

MENTORSHIP A KEY SUCCESS FACTOR IN SUSTAINABLE LAND REFORM PROJECTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

The Land Reform Program is a priority program in South Africa to redress the matter of land ownership. However the number of failures of projects implemented is alarmingly high and the majority of projects are not sustainable.

Some popular articles and reports however indicated successes and the positive role that the mentor has fulfilled in the success of the project. This has led to the research study to determine why it seems as if a mentorship program is a key factor in sustainable land reform. Fifteen mentors and 20 protégé's (new farmers) were personally visited and interviewed. The findings show that there are essential qualities and characteristics that a mentor and Protégé should satisfy to ensure a successful mentorship program. The qualities and characteristics linked to a mentor are: a knowledgeable, respectful and trustworthy person, while those of the protégé are: a committed, respectful and hard working person. The establishment of a mentorship relationship is essential for success. Obstacles that could hinder the program are a lack of willingness, no commitment and a negative attitude, while the availability of a viable and sustainable business plan for the farm is non-negotiable.

1. INTRODUCTION

Mentorship today is a word of fashion and in many instances it is being visualised as a magic wand that can bring about change by swinging it and uttering a few magic words. In business today coaching and mentorship are buzzwords, the trends of the moment (Stout-Roston, 2007) and more and more organizations/institutions are busy developing and structuring mentorship programs. Mentorship however can differ depending on the profession involved and workplace practices where it is implemented.

The concept, mentorship, can be taken back many years ago to the Greek mythology, when Odysseus, the Greek poet, took his son Telemachus to his friend Mentor and requests him to guide, coach and raise him in life skills while he will be away from home for a long time (Adams & Scott, 1997).

Transformation and therefore change, not only in South Africa, but in the world today is taking place at such an enormous speed that one sometimes feel totally lost and have a feeling of not really knowing where you are heading to. In the agricultural sector in South Africa and more specifically with regard to land reform, there is an outcry by land reform beneficiaries that they need mentors to support them. There are a number of examples of successes, but unfortunately also failures. According to the goals of the South African government with regard to land reform, 30% of

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agricultural land, currently owned by white farmers, needs to be transferred to previously disadvantaged South Africans by 2014. A second major goal is that all restitution claims need to be settled by the end of 2010.

The aim of these land reform programs is not only the settlement of previously disadvantaged individuals, groups and / or communities on agricultural land, but to provide a support service to them and enable them to live a better life.

The new farmers need to be successful in producing agricultural produce (food security), alleviate poverty and to become part of the mainstream of agricultural production in South Africa. Although there are successful settlement projects the number of failures is alarmingly high; failures that the agricultural sector and therefore South Africa cannot afford (Williams, 2005:14; Smith, 2009:71). In the document, “The Strategic Plan for South African Agriculture” (2001: 15, 16 and 26) and the Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment Framework for Agriculture (AgriBEE, 2004: 11) discussion document, the development and implementation of mentorship programs have been identified as one of the key factors that can positively influence land reform and Black Economic Empowerment.

Very little information is available on mentorship programs in agriculture in South Africa however there is a great willingness among commercial farmers to act as mentors for emerging farmers. Kieviet & Raath as mentioned by Terblanché (2003: 11) strongly recommended that the acceptance of a mentorship program and the appointment of a mentor for emerging farmers becomes a necessity.

With regard to this research the one question to be answered is:

“Can the implementation of a mentorship program, for land reform beneficiaries play a role to minimise the occurrence of failures?”

The objectives of the research study are therefore:

- To identify the necessary and essential elements, characteristics and qualities (skills and knowledge) that a mentor need to successfully support land reform beneficiaries to manage a farm effectively and
- To identify the essential elements, characteristics and qualities (skills and knowledge) that a protégé (new farmer) needs to become a successful farmer.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW: A THEORETICAL REFLECTION

2.1 Mentoring or mentorship

There are numerous definitions for mentorship or mentoring today and the definition depends on the profession involved and the workplace practices where it is implemented for instance, according to Murray (1991: 5): ‘Mentoring is a structure and series of processes designed to create effective mentoring relationships, guide the desired behaviour change of those involved, and evaluate the results for the protégés, the mentors and the organisation with the primary purpose of systematically developing the skills and leadership abilities of the less experienced members of the organisation’.

A more simplified but descriptive definition of mentoring is according to Oberholzer (as cited by de Beer, 2005) the following: ‘Mentoring is simply someone who helps someone else to learn something the learner would otherwise have learned less well, more slowly, or not at all’.

Finally mentorship is career guidance and individual development process by which competencies (professionalism) and insight are carried over by chosen people (mentors) to other people (protégés). (www.gclearning.com).

The analyses of these definitions of mentorship emphasise three elements namely:

- A reference to individual people, one person interacting with another person (mentor and protégé);
- The involvement of some kind of supportive action – i.e. guidance, support, advice, learning, coaching and counselling and
- Promoting professional and personal development.

Mentoring brings individuals together on a one – to – one basis, bypassing bureaucracy and institutions. It brings people together, real people talking to real people. Mentoring therefore implies someone older (or somehow more experienced) working with someone younger and by definition, less experienced.

According to research, (Murray, 1991; Adams, 1998; Holliday, 2001; Edwards & Keane, 2001; Young & Wright, 2001, Primary Agriculture Education and Training Authority, 2003; de Beer, 2005; South African Cane Grower’s Association, 2005 and Ueckermann, 2005) the successful outcomes of a mentorship program, depends heavily on the development of a mentoring relationship between the mentor and protégé. Table 1 is a summary and example of a framework for a mentoring relationship. The framework includes aspects such as obstacles that might hinder the relationship as well as the benefits for the role-players (Terblanché, 2007).

Table 1: A mentoring relationship framework

MENTOR	PROTÉGÉ
1.The mentor provides skills, knowledge and experience through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance • Counseling • Coaching • Support 	The protégé provides latent abilities namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take responsibilities • Willingness to learn • Personal development plan
2.Obstacles that confront the mentor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentor style • Insufficient time • Protégé with a hidden agenda • An inappropriate attitude on the part of the protégé 	2.Obstacles that confront the protégé: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer jealousy • Accused of holding on • Overstepping of professional boundaries • A mentor falling from favour
3.Essential elements of a mentoring relationship for the mentor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust • Respect • Partnership-building • Self-esteem • Time 	3.Essential elements of a mentoring relationship for the protégé: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust • Respect • Partnership-building • Self-esteem • Time
4.Outcomes of a successful relationship: Benefits for the mentor:	4.Outcomes of a successful relationship:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved job satisfaction • Increased peer recognition and admiration • Individual growth • Increased access to organisational information • Improved networking • Personal satisfaction of developing the protégé's professional skills and knowledge 	<p>Benefits for the protégé:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easier induction for a new comer • Improve self-confidence • Learning to cope with structures • Career advice and advancement • Acquisition of new skills and knowledge • Accelerated career progress • Acquisition of wisdom and insight
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2.2 Mentorship in the agricultural sector in South Africa – some desktop research findings

As previously mentioned there are a number of land reform projects where a mentorship program has been established. The following are some examples of structured and even unstructured mentorship programs mentioned in published and unpublished reports and in articles published in the Press and magazines.

2.2.1 Mentorship Review – towards a model of mentorship for PAETA (Primary Agricultural Education and Training Authority) – Khanya – managing rural change cc. November 2004.

Khanya was contracted by PAETA and GTZ (German Technical Co-operation) to undertake a study of mentorship practices in the primary agricultural sector based on PAETA supported project. The approach followed by PAETA has developed out of the need for practical training in farming practices. Two very important aspects that came forward according to the report are:

- ‘Mentorship is not about managing the enterprise, but helping empower less experienced farmers to do so’ (2004: 11).
- The formation of partnership and linkages during the mentorship program is, according to the Report (2004: 21), of great importance. These linkages and partnerships will be crucial for the new farmer to continue farming activities and to have access to support services available from all possible service providers.

2.2.2 Report on the South African Cane Growers Association’s Mentorship Program for the Development of new Black Farmers – June 2005

CANE GROWERS’ identified a need to implement a Mentorship program for the New Freeland Growers (NFG’s) entering the Sugar Industry. The intention was to have an experienced sugarcane farmer, who is nearby the new farmer, assist and show the new farmer in the running of the farm as a business. The most important outcomes of the evaluation report are the following:

- The majority of mentors indicated that they were able to meet the new farmers at least twice or more per month.

- New farmers were not restricted to official visits but when they need help they could ask for additional help.
- In some areas one mentor was responsible for more than one new farmer and the mentor arranged to meet them as a group. The experience was that it did not work well; new farmers sometimes did not attend meetings with no excuses.
- A total of 68% of the new farmers indicated that the services provided by the mentor have been helpful and they now have a better understanding of a farm as a business.
- A total of 32% of the new farmers however felt that the services provided to them were not helpful at all. The majority complaining about the relationship, which came across as paternalistic and new farmers appear to have unrealistic expectations of their mentors.

Problems encountered by mentors and new farmers are:

Mentors:

- The unwillingness of the new farmers to participate fully and to be committed to the mentorship program.
- New farmers had to be pushed constantly by the mentors in everything.
- Poor attendance of group meetings.
- Lack of trust between new farmers and mentor.
- New farmers were de-motivated and frustrated as a result of financial difficulties they were experiencing.

New farmers:

- They felt they do not need the full mentorship program and therefore do not need to attend all meetings.
- Mentors try to intrude in their private lives.

2.2.3 Progress report: Training and Development Projects for Emerging Farmers – National Wool Growers Association (NWGA) 2004/05.

Results of the mentorship program:

According to the NWGA the positive result of the mentorship program can be illustrated by means of the next table while the aim of the mentorship program is to support the training of farmers in the classing of wool and all aspects of contaminations.

Table 2: A comparison of two shearing sheds, Shed A with a mentorship program and Shed B without a mentorship program

Item	Shed A - mentorship	Shed B – no mentorship
Bales	34	73
Kilograms wool	4805	7573
Micron	21,0	20,8
Clean Yield	51,1%	54,63%
Price/Kg	R27,64	R6,65
Income	R132 826	R50 327 (- R158 990)

(de Beer, 3 – 4 March 2008 Fish River)

According to the above table, farmers without a mentorship program, (Shed B) lost R158 990.

2.2.4 Report: Renosterrivier Land Reform Project (undated)

The research done on the Renosterriver project as well as many other identifies a number of aspects that could help future land reform interventions. Only a few are mentioned below with specific reference to a mentorship program:

- Commitment and post implementation aftercare is vital. Mentoring and the transfer of skills should form part of the incentives and penalties of the project and not be dependent only on the goodwill of the parties. If ongoing mentorship is not linked to sound business incentives it can easily revert to a form of paternalism which prevents people from developing.
- It is essential to built trust and credibility between the parties. The integrity of the process is as important as the end product. (p.13 – 15).

2.3 Agricultural related mentorship projects and/or requests for mentors, published in the more popular agricultural magazines and newspapers.

2.3.1 From Ciskei to the world

Sanalake ‘Solly’ Nonceba of Upper Kat River Valley struggled for years to make a living farming citrus. But when Solly entered a partnership with pack house Riverside Enterprises, under the mentorship of Llew Roberts, his fortunes changed. (Farmer’s Weekly, 4 March 2005: 47 – 48)

2.3.2 ‘The state left us hanging’.

They feel ill-equipped to run a commercial farm. ‘We’d like to have more hands-on-mentorship, even a joint venture with a commercial farmer, if it doesn’t mean losing control of the project,’ Sikele Bavuma (project coordinator) says. (Farmer’s Weekly, 3 June 2005: 58)

2.3.3 Land reform rests on post-settlement support.

After a group of Khoisan in the Northern Cape received a land restitution grant, they realized they lacked the skills to turn their venture into a profitable enterprise. Now they’re in desperate need of a mentor with practical advice. “We need a mentor, someone who will enable us to gain the skills needed to make the project succeeds. Without this, the whole thing will fail, and all that money and effort will be lost”, says Abraham Hoogtander, Manager of the farm at Jan Kempdorp (Farmer’s Weekly, July 2008: 53).

2.3.4 New Forest scheme falls apart.

In 1999 the New Forest Tomato Farm was hailed as a top-notch agricultural initiative owned and run by women. A lack of funds forced its closure in 2002. The Assistant Manager Kelvin Nemurangane blamed the Agricultural Department for the project’s

2.3.5 An empowerment success story ... at last!

Paul Clüver Junior attributes the farm's success to: Committed partnership; sound mentorship and value adding of its products. 'This project would have been a complete failure if it wasn't for the Clüvers'. They have been our mentors' says Jan Jansen Lebanon Farm Manager (Farmer's Weekly, 13 May 2008: 68 – 69).

2.3.6 Laying foundations for successful LAND REFORM.

The Masekhane Women's Land Camp project and farmer Mike Charters' mentorship and empowerment schemes are helping to reduce poverty and crime, while fostering goodwill between the town's black and white residents. 'Mike Charter came to us as a blessing, offering knowledge and capital and making the difficult jump from subsistence farmer to commercial farmer possible,' say the Gova Brothers of Ugie. According to the Gova Brothers, a mentorship program with white commercial farmers is the difference between success and failure for those emerging producers making the jump to commercial production (Farmer's Weekly, 3 March 2006: 32 – 34).

2.3.7 Micro approach yields mega boost in stock value.

Mngunube Consultants' micro approach to rural development anchored by an effective mentorship strategy to individual households, has led to significant success in the grassroots fight against poverty. Mentorship support to Elundini farmers is defined by a motivation to improve the production and quality of stock through entrenching a culture of management (Farmer's Weekly, 29 September 2006: 44 – 46).

2.3.8 The emerging of a powerful mentorship.

Sceptics often expect emerging farmers to fail, but Phopi Ralentjena, an emerging farmer from Blouberg in Limpopo, is disproving this notion. He and his mentor Auwke Jongbloed are proof that white commercial farmers can successfully mentor black emerging farmers. Phopi feels mentorship is the key and as a new farmer you must be a farmer at heart (Farmer's Weekly, 25 May 2007: 54 – 56)

2.3.9 Presentation made by Nkanyiso Gumede (new female farmer) at the South African Sugarcane Association (SASA) meeting.

'The help I received from my mentor enabled me to manage my loan repayments. Ant Bennet, I look at him as my mentor and watch everything that he does so I can learn how to become a better farmer. He is more than my neighbour and mentor, he is also my friend. My advice to potential sugarcane farmers is: Get yourself a mentor or enter into a mentorship programme as soon as possible' (Unpublished presentation at SASA meeting, 2006).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Three methods to collect data for the research project were followed namely:

3.1 A desktop study with regard to:

- A theoretical discussion (literature) about mentoring and mentorship;
- The study of available agricultural mentorship research reports and
- The study of agricultural mentorship related articles published in the more popular agricultural magazines and newspapers.

3.2 A mail questionnaire

A mail questionnaire was constructed to be send out to mentors and new farmers for completion and to be mailed back to the researcher. When testing the questionnaire by means of a personal interview, both mentor and new farmer indicated that they would not have completed the questionnaire if received by post or e-mail. The reasons mentioned were because of the human and personal nature of most of the questions and the sensitivity nature with regard to land reform in South Africa. Both however assured the researcher that they believe other mentors and new farmers will participate and answer questions during a personal interview.

3.3 Personal interviews

With the support of Organized Agriculture mentors and new farmers involved in mentorship programs were identified, contacted and visited for a personal interview. In total 15 mentors and 20 new farmers were interviewed. They were assured of the confidentiality of the information and no names of mentors/new farmers or farms visited, will be mentioned in the findings. Projects were visited in eight of the nine provinces in South Africa. Mentors and new farmers were separately interviewed.

4. FINDINGS

The findings and therefore respondent's expectations, experience and perceptions will be presented under the following headings:

- Mentoring and mentorship.
- What is a mentor?
- What is a protégé?
- The mentoring relationship.
- The outcomes of the mentorship program.
- Possible obstacles hindering a mentoring relationship.
- The ending of a mentoring relationship.
- Additional aspects mentioned by mentors.
- Innovative ideas to be considered in a mentorship program.

4.1 Mentoring and mentorship according to mentor and protégé respondents

4.1.1 Mentors

The 15 mentors individually describe mentoring and mentorship according to their experience, expectations and perceptions (Table 3). Their descriptions of mentoring and mentorship can be clustered into four mentoring categories and it is presented in the next table. According to the table below there are no significant differences between the four mentoring categories. It strengthens the fact that mentoring is a philosophy that includes aspects of guidance and training that leads towards the establishment of a relationship.

Table 3: Mentor respondent’s description of mentoring and mentorship

Mentoring category	Mentors description	% Respondents
Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can I the mentor, support you the new farmer, so that you can achieve in life where you want to be. • It is an effort to make South Africa work. • It is my small contribution towards bettering the farming community. • To create independent and sustainable farmers. 	29
Guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To guide the new farmer on the “road”- you walk the “road” side by side. • To assist (guide) new farmers to become commercially successful. • Mentorship is never prescriptive. • To help (guide) new farmers to focus on and stick to the business plan. 	29
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is more of a coaching (training) process than a theoretical mentoring program. • The hands-on training of new farmers. • The practical training of emerging farmers on commercial farms. 	21
Relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring is a one-to-one relationship or partnership focusing on the needs of the new farmer. • It is not a quick fix – you need to win the protégé’s trust and confidence. • Mentorship is a two-way street. The mentor is willing to share knowledge and the new farmer must be opened and respective to the process. 	21
Total		100

4.1.2 The new farmers (protégé’s)

The 20 new farmers who participated in the research project individually describe, according to their experiences, expectations and perceptions their specific mentoring and mentorship program. The descriptions as mentioned by the new farmers have been clustered into three mentoring categories as indicated in the next table.

Table 4: New farmer respondent's description of mentoring and mentorship

Mentoring Category	New farmers' description	% Respondents
Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentorship is the magic ingredient to an emerging farmers' success. • The mentorship program makes the difficult jump from subsistence farming to commercial farming possible. • Mentorship is the difference between failure and success for new farmers. • The first year I watch and the mentor did the job. In the second year the mentor gave the instructions, I executed it and he observed. In the third year I had to decide what needs to be done, discuss it with the mentor, execute it while he observed from time to time. • Keep to the rules of the mentorship program. It is not a charity program – do not expect charities from the mentor. 	30
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receiving hands-on-training by a mentor (11). • I watch everything the mentor does so I can learn how to become a better farmer. • To follow to the letter all the technical instructions. 	50
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our (group of 20 small-scale farmers) mentor manages the farms for us, doing everything on behalf of us. 	10
Relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have an open door relationship 	10
Total		100

A total of 50 per cent of the new farmers experienced their mentorship program as hands-on training. Important however is the experience and perception of 30% respondents that their mentorship program is more of a philosophical nature and it has been observed that the mentor played an important role to establish this concept with his/her new farmer. Although only one group indicated that their mentor actually manages the farm on their behalf, it is a concept that needs to be carefully managed. It unfortunately does not contribute to promote the independency of the new farmers.

At one of the most successful land reform projects visited, the new farmer clearly indicated that he would not have been successful if it wasn't for the mentoring and mentorship program he and his mentor followed. It consists of a number of aspects that needs to be taken in consideration namely:

- As a new farmer he acknowledges the fact that he does not have knowledge, equipment, labour and even sufficient finance to develop and maintain the farm.
- He acknowledges the fact that he depends heavily on his mentor in the first year to do everything on the farm – however everything was done side-by-side, the mentor explaining each activity.

- During the second year he had some equipment, labour and finance and it was according to their agreement, his responsibility to execute all the instructions the mentor gave – again everything was done side-by-side, he was doing and the mentor was observing and ready to advice.
- In the third year the new farmer was responsible to draw up the business plan for the farm, inform and discuss the plan with the mentor, adapt if necessary and then execute all the farming activities. They had scheduled meetings when the mentor visited the farm or where he as new farmer visited the mentor. They however had an open door relationship, meaning they can visit or call one another anytime.

4.2 The mentor

According to Young & Wright (2001) as cited by de Beer (2005: 30) the mentor is a person who guides another to avenues of success; will meet the protégé’s needs; knowledgeable and respected; a person who listens and a problem solver. Mentor respondents were requested to describe a mentor according to their experience and perception, identifying essential characteristics and qualities of a mentor to be successful, and the results are presented in Table 5. The responds were clustered into five mentor categories and these categories are actually characteristics and essential qualities of a mentor.

Table 5: Mentor respondent’s description of a mentor

Mentor Categories	Mentors description of a mentor
Trusted person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wise and trusted advisor and helper to an inexperienced person • A trustworthy person • Shows that he cares
Purposeful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A purposeful person
Willingness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The will to be a mentor • The willingness to help a fellow farmer • The ability to encourage, inspire, willing to share experience and knowledge
Respectful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earning respect

The importance of knowledge as a key and essential element in the accoutrement of a mentor is clearly illustrated by the above table. Aspects such as willingness and trust are also essential according to mentors themselves.

The new farmer’s description of their mentor is presented in the next table. The responds were clustered into five mentor categories. According to the table new farmers (protégé’s) also indicated that the most important and essential element of a mentor is knowledge. Linked to knowledge is the characteristics helpfulness and experience, which were also indicated by the new farmers as important elements.

Table 6: New farmer respondent’s description of a mentor

Mentor Categories	New farmer’s description of a mentor
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An experienced person who always shows understanding • An experienced person and always available to assist me on the farm
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very knowledgeable farmer he knows what is going on • A knowledgeable and prosperous farmer • A responsible and knowledgeable person • Nothing is impossible for him, he has a solution for every problem • He has all the contacts with all organizations in the industry
Passion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He has a passion for the task and dedicated to the task • He is more than my neighbour and mentor, he is also my friend
Directness/ Purposeful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very direct in his approach – he is a good man
Helpful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He helps me to achieve what I wanted to achieve • He never forced ideas on anyone

A mentor also exposes specific characteristics as well as essential qualities. Mentor and new farmer (protégé) respondents were requested to identify the essential characteristics and qualities of a mentor and the outcome are presented in the next table.

Table 7: Essential characteristics and qualities of a mentor as perceived by mentor and new farmer respondents

Characteristics/ Qualities	According to mentors		According to new farmers	
	No	Rank order	No	Rank order
Knowledge	4	1	5	2
Trustworthy	3	3	5	2
Purposeful	1	4	1	6
Willingness	3	3		
Respect	4	1	6	1
Encouraging	1	4		
Experience	1	4	2	5
Passion			1	6
Helpful	1	4	1	6
Commitment			4	4
Understanding			1	6

According to mentors the four most important characteristics/qualities of a mentor are:

knowledge; respect; trustworthy and willingness.

According to the new farmers the four most important characteristics/qualities of a mentor are: respect; knowledge; trustworthy and commitment.

4.3 The new farmer (protégé)

According to Young & Wright (2001) as cited by de Beer (2005: 30) the protégé is the person who is being mentored. The protégé must respect and trust the mentor; be willing to enter into a relationship and must be committed and willing to learn. The literature review emphasizes a number of important characteristics and qualities of a protégé that are essential to establish a relationship.

Mentor and new farmer respondent's described the new farmer they are working with and the results are presented, in order of priority, in the next table.

Table 8: Mentor and new farmer respondent's description of a new farmer in priority order

Mentor's description of a new farmer:	Rank order:	New farmer's description of new farmer:	Rank order:
A committed person.	1	A person willing to learn.	1
A hard working and discipline person.	2	A person who has the time and energy to persevere.	4
A keen person who does not know what to do.	6	A person who listen carefully and implement.	2
A person who has been successful in the past.	7	A hard working person.	2
A person willing to learn.	3		
A person with realistic expectations.	5		
A person that listens to advice and implement it.	4		

Although there is a slight difference with regard to the description of a new farmer by the mentors and the new farmers, the following descriptions were mentioned by both:

- A person willing to learn;
- A person who listen and implement and
- A hard working person.

Mentors and new farmers were also requested to indicate the characteristics that describe the new farmer. The results are presented in the table below.

Table 9: Characteristics of a new farmer as perceived by the mentor and new farmer in order of priority

Characteristics	Mentors rank order	New farmers rank order
Commitment	1	1
Self-confidence	7	5
Determination	5	
Humble	2	
Able to make decisions	4	

Risk taker	7	
Eagerness	5	2
Motivated	2	
Honest		3
Trustworthy		4

According to the above table both mentor and new farmer agree that the most important characteristic of the new farmer is commitment.

4.4 The mentoring relationship

The success of the mentoring relationship according to Young and Wright (2001) as cited by de Beer (2005) depends on the mentor and protégé and what they bring to and do in the relationship. According to the research:

- Mentor and new farmer respondents, who were visited, unanimously stated that a relationship was formed but it took approximately a year before they really established the relationship.
- Both mentors and new farmers indicated that in the beginning of the program they experienced a lot of uncertainty, anxiety and even fear.
- They also experienced a sense of hope, excitement, expectations and even relief.
- The majority of respondents indicated that it took approximately three years before the project (farm) becomes financially successful and in some case it even took five years. This again is a confirmation that sustainable farming as a business is not an easy road to travel on and mentorship is not a quick fix solution. The development of a sustainable farming operation/business plan with the support of a mentorship program is a long-term strategy.
- On the question: Why was your mentorship program successful? Respondents reacted as follows:
 - In 85% of the programs the mentorship program was initiated, both by a new farmer or a mentor and not by an outsider person or organization.
 - In only 15% programs an organization linked the new farmer to a mentor.
 - No one was forced into the project.
 - Both mentor and new farmer were mutually committed.
 - They establish respect for one another - the new farmer acknowledging the knowledge, skills and abilities of the mentor and the mentor acknowledge, the willingness and eagerness of the new farmer to become successful.
- Effective communication channels were established; both parties setting time aside and make themselves available. They stick to the program and by doing so trust was built between them.
- In the majority of the long-term mentorship projects mentor and new farmer formed partnerships.
- It is also important that the new farmer should regularly visit the mentors' farm and to observe the mentors' managerial skills.

- Lastly, in some of the most successful projects both mentors and new farmers emphasize the fact that it was their faith in God that makes their mentorship program a success and nothing else. This did not come as a surprise because the Bible is clear with regard to the empowerment of people. In the letter to the Philippians, Chapter 2: 13 the Apostle Paul wrote: ‘for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose’ (NIV Study Bible: 1846).

Mentors and new farmers mentioned a number of other important aspects that support a sustainable mentoring relationship and therefore a sustainable farming enterprise:

- No land reform project and mentorship program can be successful without a viable and sustainable business plan (farm plan). The mentor and new farmer in cooperation with other role players should together develop the business plan. Both mentor and new farmer must have the same understanding of the business plan and develop a common vision with regard to the future of the farming enterprise.
- New farmers starting a new farming enterprise with unrealistic and non-feasible expectations are doomed to fail. One can dream big, but be realistic. The more sophisticated and intensive the enterprise, for instance greenhouse production, the more realistic one needs to be.
- The availability of essential infrastructure and the necessary equipment is non-negotiable to manage a farm successfully.
- A dedicated and well cared farm worker team is indispensable. The farm workers, transferred to the new beneficiaries.
- No farm can be operated and managed without financial support. A financial plan which forms part of the business plan is essential. Financial institutions (banks) need to support new farmers with loans/credit. Government grants available needs to be released on time and according to the business plan and not months or even years late.
- New farmers need to have access to markets for their products. A contract linked to a market is to some extent an insurance policy to success.

4.5 The outcomes of the mentorship program

The success of the land reform project linked to a mentorship program can best be illustrated in the words of the new farmers:

- ‘I feel proud to be part of the Heavenly Promise Project. It feels like there’s a future for me again’.
- The project brought hope for many people, and it played a major role to bring together people from different cultures. ‘There is a vibe that you will not find in many parts of our country’.
- ‘This land (farm) feeds the whole nation, we’ll keep it as an economic asset’.
- ‘The community at large benefits from our project’.
- ‘I have planted 98 ha of cane and I am proud to say that I recently won the local award for the most improved grower’.
- ‘I am very proud to be part of the sugar industry and proud to contribute to the economy of South Africa. I produce over 8000 tons of sugar annually’.
- ‘At least we now have food to eat’.

- ‘We are so happy to see our farm growing’.
- ‘Being a co-owner of the farm and able to say that I have my own land has changed my life completely’.
- ‘Commitment and patience is starting to pay off, and when we stand back and look at what we have achieved, we are proud and content’.

The majority of mentors and new farmers visited, clearly stated that the projects are successful and that:

- Both mentors and new farmers are clearly proud of what has been achieved, expressing a sincere feeling of satisfaction humility and thankfulness.
- ‘We understand one another and work together to achieve one goal – I the new farmer must be successful. I have developed a new value system- proud on who I am and what I have achieved. It is a great experience to see my farm products on the market and on the shelves of the supermarket. The secret is we (mentor and new farmer) made time available for one another’.

4.6 Obstacles hindering the mentoring relationship

The following obstacles that might hinder the mentoring relationship have been mentioned by respondents:

4.6.1 Mentors

- A lack of willingness by both mentor and new farmer.
- A lack of commitment by the new farmer – not implementing advice.
- An unrealistic business plan for the farm.
- The new farmer(s) not really understanding farming as a business.
- Insufficient finance, infrastructure and equipment to operate the farm enterprise.
- Cultural and gender differences need to be understood and respected.
- The mentor must have sufficient time available to assist the new farmer – do not rush or try to quick fix everything.
- Time management ignored by the new farmer.
- There is a need for strong leadership where the new farmers manage the farm as a group. Conflict within the group of new farmers (beneficiaries) can hinder the relationship.
- The new farmer expecting too much from the mentor.
- Negative influences from outside the project.
- Other role players who does not keep to their promises.

4.6.2 New farmers

- The attitude of the mentor – a boss/servant attitude.
- Peer jealousy and pressure from neighbouring farmers/communities.
- The mentor not having sufficient time to attend to the new farmer.
- The mentor not a good listener – just gives advice and orders no guidance.
- Both mentor and new farmer not willing to participate (forced mentorship).
- Insufficient finance and equipment to manage the farm.

- Promises not kept by other role players outside the mentorship program – finance, grants and equipment.

4.7 The ending of the relationship

There is, according to the literature, no specific rule when to end a mentoring relationship. It could be, and there are examples from the past where the mentoring relationship is a life-long relationship.

A mentor and protégé will always nourish a successful relationship. According to de Beer (2005: 27) it is healthy for a mentoring relationship to end. It depends on the mentor and the protégé to, if necessary, take the courage's step and end it.

4.8 Specific needs mentioned by mentors

- There is an urgent need for a structure (forum) on national and even provincial level where mentors can affiliate to.
- Mentors unanimously mentioned that such a forum for mentors should not be managed by government institutions/departments and or other institutions. A department can however play an important role in the monitoring and evaluation of mentorship programs.
- Mentors identified a need for training before entering into a mentorship program.
- Mentors also indicated that there is a definite need for the training of new farmers and specifically with regard to their responsibilities in the mentorship program.
- Mentors and new farmers must have the final say/decision with whom they want to relate to.
- There is a need for a data base of prospective mentors and new farmers.
- The implementation of a selection instrument to identify prospective farmers with the best change to be successful in farming is becoming an absolute necessity.

4.9 Innovative ideas to be considered

- The mentor and new farmer together need to draw up a personal development plan for the new farmer (protégé).
- Mentor and new farmer to draw up a checklist for the mentoring program.
- The mentor to complete an instrument to identify his/her preferred mentoring style.
- The establishing of a mentorship creed.
(de Beer, 2005)

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

A total of 15 mentors and 20 new farmers were interviewed. The majority of mentors described their mentorship program as a broad concept with a philosophical nature, while the concept of guidance also featured strongly in the description.

More than 50 percent of the new farmers experienced and perceived their mentorship program as hands-on training. Both mentor and new farmer respondents accentuate the fact that a mentor is a knowledgeable person; respectful and trustworthy.

According to both mentor and new farmer respondent's commitment is the most essential quality and characteristic of a new farmer. A new farmer according mentors needs to be: a person that is committed, hardworking, willing to learn, listen to advice and implement it. According to new farmer respondents a new farmer should be: willing to learn, hard working, a careful listener and an implementer of advice.

Mentor and new farmer respondents unanimously stated that a mentoring relationship does exist within their mentorship program. They also unanimously declared that the relationship was established because of their commitment and respect for one another.

Respondents identified the following aspects that are supportive to the success of a mentorship program:

- A viable and sustainable business plan for the farm;
- The availability of essential farm infrastructure and equipment to manage the farm;
- A dedicated farm worker team and
- Financial support.

The outcomes of the mentoring relationship and therefore, the mentorship program, are best summarized in the words of a new farmer:

'We understand one another and work together to achieve one goal – I the new farmer must be successful. I have developed a new value system – proud on who I am and what I have achieved. The secret is we made time available for one another'.

Obstacles that could hinder and damage a mentorship program are:

- The absence of willingness, no commitment and a wrong/negative attitude.
- Be careful and on the look out for negative influences from people outside the project.

5.2 Recommendations

It is hereby recommended that:

- Organised agriculture need to establish a specific structure on national and also at provincial level to support mentors, kept a data base of prospective mentors/protégé's and manages the mentorship program.
- Prospective mentors should attend a training program/seminar before they engage in a mentorship program.
- The AgriSETA formerly known as PAETA should be requested to financially support prospective mentors to attend the training program.
- An official monitoring and evaluation structure should be in place to monitor and evaluate all mentorship programs in the land reform programs.
- Mentors and protégé's should not be forced into a mentorship program and that they should have the final say/decision with whom they want to relate to.

- Before the mentorship program start the mentor and new farmer need to draw up a personal development plan for the new farmer.
- The mentor should complete an instrument to determine his/her preferred mentoring style.
- A mentorship program should be structured for at least a three (3) year period.
- The mentor and new farmer in cooperation with other role players should together develop a sustainable business plan for the farm. They must have a common vision of where they are going.

‘Mentors are masters, recognised by their institutions or profession, as holding a position that protégés should strive towards achieving’ (Edwards & Keane, 2001).

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