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INSIGHT PAPER

Mentorship as a Strategic Investment in Entrepreneurial Development in Kisumu

Building structured support systems for women and youth entrepreneurs

From one-off training to durable mentorship systems

Mentorship | Markets | Finance | Readiness

COUNTY	Kisumu County
FOCUS	Women & youth entrepreneurship
THEME	Mentorship for market readiness

What this carousel covers

- Why mentorship matters
- What makes it work
- Practical capabilities
- Institutional ownership

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WHY IT MATTERS

Mentorship is more than business advice

It links founders to markets, finance, policy actors and formal value chains.

70%
WOMEN & YOUTH SHARE OF POPULATION

67%
HISTORICAL YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

45.6%
AGRIBUSINESS PARTICIPANT TRACTION

Mentorship helps turn entrepreneurial energy into investment-ready, market-connected and resilient enterprises.

Growth acceleration

Policy-to-action alignment

Inclusive cultural shifts

MENTORSHIP DESIGN

What makes mentorship work

Trust, structure and long-term engagement determine whether support changes business practice.

Trust

Orientation, confidentiality and clear expectations build confidence between mentors and founders.

Structure

Milestones, accountability and sector-specific guidance make mentorship practical.

Continuity

Regular engagement changes business habits more than one-off workshops.

Short-term workshops share information. Structured mentorship builds sustainable enterprises.

Idea stage → Validation → Growth → Market readiness

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CAPABILITY GAPS

Entrepreneurs need practical business capability

Across sectors, founders identified a shared need for hands-on business systems.

Financial management

Cash sales books, expense ledgers, bank statements and investor-ready records.

Market-focused strategy

Customer retention, after-sales follow-up, branding and practical market research.

Compliance & collective action

Legal readiness, sector associations and partnerships that reduce market barriers.

Focused mentorship

Practical, specialised guidance instead of generic business motivation.

The real gap is not ambition - it is structured capability.

OWNERSHIP

Sustainable mentorship needs institutional ownership

Effective mentorship cannot depend only on volunteers or isolated goodwill.

County Government	Create a legal mentorship framework and central digital registry
WiseHub & ESOs	Manage verified mentor networks and tiered mentorship models
TVET institutions	Embed industry mentors into training pathways
Private sector	Make corporate mentorship part of CSR and supply-chain readiness
Financial institutions	Link business guidance to lending and micro-financing

System, not goodwill

WAY FORWARD

From mentorship events to business infrastructure

Kisumu can turn fragmented support into a coordinated system for resilient enterprise growth.

01

Formalise mentorship

Protect mentorship frameworks through county-led systems.

02

Build the registry

Categorise mentors by sector, gender, youth status and disability considerations.

03

Strengthen access

Use radio, community forums and chiefs' barazas to reach underserved wards.

04

Fund the system

Shift funding from short workshops to long-term mentorship platforms.

The next frontier is coordinated mentorship that carries founders into formal value chains.

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