



# ELEVATING MENTORING EXCELLENCE TO SUPPORT GRASSROOTS ENTREPRENEURS IN SOUTH AFRICA

## PROGRAMME SNAPSHOT

- **Client:** Taking Care of Business (TCB)
- **Year:** 2025
- **Number of participants:** 60 participants (mentors, tutors, managers, operations)
- **Participating country:** South Africa (4 regions)

## THE CONTEXT

Taking Care of Business (TCB) is a South African non-profit that works across four provinces to help grassroots entrepreneurs, predominantly women, build sustainable livelihoods through a 24-month, holistic programme that blends business, financial and life skills with deep personal development.

For over 15 years, TCB has walked alongside individuals navigating their way out of poverty through self-employment. Their approach combines practical, learn-by-doing entrepreneurship with healing, trauma support and parenting education designed to spark not just economic change, but generational change.

## THE CHALLENGE

TCB has long incorporated mentoring into its programme, but as the organisation expanded, so did its commitment to ensuring mentoring was delivered with consistency, clarity and excellence across all regions. With teams spread across regions and no formal training in place, TCB recognised an opportunity to strengthen its mentoring approach and embed shared standards across the organisation. The decision to strengthen it further was supported by the CEO's own experience in a previous Human Edge programme.

“ I said there's one word missing in our mentoring and that's the word excellence. **Jane Naude – National Programme Manager at TCB**

Recognising this gap and needing **a solution that could work at scale** across 1,000 kilometers while maintaining the **human-centered** approach central to their model, TCB decided to enrol 60 mentors, tutors, managers and operations team members in The Human Edge's **Mentoring Skills and Practice Course**.

## THE OBJECTIVES

With mentoring already embedded as a key pillar of its support model, the organisation sought to further strengthen this pillar by:

- **Professionalising mentoring across regions:** Shifting from volunteer-led practices to a consistent approach delivered by trained mentors
- **Creating national coherence:** Aligning mentoring practices across four branches while respecting local context and delivery styles
- **Clarifying role boundaries:** Helping mentors understand the distinction between mentoring and the life coaching offered elsewhere in the programme
- **Establishing quality assurance mechanisms:** Defining what 'excellent mentoring' looks like and building internal systems for observation, feedback and learning
- **Building mentor confidence and capability:** Equipping participants with practical tools, shared language and a clearer sense of purpose in their mentoring role
- **Strengthening programme outcomes:** Ensuring entrepreneurs receive consistent, high-quality mentoring that supports business growth and personal resilience

“ We've been doing mentoring for years, but we realised we needed to upskill, if we want to do this properly, we need to do it well and we need to do it consistently. **Jane Naude**

## THE HUMAN EDGE SOLUTION

The Mentoring Skills and Practice Course provided TCB with a flexible, scalable training solution that could be delivered remotely, yet still grounded in connection and reflection. Designed to work across geographies and roles, the course blends independent learning with critical human touch points. It includes:

- **Self-paced modules** covering mentoring models (OSCAR, GROW), skills, boundaries and best practices, complemented by videos, case studies and interactive exercises.
- **Live practice sessions:** Two virtual sessions where participants connected across regions, practiced mentoring skills in real-time and built relationships with peers.

The live practice sessions proved to be a turning point.

“The dynamics changed for our entire team after that session... something special happened. People connected. And suddenly, the material felt like it saw them, heard them.”  
**Jane Naude – National Programme Manager at TCB**

These interactions didn't just reinforce the learning, they created a sense of shared purpose and helped staff see mentoring not as a task, but as a relational act of leadership.

## KEY OUTCOMES

### PERSONAL GROWTH AND PROFESSION DEVELOPMENT

- **Most frequently cited change:** Renewed enthusiasm and motivation among mentors: “The excitement level post-The Human Edge with the mentors was something I hadn't seen before. I think they were motivated. I think they were shown a picture of what excellence looks like as a mentor and I think it reignited a general enthusiasm that perhaps some people had lost.”  
**Jane Naude**
- **Mentor confidence:** Staff reported feeling equipped with practical tools and clearer understanding of their role boundaries: “As a mentor I was challenged and at the same time empowered and got a lot of new knowledges and skills to help refine my mentor skills.” – **Beauty Ntombizanele Zondi, Mentor @TCB**
- **Cross-regional connection:** The live sessions created unprecedented connections across branches, with Johannesburg people, Cape Town people, something special happened in those sessions.

### ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND STANDARDS

- **100% of mentors** are now exposed to a consistent standard of mentoring excellence
- **Enhanced quality systems:** Jane now has frameworks and tools to support “each region's mentoring rollout, maintaining that standard”
- **Cultural evolution:** The programme reinforced TCB's commitment to mentoring excellence, while also strengthening internal relationships. It created space for team members across roles and regions to reflect together, share experiences and support each other, fostering a culture of trust, learning and collaboration.

### IMPLEMENTATION AND PRACTICE CHANGES

- **Enhanced mentee preparation:** Introduction of a “Getting to Know Your Mentee” session. It's 30–45 minutes of trust-building before diving into business topics
- **Comprehensive onboarding materials:** New pages explaining what mentoring is, what a mentor does and why TCB values it—building on existing programme strengths
- **Contextualised tools:** TCB used and adapted core mentoring tools to focus on issues most relevant to their entrepreneurs, like stock management or pricing, so that mentoring conversations could be anchored in the everyday challenges of running a micro-business.
- **New tools and common language:** Participants gained practical resources, from structured questions to business wheels and feedback models, which they could apply immediately. “I really enjoyed the whole programme - very clearly and practically articulated, easy to follow, powerful tools, frameworks and the final phase of winding down and moving on also very key”, **Brett Warren Hansen, Mentor @TCB**



MSP1 course rating by TCB participants

4.5/5

Rated for relevance, clarity and practical application



## PROGRAMME IMPACT

The TCB Mentor Training Programme demonstrated that online learning, when combined with meaningful human connection, can strengthen organisational capacity at scale. By establishing clear standards and providing practical tools, the programme created a foundation for consistent mentoring excellence across diverse contexts.

In grassroots development contexts, mentoring quality directly impacts participants' ability to journey out of poverty. By investing in mentor capability, TCB has strengthened the entire support ecosystem for their 800 participants building sustainable micro-businesses.

“As a result of this training, our team of mentors can step into the mentoring space with a greater sense of purpose and a clearer picture of what the mentoring end result looks and feels like. As a leader of an organisation or a programme, knowing your mentors share this foundation and can deliver to a consistent standard is a huge value add. **Jane Naude – National Programme Manager at TCB**

## LOOKING FORWARD

Jane's focus for the future builds on this foundation: "Embedding down excellence and consistency. And making sure we've got the right people in mentoring roles. The who is just as important as the what."



**Looking to build mentoring capacity and consistency across your organisation? Let's work together to equip your mentors with the standards, skills and confidence needed to deliver excellence, one relationship at a time.**

**Contact us now!**