

# YL-IM

## YOUNG LEADERS - INSPIRING MENTORS

*A practical guide for the Inspiring Mentor*

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### About Mentoring

The Young Leaders – Inspiring Mentors program (YL-IM) focuses on the **mentoring of young leaders** (under 35) **by experienced top leaders**. We define mentoring for our YL-IM program as the process through which a seasoned leader helps a high potential below 35 to increase their positive sustainable impact within their organization and on the broader society; something that (s)he would otherwise have learned less proactively, more slowly or not at all. In other words, providing mentorship is giving valuable advice, building self-esteem, providing a sounding board, keeping up the mirror, seeking to pass on knowledge, a different perspective and wisdom, all this with the eye on increasing one's impact that will positively influence their stakeholders and society.

We believe it is a gift to self-development when young leaders look for an inspiring mentor who can guide them in increasing their personal impact and in relation to the essential questions they are asking themselves why and how to have such a relevant impact. The aim of the discussions for these young leaders is to **get to know themselves better, to get a clearer picture of what their strengths and weaknesses are and how these influence their actions and achievements**. The inspiring mentor is a recognized leader, selected by the YL-IM board, who will guide the young leader by asking the right questions and open up a new way of looking at things. The inspiring mentor is not merely a person of reference to whom the mentee asks questions with the expectation to effortlessly receive answers in return. The mentor doesn't give ready-made answers but helps the mentee to broaden their perspective and provides guidance through the different options that they identify together and **helps the mentee in analyzing the options and in assessing their value, to enable the mentee to make well-informed and thought through decisions**.

The mentor isn't making him or herself available solely for an informal chat with the mentee. The **duo determines upfront what they want to achieve together**, how often they are going to meet (we recommend every 4 to 6 weeks), and which topics they wish to discuss together. **The mentor is expected to challenge his/her mentee and we expect that each mentor allows to be challenged** by his/her mentee too. The 'confrontation' of perspectives and views is meant to be very enriching. Mentoring is not about convincing the other of the truth but about offering different ways to look at his or her reality.

In addition to discussing the mentee's essential life questions and how to improve his or her personal impact for society, we aim for the mentor to **introduce his or her mentee to the various aspects of running an organization or a business, i.e. of being a leader.** That involves the purely organizational-operational aspects (how to organize time, put priorities, make the right decisions, accept or not opportunities, ...), the governance aspects (how to align board of directors and management, what is the best organizational structure and why, how do I involve all the stakeholders, what is my role and the role of the shareholders, ...) and strategic aspect (how to build a vision about the organization's future and stick to it, how to make the organization conscious and align the different stakeholders around one shared purpose and organizational culture, ...).

**Mentorship is holistic:** it approaches both the personal and professional parts of life, ideally on a 50%-50% equilibrium, and incorporates values, life principles, ambitions, goals and corresponding strategies. Mentoring is much more than 'just' looking into the professional goals and how these can be achieved. We want the inspiring mentor to challenge his/her mentee on the why (are you doing what you're doing?) and the how (you are doing it?) of his/her purpose and strategy.

**The matching of each duo is done, consciously, by our experienced jury** which has carefully selected and met all of the participating 15 mentees out of a large group of candidates who have applied for the program. As a general principle, the jury looks to match persons from different 'sectors' and backgrounds, as often duos with different backgrounds and ways of looking at things enhance the learning. We match our duos with the aspiration of a genuine 'click' between both personalities. In the many years that the YL-IM program has been running, we proud ourselves to have close to zero mismatches. We strongly encourage both our young leaders and inspiring mentors to build a spontaneous and personal relationship and have no fears of bringing everything relevant to the table. There should be no elephants in the room! **The communication within the duo should be open and reciprocal (also the mentor should take responsibility in reaching out to his/her mentee,** who sometimes might be 'impressed' by his/her mentor!). The objective for the mentor and mentee is to quickly become comfortable with each other and to feel free to ask anything and talk about anything, including personal topics that have an impact on life choices and increasing joy in life, and by that on the expected impact we want our participating mentees to have. It may take some time before total openness is achieved. It sometimes requires considerable effort and dedication to get to the core of topics that really matter and will make the difference. Building and nurturing a mentoring relationship is often a valuable learning experience on itself. It reveals a lot about the inner dynamics of both the mentor and the mentee, and how they deal with their doubts, their fears (to bring essential things to the table), ego and self-esteem.

In order to be an inspiring mentor **you have to be willing to spend time with a younger and less experienced person and to care for the way he or she views society.** We look for mentors with an open mind and encouraging and caring attitude who enjoy meeting people, who want to help others, who are curious towards others' different perspectives, and who are very committed to boost the societal relevance of their mentee.

## In practical terms

Our **YL-IM 2019 program will start on the 1st of April 2019**, during a formal celebration that will concurrently kick-off the 2019 edition and close the YL-IM 2018 edition. During this first gathering, both mentor and mentee will be introduced to each other. From that point onwards, all subsequent meetings will be planned as both of them decide together, taking into consideration the drive to meet and each other's respective agendas. The structure of your meetings is flexible and not predefined – from thereon it's the duo who decides what's best for them.

On average, we recommend that duos try to **meet for about 2 to 3 hours every 6 to 8 weeks**. Don't hesitate to weave in a variety of meeting venues and contexts – over breakfast, lunch or dinner, in the respective working environments, at home, during a walk, while doing sports together, ...) as this adds to the bonding and inspiration. The more comfortable and meaningful the contact becomes, the better the outcome will be for both parties, and the more your mentee will be grateful for his/her growth and improved self-awareness, consciousness and confidence.

In Q4 of 2019, a **duo-interview** will be scheduled with **Trends or Trends/Tendances**. The objective of this interview is to share your experience and lessons learned, outside of the YL-IM community. In addition, you can follow us via our website [www.ylim.eu](http://www.ylim.eu) or via [Facebook](#) & [LinkedIn](#) from where we regularly share our news and post relevant things that matter. We are also considering of creating our own blog and youtube channel, where interviews will be posted.

The formal mentoring process will end at the closing event organized at the end of Q2 2019. Here both mentee and mentor will be formally recognized and integrated in the YL-IM Alumni community, which grows annually. Note that after the formal closing event, informal contacts are often maintained between the duos. Some even become close friends!

For further questions on how to make this an exciting and successful mentoring, for any kind of concerns or for suggestions please reach out to me. Consider me as the “coordinator-inspirer mentor” of the inspiring mentors.

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For all practical questions you can reach out to

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