



## Intercultural Relationship and Mentoring: Case Study of Italian Air Force in Afghanistan

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### Abstract

Mentoring is a developmental and learning support methodology, aimed at promoting individual potential, which takes place in an exchange relationship (formal or informal) between a Mentor - agent of socialization, natural facilitator, "older friend", *passé par tout* for the adult world, continual source of reference - and a Mentee, a less experienced person, a student. In the modern sense, mentoring relationship is looming as a process of guided learning in formal and facilitated, designed, managed and organized process. Once trained and volunteer, Mentor shares knowledge, skills in the form of teaching and transmission of experience, to foster personal and professional growth of the Mentee. [1] Italian School of Mentoring (SIM), in Florence, founded by Matteo Perchiazzi, supported the Italian Air Force (AM) using the methodology of mentoring as part of NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan, launched in autumn 2010 and still in progress, whose aim is to facilitate the process of transition to full independence of the Afghan military. SIM and CEFODIMA - ISMA (Institute of Military Sciences and Aviation) trained about 110 "Mentor / Advisor", engaged in mentoring activities to the staff belonging Afghan military airport of Shindand, future pole excellence and training the entire Afghan Air Force. [2] In the performance of Mentoring in Afghanistan a very important tool was the Mentor's "diary". This tool was in the perspective of Knowledge Management System and to manage the communities of practice of Mentor. This ongoing monitoring tool collected empirical data and information about the performances and the results achieved through mentoring relationship (setting, content, teaching methods used).

Empirical evidence emerging from qualitative and quantitative analysis of about 170 Mentors' diaries allowed us to see how mentoring plays a helper functions in daily life and work, improving communication mechanisms, providing a sense of belonging, tools for professional and organizational enrichment, promoting the development and exchange between professional and cultural diversity. The innovative methodology of Mentoring has the capability to convey the role and skills of cultural values, through the centrality of the relationship built on a ground of trust, empathy and equal interchange, from which it's possible then to define pursues and achieve professional goals.

The analysis of the case studies made clear that the strength of the relationship has allowed to establish an effective intercultural communication, during the process of 'helping to learn', especially the exchange of values, traditions, customs, perception of time, work and life. The results in this extreme setting so far support the view that mentoring can be successfully applied in any context (social, business, school, etc.) of intercultural exchange and communication.

### References

- [1] M. Perchiazzi, Learning Mentoring, 2009, [www.scuoladimentoring.it](http://www.scuoladimentoring.it)  
[2] <http://www.aeronautica.difesa.it>