s articles and news reports were better written. The big success story here is my mentee improved his whole agency’s style. His editor formed a committee, we mentored the whole agency, and we used the online course. Everyone realized you can improve.”

Mentor Mr. Hans-Joachim Neubert, Hamburg (Germany)

And finally

- Make sure all the participants are aware of conferences, courses, workshops and other opportunities to network and find stories.
- Make a strict policy on plagiarism, lack of attribution and other ethical issues in journalism, with examples. In some instances, the mentee will not know that these practices are unacceptable as lack of attribution, for instance,
- may be commonplace in their newsroom.

Mentors and mentees learn from each other. They experience the difficulties of doing good science journalism in challenging situations and the pleasures of seeing progress: a story that changed policy, a new beat, a dedicated science page in the paper or online, more recognition of research locally.

It could come as an award, or scholarship, a new found confidence, or a new colleague to trust. SjCOOP’s experiment in peer to peer mentoring put all of us on a more equal footing as we traveled a new path to cooperation among science journalists. Now it is your turn.

Go for it!

“When you see them start to see themselves as having a professional niche, to create a space in the newsroom or freelance an article, if you talk about how to cope with a hostile environment, help them survive, encourage them to go for awards, scholarships. This is sustainable. What was initiated can be repeated ten, fifteen times down the line.”

Mentor Mr. Otula Owuor, Nairobi (Kenya)

Annexes

Worksheets, Tools, and Guides

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I -Announcement to recruit Mentors

Mentor in Science Journalism

The World Federation of Science Journalists' mentoring project for journalists in Africa and the Middle East twins experienced science journalists with journalists keen to improve their skills at covering science and technology. Participating journalists and mentors will be organized in three groups: English-speaking Africa, French-speaking Africa and the Middle East. Each group will be led by a regional coordinator and will include 5 mentors and some 20 journalists (mentees). The mentoring will extend over two years. It will mainly be distance mentoring but will also include at least two face-to-face meetings between mentors and mentees, associated to field visits and scientific conferences in Africa and the Middle East.

The mentors are key players in the Project. Each one will accompany 4 journalists during two years of learning on how to become professional science and technology reporters. The mentoring will be based on a peer to peer relationship, i.e. the mutual sharing of professional challenges, best practices and expertise between colleagues. The project is looking for mentors who not only have a solid experience of science journalism, but who can also inspire and act as role models.

The mentors will be selected in Africa and the Middle East, as well as outside those two regions. All mentors will need to participate in a two-week training session that will equip them to help journalists in Africa and the Middle East to overcome the challenges of reporting on science and technology.

Mentoring will be achieved through advice, comments and suggestions on articles, reports and programs produced within the regular professional work of the mentored journalists. It will be mainly distance mentoring through emails and correspondence with the possibility of phone conversations.

The distance mentoring will be completed by at least two face-to-face encounters during the course of the two-year mentoring; these face-to-face encounters will be planned to coincide with scientific workshops or conferences or/and field visit of research activities, in the Middle East or Africa.

A formal contract will outline the responsibilities of each party and the two years will conclude with the delivery of a certificate from the World Federation of Science Journalists.

If you want to be a Mentor**Mentor: essential qualifications and requirements**

- Presently working as a science journalist, freelance or for a media, since 10 years;
- Being able to give the time needed for the mentoring and participate in the program activities: 5-day training session in July 2006 and one meeting per year in Africa or the Middle East;
- Strong interest in helping, sharing and motivating;
- Respect and openness; and
- Internet connection.

Mentor: useful experiences and qualifications

- Previous experience in mentoring, coaching, or teaching of science journalism, or in the organization of training workshops in science journalism; and
- Professional track record recognized by prizes, awards or scholarships.

Mentor: Tasks and responsibilities

- Mentor 4 journalists during 2 years;
- Learn about the 4 mentees, their achievements and expectations in science journalism;
- Build a relationship of trust, respect and friendship with mentees;
- Provide advice, comments and suggestions on the best practices in science journalism;
- Share with mentees information on available resources (manuals, contacts, online courses, internships) as identified by the World Federation of Science Journalists;
- Comment on the strengths and weaknesses of articles or audio or video productions of mentees in a constructive way with the goal of improving the mentees' ability to cover science and technology;
- First six months: the mentor has to interact with his or her mentees once a week;
- Last 18 months: the mentor has to interact with the mentees twice a month.
- Participate in the Training Session for Mentors, 10-14 July 2006 in Munich (Germany);
- Participate to two meetings with the mentees in Africa or the Middle East (approximately one week);
- Make sure that articles or electronic productions of mentees are copied to the regional coordinator and project secretariat with comments. (If the mentoring is for television, the schedule will be adapted to accommodate the different stages of the productions);
- Evaluate progress of mentees to prepare final report and recommendation for awarding a certificate of the World Federation of Science Journalists for participation in the two-year mentoring project.

Contract and stipends

The different tasks of a mentor will be detailed in a contract between the mentor and the World Federation of Science Journalists.

To be a mentor:

Send your application with CV to ...

Help for the creation of associations of science journalists

In parallel with the mentoring scheme of individual journalists, the World Federation of Science Journalists will also help science journalists in Africa and the Middle East aiming to create their own association of science journalists.

Twinning of the aspiring association with a well-established association will offer the framework for the consolidation of young associations. Support for field visits, exchanges and training activities (workshops, scholarships and internships programs) organized jointly by both groups will be included in the program.

Joint activities organized by twinned associations will be designed to also generate some revenues to build sustainability of the associations of science journalists in Africa and the Middle East.

If your association, or your group of science journalists, is interested in participating in this twinning scheme, please contact ...

II - Announcement to recruit Mentees

1. Who is eligible?

The **Peer to peer Training in Science Journalism Project** of the World Federation of Science Journalists aims at offering the possibility to journalists in Africa and the Middle East to improve their skills in science journalism. Any professional journalist in Africa and the Middle East can participate in the program. To be accepted, a journalist will need to demonstrate previous interest in covering science and technology as well as a willingness to improve his or her skills in science journalism.

2. Benefits and conditions

Each participating journalist will be twinned with a mentor, an experience science journalist from Africa, the Middle East or from somewhere else in the world. During two years, the mentee will share his or her work (articles, audio or video cassettes) with his or her mentor. These articles and productions will have to cover science and technology issues. The mentee will benefit from the advice, suggestions and comments from an experienced science journalist on his or her production. At least once a year, mentors and mentees will have an opportunity to meet during a workshop in Africa or the Middle East tied to field visits and some major scientific conferences.

Benefits:

- Advice from an experienced science journalist during two years
- Participation in at least one workshop per year somewhere in Africa and the Middle East with face-to-face meeting with mentor.

Conditions:

- Strong desire to improve skills at reporting science and technology issues
- Commitment to produce (weekly during the first six months) articles or radio or TV programs on science and technology issues during two years
- Willingness to share his or her production with a mentor and accept comments and suggestions.

3. To register

Send your application, your CV and three previous productions (newspapers, magazine articles or audio or video) related to science and technology issues with a brief outline of your expectations to ...

Deadline for applications: 30 June 2006 (Expect decision by 4 September 2006).

III - Confirmation letter to mentees

Dear Mr. Hippolite,

Congratulations! The World Federation of Science Journalists' (WFSJ) peer to peer mentoring program in science journalism is a brand new initiative and you are invited to participate. The aim of the project is to enhance your skills as a science journalist and advance the knowledge and understanding of science and technology reporting in your country. To confirm your participation in the program, please send an e-mail to by September 20th, 2006.

Role of the Mentor

Over the next two years, you will be mentored by, a highly experienced science journalist from.....country..... Your mentor's role will be advisory – she will provide advice and suggestions on the best practices in science journalism, comment on your work, and help identify science sources and resources. This project, sponsored by the World Federation of Science Journalists will see 15 experienced science journalists mentor a total of 60 journalists from Africa and the Middle East. We all share an interest in improving science and technology (S&T) reporting skills and advancing science journalism in the media.

Communication between mentors and mentees

Here's how it works. Each mentor will be mentoring four journalists. Distance mentoring will be the main form of correspondence, with feedback occurring through online discussions and occasional phone conversations. Interactions with your mentor will occur on a weekly basis during the first six months of mentorship, and twice a month for the last 18. These will occur on an agreed upon day and time discussed during an initial phone conversation with your mentor in September. You will be contacted by e-mail shortly to determine the best time for this first encounter.

First exchange with your mentor The goals and objectives you hope to achieve through the mentorship program, as well as the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to your science journalism career, will be discussed during this first contact. These should be revisited throughout your mentorship to ensure that you are receiving the guidance you need and to ensure that your mentor is not putting in more time than necessary. On average, your mentor will provide one hour a week of mentorship for the duration of the two-year program. This will not be just direct contact time by telephone or e-mail but will include other supporting activities.

An Internet site specifically for communicating

Worksheets to help prepare for your first discussion are attached and can also be found online at the program's "WE" website at <http://www.we.wfsj.org/>. The WE site will be a simple and invaluable communication tool and resource during your two years. An email account has been created for you: cdrive45@we.wfsj.org. A special sub-site has also been developed exclusively for you and your mentor on the site (www.we.wfsj.org/hlemmy).

Your username and password to access the WE site are:

Username:
EXTRANET\hlemmy

Password :
t779UR

Your mentor will explain the website's operation during your initial discussion.

By November 1st, 2006, your mentor will need to have received and commented on a minimum of three, and ideally six, articles, tapes or scripts that you have sent to him or her. We recommend that you upload these to your WE site. If you have initial difficulties navigating the site, please send your work as an email attachment. Deadlines for these submissions are also to be discussed with your mentor in September.

Meetings with your mentor

In addition to distance mentoring there will be at least two face-to-face meetings during the course of the two-year mentoring. These will be planned to coincide with scientific workshops, conferences, and/or field visits of research activities in the Middle East or Africa.

The first such meeting will take place in Nairobi, Kenya from November 4th – November 11th, 2006. Kenya is hosting the UN Climate Change Conference and second meeting of the parties to the Kyoto Protocol from the 6th -17th of November. We will evaluate the mentoring program at this time and you will also have the opportunity to meet your mentor, other mentors and mentees, and interview experts on climate change. Please note you will be required to obtain a travel visa to Kenya as soon as possible. Travel, accommodation and daily per diems will be arranged for you. An invitation letter with further information on the Nairobi meeting will follow shortly. Details of the second face-to-face meeting, to take place a year from now, will be finalized and shared at a later date.

There is no intention on our part to interfere in any way with your work establishment's own editorial process. For reasons of confidentiality, the mentoring relationship will be strictly private - we will not provide your workplace with any evaluation of your work. Please note that you were selected on the basis of your work samples and will not receive remuneration for participating. A letter to your employer has been drafted

informing them of these details, the program in general, its confidentiality protocols, and the upcoming meeting in Nairobi.

We anticipate that your involvement in the mentoring program will help to improve your career as a science journalist through mentorship, exposure to national and international S&T conferences, networks, scholarships and freelance and other opportunities. As a result, we hope you will see your talent enriched and developed and have the opportunity to advance science and research coverage within your country. In addition, all successful participants with the mentorship project will receive a WFSJ certificate at the end of the program.

Please contact us should you have any questions or need additional information. We look forward to meeting you in person in Nairobi!

Best regards,

Coordinator

Setting the Schedule – A Few Important Dates to Note

By September 20th: your mentor will have engaged you in a first encounter and you will have interviewed each other on goals for the program and discussed communication times, submission deadlines and the WE website. The project coordinator will have sent out letters to your employer where applicable.

By September 25th: you should be sending the first of your work to your mentor, and in turn receiving advice on practical ways to pitch stories or find sources, or both.

By October 15th: your mentor will have a record of your encounters and be able to flag any potential problem areas and share these problems and look for solutions through the mentors' discussion forum on the program website, "WE", located at <http://www.we.wfsj.org/>.

By November 1st : your mentors will have received and commented on between a minimum of three and ideally, six articles, tapes or scripts from you.

November 4th-11th: the first face-to-face meeting will be held in Nairobi, Kenya.

IV - Letter to the mentee's employer

Dear Employer:

I am pleased to let you know that your employee has been chosen to participate in the peer to peer mentoring program in science journalism sponsored by the World Federation of Science Journalists (WFSJ). This means that (name) will be mentored over the next two years by (mentor's name.....,) a highly experienced science journalist from.....country.....

The project's goal is to encourage more science and technology content with solid journalism values. Each mentee will have access to excellent journalistic resources and you will benefit from having your journalist mentored free of charge. Your employee was chosen on the basis of his/her work samples and will not be paid for participating.

The WFSJ is excited by this new endeavour, which will see fifteen experienced science journalists mentor a total of 60 journalists from Africa and the Middle East. Each mentor will be mentoring four journalists who are committed to improving their skills in science and technology reporting. The mentor's role will be advisory: commenting on the mentee's work and helping to compile good science sources and resources.

It will be mainly distance mentoring through emails and correspondence with some phone conversations.

The distance mentoring will be complemented by at least two face-to-face encounters during the course of the two-year program. These meetings involve travel and will be planned to coincide with scientific workshops or conferences or/and field visits of research activities, in the Middle East or Africa.

The first face-to-face meeting will take place in Nairobi, Kenya from November 4th – November 11th, 2006. Kenya is hosting the UN Climate Change Conference and second meeting of the parties to the Kyoto Protocol from the 6-17 of November. We will take stock of the mentoring program at this time and our mentees will also have opportunities to interview experts on climate change. Details of the second face-to-face meeting are still to be confirmed. Rest assured that expenses for the mentee will be covered by the peer to peer program.

There is no intention on our part to interfere in any way with your own editorial process. For reasons of confidentiality the mentoring relationship will be strictly private, in other words, we will not be offering you any kind of evaluation about the mentee's work. All successful participants will receive a WFSJ certificate at the end of the program.

We hope you will see a difference in your employee's output as a result of this project, and offer your support to the program. We also aspire to see more science and technology coverage in your local media. Please DO not hesitate to contact any one of us should you need further information.

Best regards,

Coordinator

V - First contact questionnaire for mentors

First contact questionnaire (mentor worksheet)

Adapted from Queen Mary University of London

- **Goals and Expectations**

What are the 5 key goals I hope to achieve as a WFSJ mentor?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

How can my mentee help me to achieve these goals?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Strengths and Weaknesses

What are my mentee's top 5 personal strengths that I admire that have likely had a positive impact on her/his career as a science journalist?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What are her/his 5 personal weaknesses that s/he might want to consider working on that may have a negative impact on her/his career as a science journalist?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

- **Opportunities and Threats**

What are the top 5 opportunities available to my mentee that s/he could do or act on to help him/her develop and reach his/her potential as a science journalist? (These are external opportunities e.g. attending a conference, taking a course, etc.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What are the top 5 obstacles in the “real world” that my mentee is currently faced with, which are deterring him/her from achieving her/his goals in science journalism?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

- **Planning Solutions**

What are the 5 most important things my mentee can do in the next 6 months to build on her/his strengths and overcome his/her challenges?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What are 5 ways that I can help my mentee achieve the above?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Short-term and Long-term Goal Establishment

- Be positive about short-term goals and committed to long-term ones
- Develop a task-based project

With your mentees, discuss the five action areas you have developed based on your perceptions of their strengths and weaknesses, and their own 5 action areas. Next develop an action plan for who will be responsible for completing the action, as well as a deadline for the action to be completed. Re-visit these actions and target dates on a regular basis to determine if they need to be adjusted.

TASK	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	WHEN
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

VI - First contact questionnaire for mentees

First contact questionnaire (mentee worksheet)

Adapted from Queen Mary University of London

Goals and Expectations

What are the 5 key goals I hope to achieve through the WFSJ mentoring program?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

How can my mentor help me to achieve these goals?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Strengths and Weaknesses

What are my top 5 personal strengths that likely have a positive impact on my career as a science journalist?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

5. _____
What are my top 5 personal weaknesses that may have a negative impact on my career as a science journalist?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Opportunities and Threats

What are the top 5 opportunities available to me at this moment that I could take advantage of and act upon to help develop and reach my potential as a science journalist? (These are external opportunities e.g. attending a conference, taking a course etc.)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

What are the 5 most important things I can do in the next 6 months to take advantage of opportunities that exist to advance my science journalism career?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

What are the top 5 obstacles in the “real world” that I am currently faced with, which are deterring me from achieving my goals in science journalism?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What are the 5 most important things I can do in the next 6 months to overcome these external obstacles?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What are 5 ways that my mentor can help me to overcome these obstacles?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Short-term and Long-term Goal Establishment

Be positive about short-term goals and committed to long-term ones
Develop a task-based project

With your mentor, discuss the five action areas you have developed based on your perceptions of your strengths and weaknesses. Also discuss their recommended five action areas for you. Next, develop an action plan, including who will be responsible for completing which action, and a deadline for the action to be completed. Re-visit these actions and target dates on a regular basis to determine if they need to be adjusted.

TASK	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	WHEN

VII - Mentors reporting on mentoring

Name of mentee: _____
1/2

Mentor's name: _____

Page

Q 1. In the past 2 months my mentee and I have been in touch: not at all a few times once a week twice a week more than twice a week

Q 2. My mentee has access to the internet: at home (broadband) at home (modem) at work cyber-café etc. not at all I'm not sure.

... and she/he uses SKYPE (internet-telephone):.... not at all / not yet in a cyber-café at home I'm not sure.

Q 3. Our current status on the usage of WE (our internet platform) - (you can tick several times):

My mentee manages to upload material. We are trying to use it but we still have many technical difficulties.

I upload on WE what my mentee emails to me. ...we also use it for discussions in our mentor-mentee relationships

We don't use it and I don't expect this to change soon.

Q 4. In the area of *communcation* and *coaching*, which were the *most important aspects* of your mentoring work in the past 2 months? (you can tick several times.)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Identifying aspects of my mentees' work that she/he wants to improve | <input type="checkbox"/> teaching mentee how to pitch a story |
| <input type="checkbox"/> discussing research (finding stories / material / different sources etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> discussing new ideas/projects (special trips, series, science pages etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> editing manuscripts | <input type="checkbox"/> helping my mentee to point out problems, doing auto-critique |
| <input type="checkbox"/> teaching mentee how to find new publishing outlets | <input type="checkbox"/> doing journalistic research myself to help mentee |

- doing joint projects with mentee (conference visits, joint productions, etc.)
 - taking a course(s)/workshop(s) myself to improve my skills (name): _____
 - discussing different types of stories (feature, commentary, narrative, news, etc.)
-

Q 5. In the area of *networking*, in which aspects were you active?

- being in touch with my regional coordinator WE
 - encouraging my mentee to post a message on WE
 - being in touch with other mentors on a regular basis association
 - encouraging /helping mentee to be active in his association
 - taking part in the mentors'-, regional- and general-discussions on WE project
 - encouraging my mentee to network outside the PtoP project
 - linking mentee to my group of mentees also: _____
 - and
 - linking mentee to other mentors and mentees outside my group
-

Q 6. Please put down some difficulties *you yourself* had in mentoring in the past 2 months: (e.g. misunderstandings / not enough time / not the journalistic expertise the mentee needs / difficulty with counselling). ***This is a very important question. Please take time to fill in this box.***

In the past months I myself had the following problem(s) in my mentoring-relationship with mentee 1:

Q 7. Every mentoring-relationship is different – and at different stages of a mentoring relationship different aspects are more or less important.

Page 2/2

What were some of the important questions you discussed? Which ideas and activities followed? What progress did you observe? What did you learn? (You don't always need to write long paragraphs or full sentences in the boxes – just state some important facts that you think will be important if you look at this form later). IMPORTANT: We don't expect to see progress all the time everywhere! So it is OK to tick "not much progress" most of the time.

MENTEE 1:	Important problems / questions / discussions	New approaches / ideas / suggested solutions / activities	Progress / learning / breakthroughs	Remaining problems / lessons learned/ plans for next months
Communication: Establishing a working relationship through emails, phone-calls, etc.: getting to know each other better, planning mentoring, being able to discuss problems, auto-critique etc.			In the past weeks: <input type="checkbox"/> not much progress <input type="checkbox"/> some progress <input type="checkbox"/> a bigger progress	
Internet: Helping mentee to work with computer, www, email / WE / Skype etc. (Also: help with search engines, pubmed, eurekaalert, naturepress, newscientist etc.)			In the past weeks: <input type="checkbox"/> not much progress <input type="checkbox"/> some progress <input type="checkbox"/> a bigger progress	
Coaching: Personal training, discussing and improving professional skills (writing skills, research skills, interviewing skills, finding new outlet etc, doing new projects etc.)			In the past weeks: <input type="checkbox"/> not much progress <input type="checkbox"/> some progress <input type="checkbox"/> a bigger progress	
Counseling: Discussing all kinds of difficulties, helping with career planning, taking decisions (discussing a science page or science beat with the editor, etc.)			In the past weeks: <input type="checkbox"/> not much progress <input type="checkbox"/> some progress <input type="checkbox"/> a bigger progress	
Networking: Helping mentee to build his contacts, sharing resources (contacts for freelancing opportunities, etc.), activities			In the past weeks: <input type="checkbox"/> not much progress <input type="checkbox"/> some progress <input type="checkbox"/> a bigger progress	

in associations				
-----------------	--	--	--	--

Q 8. Please put anything special that you did or that happened in the past 2 months below: (Has your mentee applied for a scholarship / award / internship? Have you contributed something special on WE - a discussion forum, a section of the online course? Have you helped your mentee in any special way (invitation to a conference or internship? Has your mentee started a big project? Has she/he made a career step? Did she/he do something in his national association?)

--

VIII - Monitoring Interview of Mentees

Mentee-Interview,

PAGE 1 of 2

Name of mentee: _____ Name of interviewer: _____

I would like to discuss with you how your work as a journalist has changed since November 2006 and in what respect you have made progress in your career.

Questions	Please fill in your answers in the boxes below
1. If you are employed full-time: What is your current position? Has it changed over the past year? Has the work you do changed?	new position: new areas of activity:
2. If you do free lance work: Have you had the chance to work for new news outlets in the past year? Which ones?	New outlets:
3. Do you think you have done more <i>science (and health, ecology, technology)</i> reporting in 2007 than in 2006?	Reports per month in 2006: _____ Reports per month in 2007: _____ (if in doubt give your best guess)
4. In your reporting over the past year, have you tackled areas in science (and health, education, ecology, technology) that were new to you?	New areas covered: - -
5. Has anything special happened to your working life in the past year? For example: receiving a journalism award or a scholarship. Developing a new science programme or page.	
6. Has anything special happened through your regional/national science journalist's organisation that was of <i>public importance</i> ?	
7. Have you collaborated with other SjCOOP-participants for a story? If yes please give me the details. (<i>Who with? on what? where published? when?</i>)	
7. Can you please give me the name and contact details of one or two editors/bosses? We would like to ask them about your general progress.	

Room for additional comments:

Mentee-Interview,

PAGE 2 of 2

Name of mentee: _____ Name of interviewer: _____

Your Best Story since November 2006. As you know JM has asked everyone to bring his best story to Can I see yours? Can I get a copy of the manuscript? (If you don't have it here can you tell me about it?)

Title / subject /content of my best story:	
Publishing date and medium	
Why do you think this is a good story?	
Feedback from editors, <i>(! Please add name and contact of editor)</i>	
Feedback from scientists <i>(! Please add name and contact of scientists)</i>	
Feedback from decision makers, companies, other groups. <i>(! Please add name and contacts)</i>	

Do you have one or two other good story you would like to mention?

	Story No 2.	Story No 3.
Title / subject / content		
Publishing date and medium		
Why do you think this is a good story?		
Feedback from editors, <i>(! Please add name and contact of editors)</i>		
Feedback from scientists <i>(! Please add name and contacts of scientists)</i>		
Feedback from decision makers, companies, other groups <i>(! Please add names and contacts)</i>		

Room for additional comments:

Thank you!

IX - Mid-term Evaluation of Mentee

Dear mentors:

The management team thinks that it will be useful to evaluate the mentees at this stage and rate what they did. The idea behind that is to tell the mentees who did well to continue the good work and inform those who are lagging behind that they need to work harder during the coming months if they want to graduate.

As you are aware we agreed after the end of the mid-term evaluation hold on December 2007 that each mentee needs to:

- Has his own personalized mentoring program and work on it
- Submit and discuss one article per month to the mentor
- Follow an online course per two months and respond to the assignments
- Participate to one Skypechat or discussion Forum per month

Now, we would like you to rate your mentees according to the following criteria as if the program was over.

	Percentage	Rate
mentor's rating	30	
articles	40	
online lessons	15	
Skypechat/cast or WE forum	15	
total	100	

Comments:

X - Final evaluation: Mentees evaluate Mentors

Dear Mentees,

As you know, in SjCOOP it is not only the mentees who learn and progress it is also the mentors. We would like to ask you to give us some feedback on your mentor. We would like to know what worked well and also what can be improved in future projects.

QUESTION 1: Please tick only one box in every line:

In my mentoring relationship I profited from the following:	0 <i>Not really. This is the kind of help I did not need much.</i>	1 <i>Not really. This is something my mentor did not / could not do much.</i>	2 <i>Yes. It was sometimes helpful.</i>	3 <i>Yes. It was a big help to me.</i>	4 <i>Yes. It was of help - but I could have used even more help in this area..</i>
A. My mentor editing my articles/pieces.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. My mentor helping me to find and pitch new story ideas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. My mentor helping me when I was facing problems in my work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. My mentor generally encouraging me to do things that are new to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. My mentor suggesting projects to me where we were both involved.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. My mentor discussing career options with me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. My mentor helping me to network with people inside SjCOOP.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. My mentor helping me to network with people outside SjCOOP.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I. My mentor discussing science journalism issues in general with me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(you may add something else here)					

QUESTION 2: Which of the above points were *the most important* ones for you in the first months of SjCOOP (2006-beginning of 2007)? Please only tick 3 boxes here!

A B C D E F G H I J

QUESTION 3: Which of the above points were *the most important* ones for you in 2007 and 2008? Please only tick 3 boxes here!

A B C D E F G H I J

QUESTION 4: Was there an incident or story that reflects your mentoring-relationship? Please write it down here.

QUESTION 5: How do you think your mentor has progressed? What do you think she/he learned or improved?

QUESTION 6: Please put other comments/suggestions for your mentor here:

QUESTION 8: Please put general comments/suggestions for future WFSJ-programmes here:

Thank you!

XI - Final evaluation: Mentors evaluate Coordinators

Dear Mentor,

As you know, in SjCOOP it is not only the mentees and mentors who learn and progress it is also the regional coordinators. So we would like to ask you to give us some feedback on your coordinator. We would like to know what worked well and also what can be improved – for future WFSJ-projects, e.g. how the work could be shared between the headquarters in Canada and the regional coordinators.

QUESTION 1. Please tick one box in every line:

<i>In the past two years my regional coordinator...</i>	0 Not at all.	1 Not much.	2 Sometimes.	3 Yes, she/he did.	4 Yes, very much so!
<i>A. ...discussed my mentoring group with me on a regular basis.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>B....was available quickly when I had questions or problems.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Cfacilitated the discussion among mentors in our regional group.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>D ...represented our group and region well.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Ecame up with new projects and ideas for our group and for SjCOOP as a whole.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>F.... responded with good suggestions when I was facing difficulties with my mentoring</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>G..... was a key player in the success of the mentoring project</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

QUESTION 2: Which of the above points - in your view – are *really important* for the success of your mentoring work and SjCOOP as a whole?

A B C D E F G

Please put other comments or suggestions on the cooperation of coordinators and mentors here:

Thank you!

XII - Mentees final evaluation

Dear SjCOOPies:

We are looking forward to a fruitful end of this wonderful mentoring program.

As discussed in ..., there are some criteria to be met if you would like to graduate from the mentoring program on November 2008.

We agreed that for mentees to be given a certificate by the end of the mentoring program, they must have accomplished the following:

- Continue working in the individualized mentoring program with their mentor
- Have one article per month uploaded to WE and commented by the mentor.
- Read one chapter of the online course every two months (assignments to be done in: <http://www.we.wfsj.org/Shared%20Documents/OCAssignForms.aspx>).
- Be involved in One per month of the following:
 - A Conference in Skype, or
 - Full thread of an online discussion forum on WE,

To complement what we discussed in Doha regarding the final evaluation, following are the percentages to be used:

Mentor's Rating	30%
8 articles	40%
4 Online lessons	15%
Skypechat/cast or WE Discussion-Forum	15%

We already asked the mentors to do a mid-term evaluation and upload it in your private website to help you know where you need to work harder during the coming months.

We are also evaluating your progress by comparing one of your first articles submitted when you started the mentoring program with an article written recently. Please upload one of your recent articles to help us with this evaluation.

We hope to see all of you graduated and why not in London's WCSJ 2009!

Best regards.

For the management team