

The Supernova Foundation

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University of the Western Cape

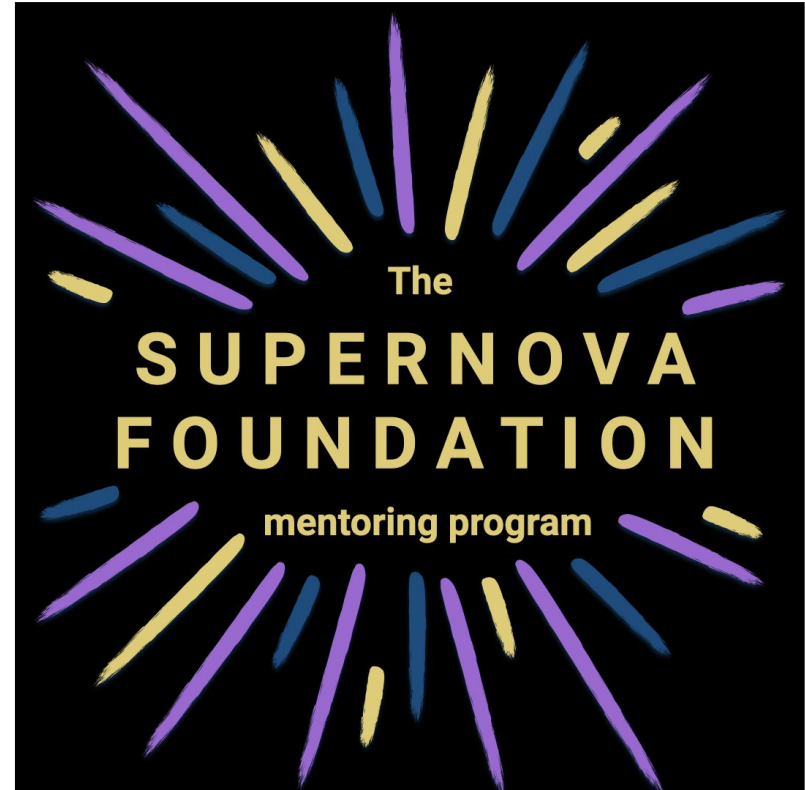
Staff Scientist
South African Radio
Astronomy Observatory



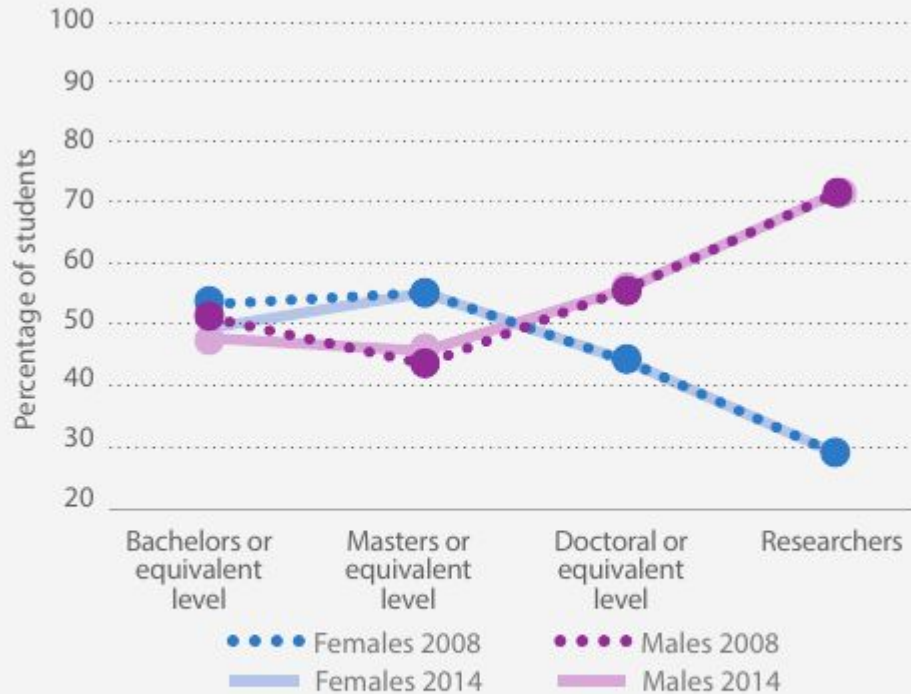
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South African Radio
Astronomy Observatory



Why do we
need
a mentoring
programme
for women
in physics?



*Gender gap widens significantly among science researchers.
226 countries.*

Data source: UNESCO 2008-2014¹¹

Can Mentoring Help?

- Mentoring by women role models acts as a “vaccine” against stereotypes and feelings of isolation

(<http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2017/05/16/1613117114>)

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- UNESCO study into gender inequality in STEM fields finds mentoring could be part of a solution (<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000253479>)
- Interviews with women graduates indicate the good mentoring was key to their success (<https://physics.aps.org/articles/v13/s53>)

Origin Story

Arose out of the [Mauritian Mentoring Programme](#) started in 2015, conceived by Prof. Bruce Bassett and run by me - aiming to encourage women Mauritians to stay in physics and study abroad. Shut down in 2017 when the [Supernova Foundation](#) launched

JEDI Mauritius, 2013



SANGEETA UJJWAL



Country: India
Research Field: Physics
Institute: University of Delhi
Position: Postdoc

SATYA GONTCHO A GONTCHO



Country: United States of America
Research Field: Astrophysics and Cosmology
Institute: Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory
Position: Project Scientist

SHAZRENE S. MOHAMED



Country: South Africa
Research Field: Astronomy
Institute: South African Astronomical Observatory and University of Cape Town
Position: Faculty

SIPHEPHILE NCUBE



Country: South Africa
Research Field: Physics
Institute: University of the Witwatersrand
Position: Postdoc

SIYI ZHOU



Country: Sweden
Research Field: Theoretical Physics
Institute: Stockholm University
Position: Postdoc

SUDESHNA BORO SAIKIA



Country: Austria
Research Field: Astrophysics and Cosmology
Institute: University of Vienna
Position: Post doctoral researcher

SWARNAMALA SIRSI



Country: India
Research Field: Theoretical Physics
Institute: University of Mysore
Position: Associate Professor (retired)

VALERIA PETTORINO



Country: France
Research Field: Astrophysics and Cosmology
Institute: CEA
Position: STAFF Scientist

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Prof. Roy Maartens, UWC
SKA/SARCHI Research Chair



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About the Supernova Foundation

Global reach (January 2024)

204 mentees

123 mentors

51 countries



Mentoring & networking

Monthly private
mentoring
sessions

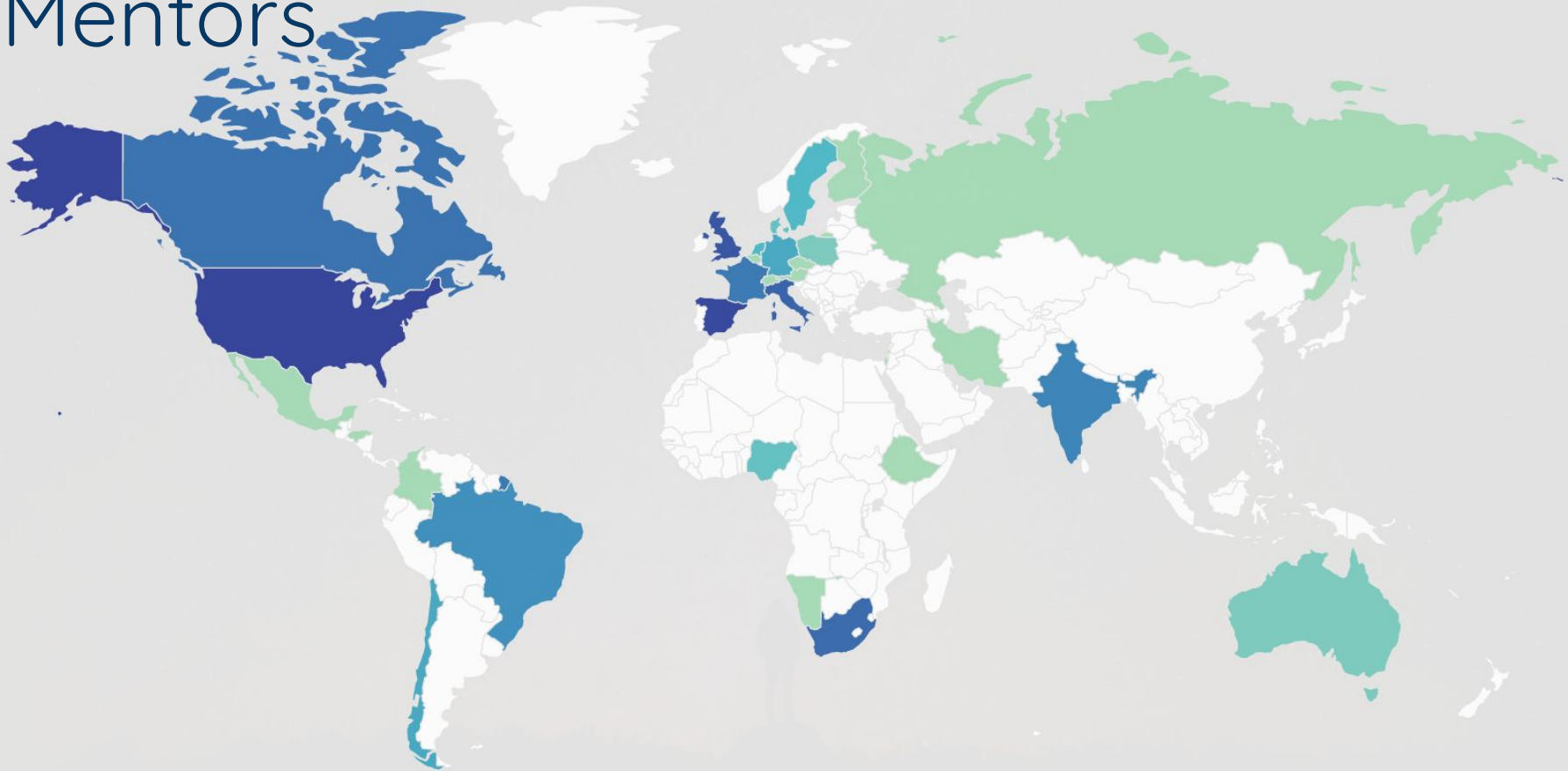
Regular webinars



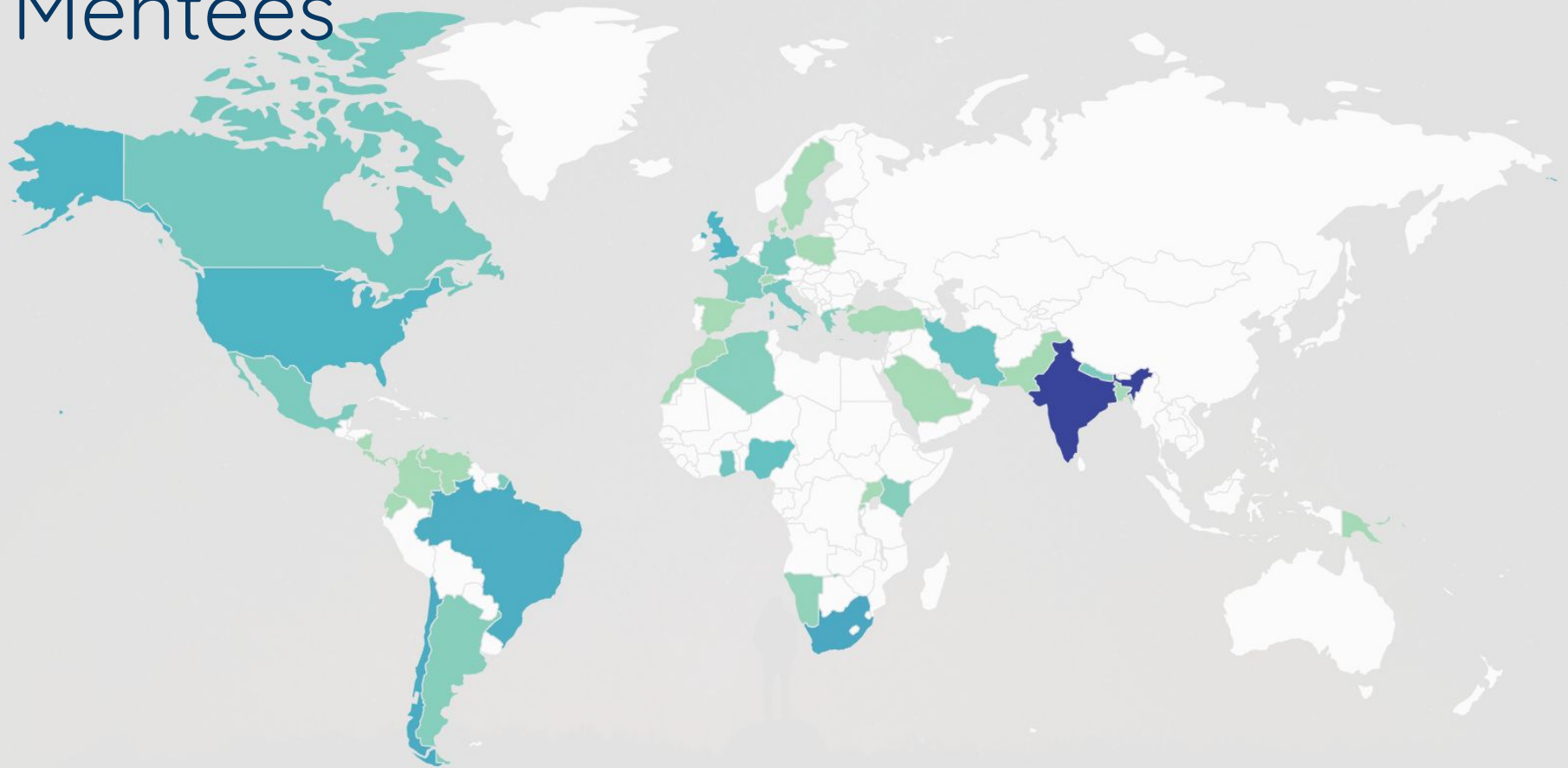
For women & gender minorities

Predominantly in astronomy
but open to all areas of physics

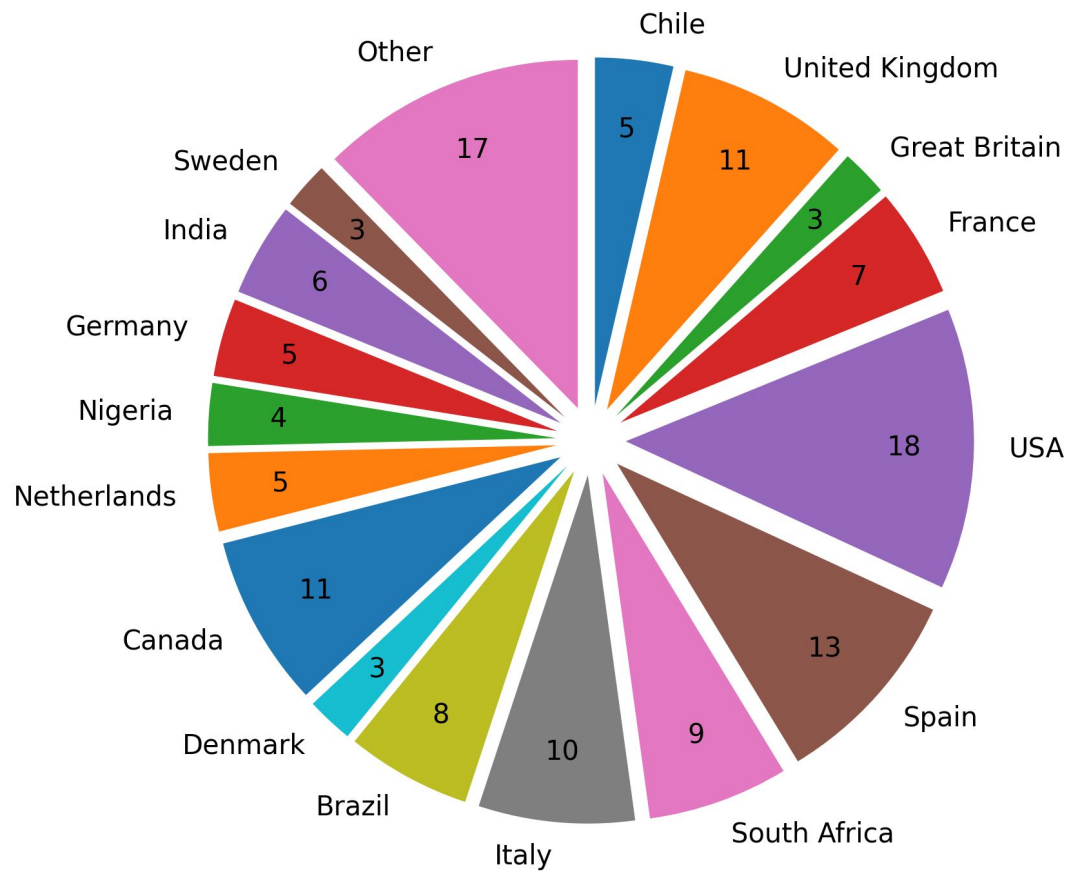
Mentors



Mentees

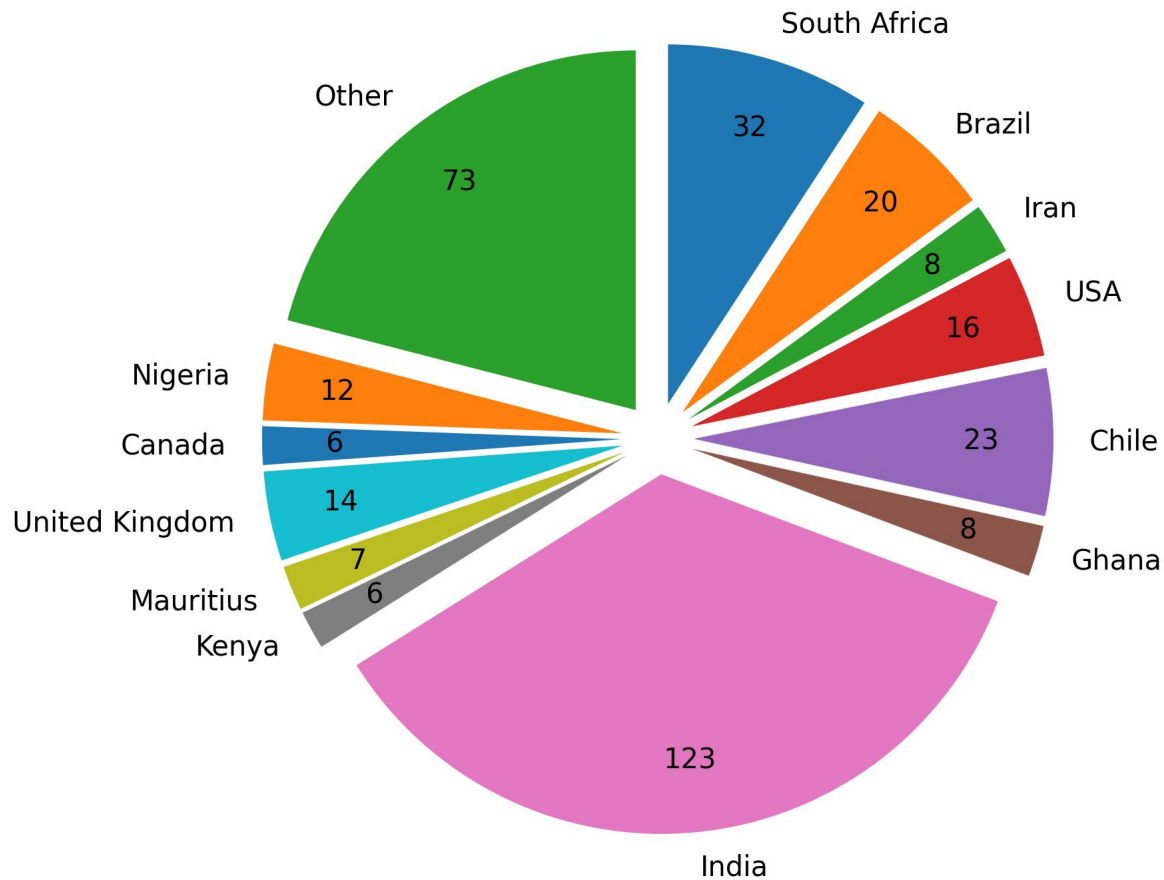


Mentors



Breakdown by country (as at 03/02/2022)

Mentees



Breakdown by country (as at 03/02/2022)

Developing a constitution



The Supernova Foundation Mentoring and Networking Programme

Constitution

1. Mission Statement

It is well known that there is significant gender inequality in most science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields and physics is no exception. This inequality can lead to discrimination, isolation, loss of confidence and eventually, to women and gender minorities leaving the field. The Supernova Foundation Mentoring and Networking Programme (hereafter referred to as the Supernova Foundation) was founded to help address these issues.

The goal of the Supernova Foundation is to provide virtual mentoring and networking to women and gender minorities in physics from anywhere in the world. By building such a

Leadership Committee



Director
Michelle Lochner



Deputy Director
Ghazal Geshnizjani



Social Media
Claudia Mignone



Social Media
Priyal Bordia



Webinars
Leah Morabito



Webinars
Rasha Shanaz



Events
Sunanda Suresh



Events
Rahima Mokeddem



Mentoring coordinator
Nina Hernitschek



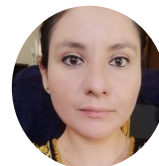
Mentoring coordinator
Thendie Motha



Outreach
Paniveni Udayashankar



Outreach
Paarmita Pandey



Digital platforms
Mariana Jaber



Digital platforms
Anna Chrysostomou



Mentor representative 1
Elena Pinetti



Mentor representative 2
Sunanda Suresh



Mentor representative 1
Saboura Zamani



Mentor representative 2
Dorcas Dupe Oseni

Senior Council



Valeria Pettorino

Administrator



Dee Knights

Lessons Learned

Online communities can
work really well,
especially for making
minority groups feel less
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Be respectful of each other's different cultures and backgrounds

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Mentors can learn a lot from mentees too!

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Everyone needs mentoring at some point

Some advice

Challenge any negative
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(imposter syndrome is a
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Learning new things is always hard - stick with it, it's worth it!

Want to be involved?

Sign up to be a mentor or mentee at:

<http://supernovafoundation.org>

Share on social media:

-  https://www.instagram.com/supernova_mentoring/
-  https://twitter.com/SF_mentoring
-  <https://www.facebook.com/SFmentoring/>
-  <https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-supernova-foundation>

michelle@supernovafoundation.org