Global Majority Mentoring Programme

2023 impact report
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Executive Summary

Following 2023’s Global Majority Mentoring Programme, London Higher has collected feedback from mentors and mentees in order to produce an impact report of the Programme. We have sought to understand what the impact has been on those participating in the programme, what has worked well, and potential areas for improvement for future editions.

We are delighted to say that the programme has been successful, and received high levels of satisfaction from participants. Mentors reported feeling very supported by programme organisers and scored the programme very highly for meeting personal expectations (9.2/10), programme aims (9.8/10). It was welcomed as a way of providing support to mentees without creating too many overheads or bureaucracy. Mentee evaluation shows that the programme scored highly on meeting personal expectations (7.9/10), and meeting programme aims (8.4/10).

We have also heard of remarkable stories from former participants, such as Dr Randhir Auluck and her mentee Alwin Puthenpurakal, who presented at an international conference on workforce development in July 2022, during which Randhir introduced Alwin to colleagues at the University of Stellenbosch (South Africa). Alwin was encouraged to draft a proposal for his PhD, and duly received an offer for a fully funded PhD scholarship at Stellenbosch. It is incredible to see what has blossomed through this programme – and we are constantly reminded of how significant interventions like the GMMP can be. With institutional buy-in, driven participants, and dedicated facilitators, London HE can and should be a model for success for other sectors across the capital. Further testimonials from both mentors and mentees can be found later in this report. We look forward to running the GMMP again in 2024.

Methodology

London Higher used a combination of:

- in-depth interviewing of mentors and mentees (Spring 2023);
- pre-programme (November 2022) and post-programme (July 2023) surveys;
- anecdotal information acquired through various engagements, including attendance at London Higher-organised events; and
- Internal reflections on how the programme ran.

The in-depth interviews (30 minutes; Spring 2023) consisted of individual mentors and mentees sharing their experiences and suggestions for next year’s programme. There was no set format, instead the interviewer responded to points raised by the interviewee to build up a picture of how the programme operated for them. 34 mentors and mentees responded to pre- and post-programme surveys; an annex provides an exemplar questionnaire for reference.
Programme Background

London Higher and our members are committed to working towards building inclusive institutions that represent the global and wonderfully diverse city in which we are situated. Through the Global Majority Mentoring Programme, we aim to:

- Improve career progression for Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff by providing a platform to match mentors and mentees.
- Give mentees a chance to be partnered with a mentor from a different institution, broadening pan-London collaboration and giving mentees a space to seek tailored support from their mentor.
- Give the opportunity to network with other global majority professionals from institutions across the capital.

The programme is currently run as a partnership between London Higher and London Metropolitan University (who jointly ran the North London Leadership Programme positive action mentoring scheme in 2020/21 with City, University of London). The programme has been generously sponsored by Minerva since its pan-London pilot.

Mentees are matched with mentors based on best fit, considering their backgrounds, career pathways, appropriate level of seniority, mentor expertise, areas for development that the mentee has suggested and other relevant information provided by applicants. Following a successful pan-London pilot programme in 2022 with 56 mentors and mentees from across eight London Higher member institutions, 2023 saw nearly 120 mentors and mentees from 15 institutions take part.

In addition to facilitating one-to-one mentoring, London Higher organises several learning and networking sessions for participants, offering mentors and mentees the opportunity to network with other professionals from global majority backgrounds across the capital. Through these events, they hear from a wide range of exciting speakers and engage in discussion on topics relevant to those working in London HE. The events we held in 2023 were:

- Launch event networking reception;
- Spotlight session focusing on mentor journeys;
- Minerva masterclass on CV advice, career development and headhunting;
- Learning Leaders leadership development workshops; and
- Celebration event networking reception

More information is available at: https://londonhigher.ac.uk/initiative/global-majority-mentoring-programme/
Key Findings

Overall, participants indicated a high level of satisfaction with the Programme. On average...

**Mentors gave an average rating of**
- 9.8/10 for meeting programme aims
- 9.2/10 for overall experience

**Mentees gave an average rating of**
- 8.4/10 for meeting programme aims
- 7.9/10 for overall experience

Mentees wanted to

- establish a personal development plan;
- develop have a clearer understanding of practical next steps to advance their careers;
- upskill and gain confidence; and
- feel in control of their role and their progress.

so, London Higher

- provided each mentee with a personal development plan to fill in with their mentor;
- organised a lunch & learn with sponsors Minerva to address career development;
- co-designed ‘Learning Leaders’ workshops to upskill and empower mentees; and
- created updated programme materials and offered a ‘pitch and prep’ session for prospective mentees.

Mentors felt they had lots to share and were able to provide support and assistance. Mentees felt encouraged, and overall felt helped in getting a better understanding of options. The centrally-organised sessions alongside the mentoring were felt to be valuable, especially the leadership workshops. The view was that attendance enriched participants’ experiences of the programme:

‘I would highly recommend the programme as it is a great opportunity to learn and widen your network with those with shared experiences beyond where you work. It is well organised, everyone is welcoming and I would definitely take part in as many workshops as possible to get all you can out of the experience.’
Key Findings

In addition to overall findings, there are several key aspects we have drawn out as having particular impact; these are detailed below.

**Learning Leaders workshops**
Improving career progression and diversifying the talent pipeline is a fundamental aim of the GMMP. With this in mind, we introduced a leadership development workshop series to this edition. ‘Learning Leaders’ was co-designed with the University of Westminster and 101 Dimensions, and provided mentees with a safe and reflective space to think critically about their own leadership qualities, empowered them to find their voice and served as a catalyst for talented global majority staff to take the next step in their careers. London Higher has received several testimonials about Learning Leaders, such as:

‘My personal and professional development have undoubtedly benefited greatly from the Learning Leaders workshop. I am eager to put the lessons I have learned into practice and to continue my development as a compassionate and efficient leader. Together, let’s continue to push boundaries and have a positive impact! I have truly enjoyed the entire journey in spite of these unknown biases!’

‘Learning Leaders was truly exceptional, providing me with an incredibly insightful journey of self-discovery. Engaging in invigorating discussions, I had the opportunity to explore the depths of my leadership capabilities. The diverse range of ideas and experiences shared by fellow participants greatly enriched our collective learning experience.’

**Co-creation with members**
As with Learning Leaders, a special aspect of the 2023 edition was increased co-creation with our participating members. Josette Bushell-Mingo OBE, the Principal of the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama delivered the keynote for the launch event; Royal Holloway, University of London delivered the mentor training based on in-house provision; London Metropolitan University was substantially involved in the matching process; University of Westminster co-designed and hosted Learning Leaders; and the previously mentioned ‘pitch and prep’ session was held at the request of Imperial College London. Many members have expressed a desire to host events or work more collaboratively in delivering this programme moving forwards.

**Profile raising**
Over the last two editions, the Programme has gained traction within London HE, but also in other sectors across the capital. Notably, the Deputy Mayor of London for Communities and Social Justice, Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard, provided the keynote for our 2022 closing event. Darren also wrote a blog on his experiences running the programme for the Greater London Authority (GLA), who count mentoring young people as a key aspect of their recovery work.
Recommendations

London Higher recognises that the programme is valued and has been impactful across the capital’s HE sector. We also recognise that there are areas for improvement which will enhance overall programme experience, such as greater buy-in at senior level from participating organisations. We have identified particular areas for improvement for future iterations, which are detailed below.

Engaging and supporting mentors

One suggestion for securing more mentors for future editions was more clearly outlining the benefits of being a mentor – for example, highlighting the cross-institutional nature and ability to widen networks with senior London stakeholders. Mentor support should be considered, to enable mentors to share experiences and offer ideas to each other. In order to minimise the administration around this, this should be undertaken in a light touch way e.g. through the creation of a self-administering group or the sharing of emails.

Setting and tracking mentee goals

The programme requires the mentee to set out their objectives/goals - which they can track through their personal development plan and via PushFar, however it was clear that this did not always happen or was not always as detailed as it needed to be. This could later lead to a lack of understanding about whether objectives had been met and/or a loss of focus on particular areas. To strengthen this further, this element should be covered at the launch event and re-enforced throughout the programme.

Career development advice

The vast majority of mentees who responded said that they would have welcomed more information on the area of career development. Minerva’s lunch and learn session on the recruitment process, headhunting, CV advice and negotiation was London Higher’s flagship offering for this aspect, and we recognise that mentors who have significant experience in relevant fields are also able to provide more tailored advice on development and opportunities. London Higher will explore ways in which we can provide more information on career development to future cohorts.

Event attendance

This was noted as crucial to meeting the programme’s stated aim to ‘facilitate the opportunity to network with other global majority professionals’. Mentors and mentees reported that increased interaction with these events allowed for the development of relationships and building of longer-lasting professional networks. Mentees also asked that mentors attend the launch, as this was felt to be a useful first step in establishing a solid working relationship. London Higher will continue to offer a blend of in-person and online networking opportunities.
Concluding Remarks

Over the past two academic years, London Higher - alongside our participating member institutions and our sponsor - has worked hard to provide a programme that meets our collective commitment to diversifying the talent pipeline within higher education, and we are proud of the impact that it has had.

We are excited to run future iterations of the Global Majority Mentoring Programme, empowering and upskilling new cohorts of talented global majority professionals so that they are able to navigate and succeed in complex working environments such as higher education. We would like to thank our sponsors Minerva for their continued support, our participating institutions for demonstrating their commitment, and above all our mentors and mentees who are the driving force for the programme.

Global Majority Mentoring Programme 2023 Cohort
Testimonials

‘I would highly recommend the programme as it is a great opportunity to learn and widen your network with those with shared experiences beyond where you work. It is well organised, everyone is welcoming and I would definitely take part in as many workshops as possible to get all you can out of the experience.’

‘This programme gave me the confidence and knowledge to apply for an Associate Professor role, and I have since been appointed!’

‘Thank you for allowing me to be a part of this amazing programme. The mentor I had really did have a huge impact on me and my confidence to see myself as a leader. It has also allowed me to develop my knowledge of the higher education sector and what I need to do to develop in the next stage of my career. The leadership programme was very helpful in learning more about what type of leader I am but also able to take time to reflect about leadership as a whole. A week after the leadership session, I was awarded employee of the month with such lovely feedback from my colleagues. I do believe this programme helped me to develop in my role and also gain confidence in leading a team (which has allowed me to take on more solo projects).’

‘The workshop provided us a truly safe space to explore our leadership capabilities as well as supporting us to reflect on our own behaviours, beliefs & values in order to assist us becoming Lifelong Learning Leaders. My fellow delegates & I experienced multiple ‘Aha’ moments together which will forever bond us.’

‘Wonderful opportunity to refocus on career options and challenge yourself to reach new places.’

‘The opportunity to discuss issues with peers and colleagues is invaluable.’

‘The most important insight I gained and achieved through my mentoring experience was understanding and valuing my contribution to my current work environment, the students I support, and my colleagues, and what and how I do this to make that possible. So often we as global majority people undervalue the essential extra work, we put in to create and to sustain the support we specifically provide. This is an integral part of us and provided the ‘who’, ‘what’, and ‘why’ at the core of ourselves. The experience with my mentor on this programme made me more aware of recognising the evidence of this and its value in how and why I do things the way I do.’