



# PERSONAL AND

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

**REPORT ON TRAINING WITH FRIENDS FOR LIFE STUDENTS  
APRIL-MAY 2015**

**FACILITATED BY PWANI ASSOCIATION OF FACILITATORS**

## **Background**

This was the second Personal and Professional Development training being run by Friends for Life to support their students during the process of transition from studying to entering the job market. The first had been run in 2014 in Mombasa, whilst this took place in April-May 2015 with a total of 16 students (9 females & 7 males). There were 3 training days for the students and 1 additional day during which 4 mentors (3 females & 1 male) were trained to support the students over the following 3 months and beyond. This element of mentoring was an additional component that was being run for the first time. The students were from a range of universities and mostly in their final year or having recently finished their courses; the training took place in Nairobi at the University Of Nairobi School Of Law, which was considered a central venue for the various participants.

The training process was facilitated by Pwani Association of Facilitators, who had also facilitated the earlier process in Mombasa; the two facilitators throughout were Mariam Okumu and John Cornwell. Methods used throughout were highly participatory and aimed at engaging participants in various ways in order to maximize both their participation and learning. Different techniques such as small group work, plenary discussions, drama and role play were used. Most sessions were also consolidated with hand-outs to give further background information, and many of these were referenced with websites and other sources of information to enable the participants to do further research if they wished.

This report details the four days, including evaluation comments from the participants and recommendations for the future. The hand-outs given during the sessions are all included as annexes in this report.

Overall, the training process was considered by the participants to be highly effective as evidenced in their evaluation comments and several expressed that it was their first time to have such an experience. The mentoring process is expected also to add considerable value to their learning and development as they start to embark on and develop their chosen careers. As facilitators, it was a pleasure to work with such a dynamic, focused and engaging group; we wish them all the best in the future and congratulate Friends for Life for the support they have given them.

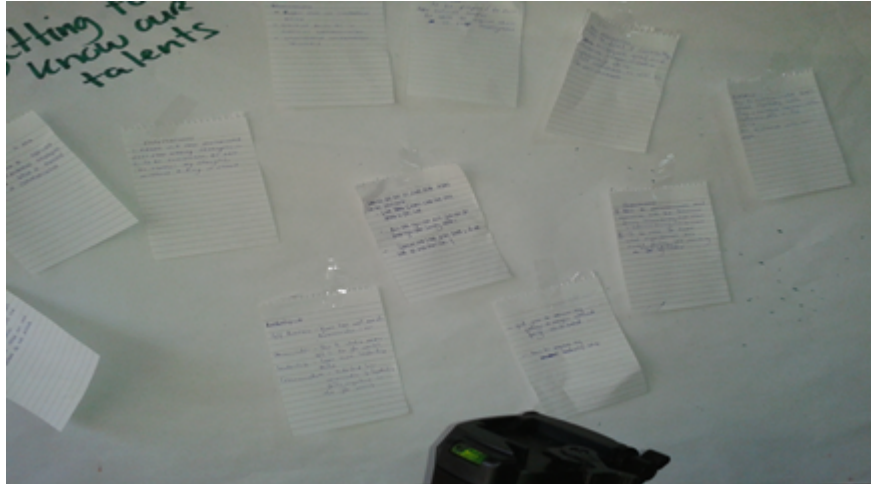
**Mariam Okumu and John Cornwell**  
**May 2015**

## **Day One – April 11<sup>th</sup> 2015**

The overall theme of the first day was '***Developing Quality Social and Life Skills***'. On arrival, participants were welcomed by Eefje van Vlimmeren from Friends For Life as well as the two facilitators, who gave them a brief on the training programme and its main objectives. Eefje urged the students to take full advantage of the training and to be interactive.

The facilitators then guided the participants on the introduction session where they shared their names, what they liked and their dreams in life. Participants were then taken through the training programme objectives and the sessions for all the 3 days but emphasized the first day's sessions on Self-awareness, Assertive Communication and Leadership skills.

The participants were then requested to note down their expectations for the 3 day training and post them up on a flipchart. Most of them expected to get better understanding on communication skills, career development tips among others. This can also be seen in the picture below;



### **SELF-AWARENESS**

The participants defined self-awareness as knowing oneself, the positive and negative aspects of oneself as an individual. The technique for developing self-awareness was seen as an important aspect and that a personal SWOT analysis needed to be done in order to develop a clear understanding of oneself. A SWOT analysis was defined as the process of critically analyzing ones Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. The analysis was done in groups where they were looking at their own SWOT that could inform their career development and they came up with the following points;

<b><u>Strengths</u></b>	<b><u>Weaknesses</u></b>
Ability to perform task within a timeline	Poor communication skills
Perfectionist	Low confidence levels
Adaptability	Too rigid in decisions
Extroversion	Not assertive
Courageous	Need supervision
Positive thinking	Cannot work to deadlines
Knowledge / Education	Lack of self-knowledge
Convincing power (charisma)	Low self confidence
Aggressiveness	Negative attitudes
Confidence	Poor self-control
Can work under pressure	Low level of experience
Good inter-personal skills	Introverted

Quick learner Team player Flexible Can work under minimum supervision	Impulsive buying Intimidated Low self-esteem Anxious
<b><u>Opportunities</u></b>  Good education Growing economy NGO sponsorship Training programmes Volunteer programmes Open job market Attending trainings & workshops Research Mentorship and connections Job availability	<b><u>Threats</u></b>  Competition Peer pressure Corruption Health Political instability Social inter-actions Weather / environment Inadequate information Globalization Centralization Bad governance Technology

A discussion on the SWOT analyses presented enabled the participants to better understand how their internal Strengths and Weaknesses could be taken advantage of to position them to take advantage of the external Opportunities and minimize the external Threats to their personal and professional growth.

The facilitator then posed a question on why carrying out a SWOT analysis is essential to personal development, to which the participants gave the following responses;

- By knowing one’s weaknesses, one can work on them and boost their strengths etc.
- In an interview, one is often asked, “Who are you?” The SWOT analysis can assist in answering that question in an interview.
- Knowing yourself helps you to avoid situations where weaknesses come out
- You can be honest with yourself

The participants were requested to do their own personal SWOT analysis and work on the results to better place themselves for available and future opportunities.

**COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

The second session on communication skills began with a discussion on the various aspects of communication, focusing on what and how to communicate with someone. Participants came up with the following list;

- Confidence in what you are saying
- Posture – body language
- The way one is dressed can encourage or discourage effective communication
- Be prepared – carry out research on the item under discussion
- Diction / pronunciation
- Have Courage
- Be knowledgeable

- Be language proficient
- Understand people you are communicating with (know your audience)
- Engage with your audience
- Be audible
- Exchange ideas
- Listen effectively i.e. be a good listener
- Don't be too brief or too long
- Create rapport with the audience
- Use gestures
- Written communication is important to be on-point and also for future reference
- Feedback is always important

Then, there were 3 types of communication that were demonstrated by the participants through role plays. These were Assertive, Aggressive and Passive communication styles. The participants agreed that assertive communication skills should be learnt and practiced as they demonstrate respect and honesty and passes information quite effectively.

### **LEADERSHIP SKILLS**

During this session, the group was asked to define leadership and they agreed that it is the act of exercising authority to influence others to achieve a desired outcome. The group then brainstormed on leadership styles and came up with Managerial, Laissez-faire, Authoritative, Autocratic and Consultative leadership styles. It was agreed also that Managers do things right and Leaders do the right thing.

The participants were then asked to do group work to establish the qualities of good and bad leaders and they came up with the following points detailed in the table below;

<b>Qualities of a Good Leader</b>	<b>Qualities of a Bad Leader</b>
Courageous	Impatient
Outspoken	Authoritative
Hard-working	Rude
Consultative	Arrogant
Easily approachable	Reactive
Good listener	Poor communicator
Effective communicator	Self-sufficient / know it all
Pro-active	Irritable
Co-operative	Unapproachable
Disciplined	Corrupt
Time-conscious	Authoritative (dictator)
Risk taker	Immoral
Dynamic	Reclusive
Team player	Self-centered
Transparent	Patronizing
Accountable	Biased
Goal oriented	Un-trustworthy

Visionary Innovative / creative A role model Smart Principled Trust-worthy High integrity Self-motivated Prudent Be informed Disciplined / good character	Uninformed
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It was agreed that a leader cannot possess all the good qualities listed but should strive to embrace at least 80% of them to be effective and one can use the different styles depending on the situation the leader is in.

### **GOAL-SETTING**

In this session, the participants were taken through the process of setting goals at both a personal as well as professional level. Goal setting was defined as planning what one wants to achieve, that is time bound, something measureable and that makes progress to reach a point.

The goals should be SMART i.e. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time Bound to be realized. The 3 types of goals; short term, medium term and long term were discussed and their importance.

Keys to achieving a person’s goals also depend on his/her values that are informed by their attitudes and behaviors. The participants were given a template of setting goals which is attached in this report to fill in and start working on them.

The day ended with reflections and participants generally felt that they had not only enjoyed the day but learnt a great deal about themselves and on their own personal development.

### **Day Two – April 18<sup>th</sup> 2015**

The theme of the second day was “**Professional Development**”, which included sessions on Employment Opportunities, Personal Marketing (Developing CVs and Cover Letters) and Self-Packaging (Interview Skills). The days started with a re-cap of the previous session, where the participants shared what they had learnt as well as the challenges that they had faced in the session, which included the following;

- It was new experience opening up during the morning session
- The use of role plays, group work, discussion as facilitation methods.
- Keeping records of the participants among themselves

Participants also shared their expectations for the day, which included appreciation and understanding of oneself, learning how to develop effective CVs and developing their interview skills.

## **EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

During this session, the participants were divided into small groups to discuss employment opportunities focusing on where and how one can find employment opportunities. The groups then presented their work and the following points were covered between them;

### ***Where to get employment opportunities:***

- Internet – browsing the job sites e.g. Brighter Monday, OLX, LinkedIn, Adsite, Career point, facebook, whatsapp etc. One can also browse organizations and companies and sign up for their job alerts.
- Newspapers and magazines – reading the Daily Nation on Mondays and Fridays, Eve magazine among others.
- Networking with friends, families, organizations, institutions (churches, trainings, mosques, professional associations), attending Trade fairs, employment fairs and exhibitions
- Scouting – Being at the right place at the right time...you can see an opportunity and create a job for yourself
- Bill boards, Television and Radios
- Public notices

### ***How to get employment opportunities:***

- Creating personal profiles in company websites
- Sending CVs and Cover letters to organizations with vacancies
- Consultation when networking with others
- Volunteering, Internships / attachments
- Psychological preparation before interviews
- Self-employment
- Connections, Corruption and Nepotism

It was agreed that the best ways to search for jobs is make focused searches when browsing the Internet and to develop good and strong networks and strive to maintain them to make them effective.

## **PERSONAL MARKETING**

In this session, the participants discussed on how to develop a good Curriculum Vitae and cover letter and this was done in groups. The groups were each given examples of CVs and cover letters for them to discuss and identify mistakes as well as positive aspects of them.

From the presentations, the features of a **good cover letter** were identified as below;

- Should be tailored to the organisation and position targeted
- Should complement the CV & be consistent with it
- Use the right format
- Correct and specific addresses

- Brief and to the point
- Reference should be more defined
- Content should include – company, department and job being applied for, explain why that company, explain why that job, your qualifications and experience in that sector, where you got the information about that job
- College you graduated from – explain your academic qualifications, skills showing you qualify for the position you are applying for
- What you have been doing – explain things you did after school, experience you gained in different places
- Show why you are qualified for the said job
- Explain your interest in the job
- Be neat
- Give your contacts
- Good salutation and signing out

The features that help in developing **a good CV** were identified as below;

- Should be long enough to cover details and short enough to keep it interesting
- Personal information (name, nationality, contacts etc)
- Career / Life objective (general & specific) or Mission & Vision
- Education background & Qualifications (from the current to the past)
- Technical skills / Professional training
- Work experience (from the current to the past), highlight the most relevant jobs
- Seminars / workshops / training attended
- Membership (clubs, associations, societies)
- Community service
- Specific skills – fluency in other languages, Leadership skills, conflict management skills etc
- Achievements
- Hobbies & Interests – which are relevant and add value
- At least 3 Referees – personal, work, community

### **SELF-PACKAGING**

This session entailed discussions on interview skills and processes. The participants brainstormed on how to be employable and they listed the following as ways one can embrace;

- Be pro-active
- Be solution-oriented (take problem-solving approach)
- Show you are able to make decisions
- Be assertive
- Be accommodative / consultative
- Be self-aware (physically, spiritually, emotionally, mentally, psychologically)



The skills needed when going for an interview were discussed and shared from role plays done by the participants and listed as below;

- Need to be confident
- Don't be shy – try to overcome it
- Maintain eye contact (with all the panelists if more than one)
- Be honest (even when you don't know something)
- Struggle and be willing to try to answer questions
- Be prepared / do your research on the company as well as position
- Don't be a know-it-all
- Make sure to ask some questions
- Give intelligent answers
- Be ready for anything
- Be attentive – listen carefully
- Dress appropriately
- Be focused
- Always try to give examples from previous successes / experiences

The day ended with participants sharing reflections on the day and there was a lot of positive feedback about the practical skills that they had learnt, which would prove very useful to them in their professional development and, in particular, their current search for employment.



Use of Drama and Role Play during one of the sessions

### **Day Three – April 25<sup>th</sup> 2015**

This day was focused on ***Training of Mentors*** and was a one day process attended by 3 of the 4 identified mentors; the fourth was taken through the process later in the week as she was unable to participate in this session. The mentors were all former beneficiaries of Friends for Life and had agreed to volunteer and mentor the current students' in their career development path.

#### **OPENING**

The session began with introductions of the participants where the mentors shared their name, course they graduated with, current work experience and their expectations of being a mentor. The facilitators

also introduced themselves and gave a brief background of PAF. The mentorship Programme objectives were also discussed, namely to have former students assist the students still in college and guide them in career and even personal growth.

### **OVERVIEW OF PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

The mentors were taken through an overview of the training that the students were being taken through on Self-awareness, Communication and Leadership skills. Some of the elements of the training programme, particularly those focusing on personal development were shared in more detail:

The 3 different communication styles were demonstrated by the facilitators in a role play that led to a discussion on the assertive, aggressive and passive communication skills. Through the discussion a passive communicator is one who is easily overwhelmed, assertive communicator is calm, composed and confident while an aggressive communicator is one who is arrogant and does not have respect for others. All the participants agreed that assertive communication style is the best one to practice while dealing with others especially the mentees.

On leadership skills, the participants defined a leader as one who guides and influences others to achieve a common goal. They listed qualities of a good leader as an;

- Assertive communicator
- Good listener
- Honest
- Team player
- Motivates & inspires
- Role model
- Confident and optimistic

The participants identified leadership styles such as;

- Bureaucratic - follow policies
- Dictator / Autocratic
- Hierarchy
- Aristocratic- Royal family
- Democratic
- Laissez faire

### **MENTORING AND COACHING**

The participants then brainstormed on their understanding of the two concepts of mentoring and coaching.

Under ***Mentoring*** the participants felt that it is more on

- Guiding and advising
- Follow- up process
- Don't need to know details
- Supporting and encouraging on a long- term basis

On **Coaching**, the mentors felt that it is more on

- Showing someone how to do something (hands on)
- Related to a particular job or skill
- Short - term
- Has clear goal

The participants then brainstormed on the **skills needed to be effective mentors** and they listed the following points;

- Good communication skills
- Honest
- Optimistic
- Self-confident
- A role model (leading by example)
- Determination & commitment
- Goal oriented
- Time management skills
- Hardworking
- Empathetic
- Good conduct
- Self-motivation (passion and will)
- Knowledgeable
- Good leadership skills
- Charismatic
- Build rapport with mentees
- Build trust
- Be Proactive

The mentors were encouraged to apply most of the skills identified to be effective with their mentees.

## **COUNSELLING**

The mentors were then taken through the importance of understanding the basic skills of counseling that might assist them while guiding their mentees towards achieving their career goals. The main objective of the mentors understanding these concepts was to prepare them to be able to respond to situations that might come up. They were also advised to be aware that they should not be offering their mentees counseling but could make use of these skills in certain situations; in more difficult situations, it was agreed that it would be wise to make referrals to qualified counselors.

## **CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLANS**

During this session, the mentors were taken through the concept of career development plans as well as a reporting template that they could use during their mentoring sessions with the students. The mentors were able to also discuss further on their role in supporting the mentees.

The day ended with reflections on the day and the mentors shared that they felt the mentorship process would be beneficial to them as well as the mentees since several of them felt that they would also have benefitted if they themselves had had a mentor.

The mentors will now take up the role of supporting the students for a 3 month period, after which the process will be reviewed to understand its impact and effectiveness. During this period, the facilitators will also continue to support the mentors with regular communication to ensure that the process runs smoothly. As the mentors are all based in and around Nairobi, not all the students decided to take up this option as some of them are quite a distance from the potential mentors; however, each of the mentors will be supporting 2-3 of the students and have undertaken to have a session with each of them at least once per month. The sessions will be either face-to-face meetings or through phone or skype and Friends for Life will continue to support this process.



a

**Day**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>**

This

was the final session with the students and had the theme of “***Applying Social and Life Skills***”. The day started with an opening where the participants were asked to share what they have been up to since the last training. From the recap, few of them had completed setting their goals while some had reviewed and updated their CVs.

Some of the students during Group work session

**Four – May**  
**2015**

was the final

## **KEEPING THE JOB**

During this session, participants brainstormed on the qualities that make an employee be an asset to a company or organization. The group came up with the following list indicating what the employee should be doing to maintain their jobs and also to develop themselves further;

- Know and understand policies
- Give their best
- Meet deadlines & policies
- Update themselves on the latest issues
- Keep developing themselves
- Maintain respect for other people
- Know who they are dealing with
- Maintain their integrity
- Be a good decision-maker

## **RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF AN EMPLOYEE**

The participants were divided into groups to discuss the Rights and Responsibilities of an employee in the work place. Their presentation was as shown in the table below;

<b>RIGHTS</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES</b>
Compensation / remuneration	Adhere to organisation policies
Safe working conditions (good lighting, clean environment)	Know/be familiar with the organisation structure
Insurance	Meeting the company's goals
Security / protection	Meeting deadlines
Holidays and leave (annual, maternity/paternity, sick)	Inform the company of any security threats
Religious freedom	Punctuality
Decision making process participation	Give your best
To join trade unions	Update oneself on one's roles
To know your job scope / clear job description	Give reports
Not to be discriminated against	To be a team player
Regular breaks	Meet the boss/company's expectations
Dignity and respect	Adherence to contractual obligations
Further professional development	Professionalism
	Due diligence and skill
	Upholding of values and vision of employer
	Integrity
	Act in good faith

The participants added that the employee should be vigilant when signing contracts and make sure they read and understand the document well before signing. The employee should also be proactive once he/she gets a job and request to be furnished with the company's policies so as to avoid going against them.

## **WORK ETHICS**

During this session, participants were divided into two groups and asked to develop a short drama; the first illustrated poor work ethics and the second demonstrated good work ethics. After the performances, the group brainstormed to get the following key points that are considered to be good ethics in the workplace:

- Need to respect guests, visitors and other colleagues
- Need for professionalism
- Need proper PR and communication skills
- Etiquette and behavior, e.g. dressing, personal grooming
- Keep personal issues out of the workplace
- Use appropriate language
- Punctuality is important
- Show good leadership skills
- Keep cool and composed
- Maintain integrity
- Need for respectful communication
- Keep proper records
- Appreciate people and their work

### **CONFLICT MANAGEMENT**

Participants were asked to consider areas of conflict that may arise during their work experiences and consider how best to resolve and/or manage them. Various issues were shared, such as competition over positions, personal differences and competing for the attention of the boss, etc.

Participants were then taken through a tool of Conflict Analysis to help them better understand the nature of conflicts. In this tool, four concentric circles are drawn which relate to:

- Personal & Family
- Community
- National
- Global

Participants then brainstormed on various conflicts which they then place within the appropriate circle. In many cases, such as war or resource conflicts, it was found that conflicts can affect different circles and those that start at Global or National level often impact at Personal and Community levels but people have little control over them.

### **MENTORING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

During this session, participants were asked to consider, firstly, the role of mentoring within career development. The group brainstormed the following points, which they felt were the ***Qualities of a Good Mentor***:

- Experienced

- Practices confidentiality (trustworthy person)
- Has achieved something in life
- Willing to be a mentor, generous to share
- Career path connection helps
- Mentor understands mentee's career path
- Keeps updated with new trends/issues
- Has best interest of mentee at heart
- Mentally fit
- Is a role model
- Builds rapport, develops the relationship

The available mentors were then described briefly and those participants who wanted a mentor were asked to select the person they felt could effectively mentor them. 8 of the group members selected a mentor, whilst 2 others were undecided on who could mentor them.

Participants were then given a template to use called a **Career Development Plan**, which they then worked on for a few minutes. The plan will be the guide and key reference point for their mentoring sessions, whilst they were encouraged to review and update them on a regular basis.

### **PERSONALITY TRAITS**

An additional presentation was offered at the end by Frankline Otieno, who had joined the group for the sessions and this focused on different personality traits. He explained that our characters are both Biological and Acquired, and fit into four categories as follows:

1. **Choleric** – ambitious, forward-looking, strong leaders, influential
2. **Sanguine** – pleasurable, happy, funny, sociable, creative, talkative, lose interest quickly
3. **Melancholic** – introverts, poor time-keepers, artistic, poetic, often perfectionists, self-reliant, not good at multi-tasking
4. **Phlegmatic** – relaxed, quiet, sluggish, content with how things are (resistant to change), affectionate

Most people have one or more of these personality traits, although there is often one which is very dominant in a particular person. The presentation was considered to add value to the earlier sessions on self-awareness and leadership.

### **EVALUATION**

The evaluation of the whole training process was conducted in two parts:

1. **Group evaluation**, where participants were asked to write on some flipcharts all the different parts of the training, then draw symbols next to the sessions they had particularly Liked, Found Difficult and those where they had Learnt a lot. There was found to be a wide spread of

Learning throughout the training, many sessions were particularly Liked and several were Difficult (or Challenging). The group evaluation serves the purpose of helping participants to remember the different aspects of the training and to discover how the general feeling was about the various sessions



Participatory group evaluation

2. **Individual evaluation**, where participants were all asked to fill out a short questionnaire on different aspects of the training. A summary of the comments follows:

On what participants **enjoyed most**, majority learnt new concepts on CV and cover letters, involvement in group discussions, the role plays and skits create an understanding of the concepts, the icebreakers and most of all making new friends.

The **challenging things** that they encountered were the travelling from their places to the training venue for most of them led to late arrival which led to late start of sessions. The pairing up with mentors especially since they were not present was a challenge.

On **what the participants learnt** from the training, various topics were appreciated like the CV writing sessions, communication and leadership skills among others.

On how they would put the **Learning into action** in future, most of the participants actioned to work on their CVs, practice their interview skills with family friends, ensuring timeliness to avoid being left behind in activities especially ones that involve other people, work on their SWOT analysis to better themselves and gain enough self-confidence to interact well with others and get a mentor for guidance on their career paths.



On the **facilitation methods used, facilitators, venue and food**, the participants felt that the food was quite enjoyable, the venue was very conducive only that it was not centrally located for those travelling from far distances and the facilitators were quite interactive and appreciative that made them open up to sharing ideas and concepts.

On the participants views on **improvement in the future training programme** for other students, they felt that the training days should be done on consecutive days and not on weekly basis, the trainings should be planned to take place during the beginning of the semesters when the students are not very busy since some sessions participants were strained as they were also having their exams, more students should be involved. The involvement of motivational speakers during the training should be considered.



Participants completing evaluation forms on the final day