

STRENGTHENING ETHIOPIA'S AGRI- ENTREPRENEURS THROUGH MENTORING

PROGRAMME SNAPSHOT

- **Client:** blueMoon
- **Years:** 2017 to 2018
- **Number of participants:** 6 mentors and 16 early-stage entrepreneurs in 6 founding teams
- **Participating country:** Ethiopia

Planting the seeds for leadership
and sustainable enterprise

THE OBJECTIVES

blueMoon, Ethiopia's first youth agribusiness incubator and seed investor, partnered with The Human Edge to pilot a tailored mentoring programme supporting early-stage agribusiness entrepreneurs. The programme aimed to:

- Pilot a new group mentoring model by matching one mentor with 2–3 co-founders per entrepreneurial team.
- Support business development, resilience and scalability of high-potential Ethiopian agri-startups.
- Strengthen personal leadership, entrepreneurial confidence and networking capacity among the entrepreneurs.
- Equip mentors with the mindset, skills and tools to empower others in their personal and professional lives.
- Create a pool of The Human Edge-trained mentors in Ethiopia to contribute to blueMoon's programmes and the wider ecosystem.

THE CHALLENGE

With agriculture accounting for a large portion of Ethiopia's GDP but declining due to drought and environmental instability, the need for innovation in agribusiness was critical. While blueMoon incubated promising early-stage teams, many entrepreneurs lacked the confidence, leadership capacity and practical tools to scale their ideas into sustainable businesses. At the same time, Ethiopia had limited mentoring capacity and most entrepreneurs had never been part of a structured mentoring programme.

OUR APPROACH:

The Human Edge designed and implemented a 12-month mentoring pilot programme that included **Mentoring Awareness Sessions** and a **kickstart workshop** to onboard and train 6 local professional as mentors and pair them with 16 entrepreneurs across 6 teams. A **structured relationship-based mentoring** model focused on both personal and business development, a **mid-year refresher and jam events** to re-energise the community and deepen learning and reflection and **continuous support** to ensure mentoring relationships were sustained and meaningful.

Human-centred design

Grounded in relational mentoring, trust-building and deep contextual understanding to foster personal and entrepreneurial growth.

Capacity for impact

Equipping both mentors and mentees with the skills and confidence needed to engage fully in the mentoring process.

Structured, scalable model

Cohort-based design combining mentor and mentee training, matching, and long-term support—adaptable to sector, stage and setting.

On-going Support

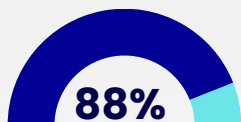
Supported mentoring pairs with regular check-ins and facilitated events to strengthen relationships and ensure lasting outcomes.

KEY OUTCOMES FOR PARTICIPANTS

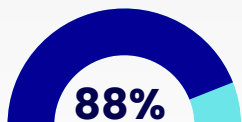
Personal Growth and Strengthening of Leadership



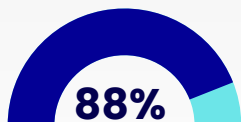
of entrepreneurs who gave feedback said they would recommend the mentoring experience to others



of entrepreneurs said the programme strengthened their network



found the programme beneficial to them and their business



said they would consider mentoring the next generation of entrepreneurs

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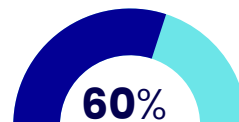
I started my journey with The Human Edge as I passed for incubation in blueMoon Ethiopia, an agribusiness incubator. It was an amazing year, we had an amazing mentor and hope to continue our relationship further.

Christian Tesfaye, Gebeya-Net, Entrepreneur

Mentor Impact



of mentors would recommend the programme to others



of mentors reported significant changes in their own professional lives thanks to the programme

302 hours

volunteered by mentors over the year - averaging 52 hours each

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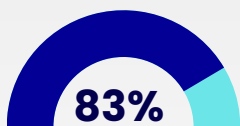
The Human Edge Mentoring journey is about people. It is about mastering emotional intelligence and managing the 'I have the answer' ego. The journey is about believing in humans' ability to explore and find their own solutions for the challenges they are facing. It is about building and nurturing entrepreneurs' mindset and thinking pattern to become multidimensional and solution oriented. This is a journey everyone should experience as I have.

Biruk Yosef, Mentor

Contact us to explore how mentoring can build leadership capacity, support business growth and create lasting impact in emerging sectors.

KEY OUTCOMES FOR PARTICIPANTS

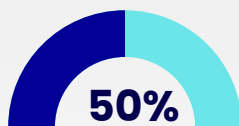
Business Growth, Sustainability, and Success



of the businesses remained operational one year later

Gebeya-Net Technologies won the Slush Global Impact Showcase in Finland and was nominated for an international award.

Biruk Girma of Bio-organic was selected for the prestigious Skoll Foundation Emerging Leaders for 2018, the first Ethiopian selected for this award.



of the incubated businesses attracted investor interest through blueMoons' Lion's Den event – one raising 3.2 million ETB



One key reason why blueMoon Ethiopia entrepreneurs secured investment at Lions Den is because of mentoring.

Eleni Gabre Madhin, founder and CEO of blueMoon

Mentoring played a critical role in building the leadership, confidence and entrepreneurial capacity of early-stage agri-founders in Ethiopia, while equipping local mentors with people-centred skills to support others' growth. Through trust-based, team-focused mentoring relationships and structured support, the programme helped entrepreneurs navigate early business challenges, overcome fear of failure, and clarify their vision and strategy for growth.

In a context where agribusiness innovation is vital for economic resilience and food security, this pilot demonstrated the power of mentoring to strengthen local ecosystems, unlock leadership potential and support the emergence of sustainable, investment-ready enterprises.

Economic Growth, Job Creation and Retention

82%

of jobs held at the start of the programme were retained

15

the number of full-time staff increased from 9 to 15

**Looking to boost innovation and resilience in agribusiness or beyond?
Partner with us to embed mentoring in your programmes, grow local talent and equip entrepreneurs with the skills to lead sustainable change.**

Contact us now!