

## Flourish:

### Intergenerational reciprocal mentoring scheme

This selection of thoughts and ideas about how to get the best out of reciprocal mentoring across generations was generated from evaluation conversations with ‘Funmi Adewole, Bisola Bello, Jo Fong and Nikhil Vyas, with support from evaluation consultant Mita Pujara. 2020/21. It is being shared here as a resource for anyone interested in mentoring schemes that aim to avoid hierarchy.

#### Preparing thoughts

- Just because it is *intergenerational* and *reciprocal* doesn't necessarily mean that the relationship is even or flattened out.
- We can acknowledge different knowledges and positions.
- Age and experience differences can involve potential power relations and navigating these as early as possible is helpful.
- Different cultures may have different attitudes to age and respect. If you don't know your partner well, establish at the beginning how you want to relate to each other, to lay the groundwork for trust, respect and care.
- There may be some particular needs and vulnerabilities that you might want to point to at the beginning and to ask your partner to navigate with care.

#### When you begin

- You may want to draw up an agreement about how you will treat each other in your work together, or you may choose to allow trust to be implicit from the outset and address issues as and if they arise.
- Ask each other if there is anything you want from mentoring, are there any particular outcomes that would satisfy you?
- If it's not immediate – keep talking until you find a set of goals or a way to navigate your desires – they might not be evident straight away
- Consider starting by discussing what are your shared interests and is there a common ground that you can frame the project within? What are the gaps in knowledge that you can support each other with.
- What are the overlaps? what are the differences?
- Think of your career in its different layers, where are you experienced and where are you not experienced, where do you still need to learn?
- A lot can be gained simply from being in relationship and listening to another person so if your goals are not concrete – what is it that you want to get close to, or to be around.
- Define a practical framework that fits each of your lives.
  - i.e. number of meetings, over the next 3 months, how long each lasts, expectations to reflect, and report, in between meetings.
- If it helps you then draw up a project plan and timetable, so that you have an agenda that you know will be covered.
- Be careful not to overcommit, enthusiasm is great but if you can't fulfill obligations then it will only disappoint you both