

POSITIVE PARTNERSHIPS

The 2020-2021 ALIA Mentoring Scheme is coming to its end, and so INCITE caught up with some of the participants to share some of their experiences participating in this program.



MENTEES



RUGARE CHIEDZA PARADZA AALIA (CP)

I always viewed my master degree in environment as mutually exclusive to my work. My mentor helped me to challenge this and appreciate the vast amount of transferable skill which can be applied into this field. I realised that the most important thing for a librarian is to understand your unique client needs, and use whatever

resources, within practicable confines, to deliver a proactive service to meet those needs.

I recently culled more than 3,000 books and would sometimes be confronted with 'weeding block'. When Louise presented her prior similar experiences and how she handled them with such wit, it dispelled all my fears. With renewed enthusiasm, I returned to work knowing that my challenges are normal parts of the profession.



ELLEN S A MILNE

My mentor provided firsthand experience in not only library and information science, but managing study and reflecting on my career, and provided guidance in structuring my bachelor degree to cater to my needs. I was surprised and relieved that I was matched with a mentor that could relate to my work style, and was adaptable to my

neurodivergence. Not only this, but I was ecstatic to know that, through sharing my own experiences, my mentor could develop a better learning environment for neurodivergent students.

The mentoring scheme has provided guidance in areas I had not even considered, such as international volunteering and networking. I have made connections and gained important understanding of the industry and how it functions, making myself (hopefully) a desirable candidate for a position that I can be proud of.



JOANNA HARE AALIA

I'd been living overseas for six years, and wanted advice about re-entering the Australian library workforce. Gulcin understood the joys and challenges of working abroad, and the reverse culture shock you can experience on returning home. Since I was looking to move not only jobs but countries, it was important to be paired with someone

who understood my unique challenges. I've started in a new role now, and Gulcin has helped me consider my longer-term goals, and how I might make returning overseas one day a reality. Surprisingly, having thought I was done with further study, after my most recent meeting with Gulcin I'm exploring options for an MBA or professional doctorate – something that would strengthen my career in Australia and help me return overseas in a more senior capacity.



CARMELA IERACITANO ALIA Tec

I was initially hesitant about applying, as I wasn't sure about the kind of support I would receive during Victoria's lockdown. However, ALIA was able to steer me through the uncertainties, and connected me with Oriana Acevedo, who was incredibly supportive and generous in her sharing of knowledge and networks. Her understanding and respect

for the work that the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health does for migrant and refugee women was immediately apparent.

Our catch ups were always full of vibrant conversation and sharing of ideas, especially in designing better pathways for women to access health information, all of which I'm currently implementing in my workplace. It has been such a positive partnership - it has reenergised my approach to my work and I'm so proud to have been a part of it.

MENTORS



LOUISE CARSON AALIA (CP)

Mentoring Rugare has been an excellent experience. It has given me a professional confidence boost and shown the sneaky imposter syndrome that it really has no place in my life. Knowing that I have a broad and in-depth knowledge of academic library functions and systems, mentoring has given me a chance to pass on tips and tricks of the profession, and to give Rugare a chance to learn from my experiences.

Sharing experiences with Rugare has also given me a chance to talk through challenges with my work and I have been able to find suitable solutions with the help of her own professional background. Additionally, Rugare has inspired me to seek out new professional development opportunities, and encouraged me to undertake a PhD.



ACADEMIC LIBRARIAN AND ARCHIVIST (NAME WITHHELD BY REQUEST)

I decided to participate in the mentoring scheme because I wanted to find a way to share some of my workplace experiences with others. This was especially important for me as a 'sole practitioner' librarian, where there aren't opportunities to connect with colleagues in the early stages of their careers. The mentoring scheme provided a structured way to do this.

The best aspect of mentoring is that it benefits both mentors and mentees. I've learned a lot from my mentee. I've been prompted to think more about neurodiversity and the physical space of our library. We can't change the building, but we can find other ways to make the library more inclusive. For me, this will be a lasting takeaway from the mentoring experience.



GULCIN CRABB AALIA

I returned to Australia a year ago, after working overseas, and wanted to continue contributing to the profession by joining the ALIA Mentoring Scheme. Jo was an ideal mentee for me – we have many common interests and experiences, and understand working in different cultural and organizational settings. I appreciated that Jo was open and willing to discuss her ideas, thoughts and concerns with me, and that we could establish a good trust relationship. I really enjoyed having conversations with Jo in her new leadership role as her mentor. Jo provided feedback to ensure that I could help her to achieve her career goals – without sounding like a coach! I found the mentoring experience satisfying, as I enjoy supporting young professionals to achieve their goals.



ORIANA ACEVEDO

Participating in the ALIA Mentoring Scheme was an honour and an exciting opportunity to connect with other colleagues across the library network. As part of the process, I was matched with Carmela Ieracitano from the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health which just happens to be one of my areas of interest.

Carmela and I had a wonderful exchange of information and ideas and it was interesting to learn about Carmela's role and her daily activities as the Coordinator of the Multilingual Library. The resources they produce are invaluable for our multicultural communities and deserve great promotion for the benefit of large audiences across all states. I hope to add the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health to the State Library of NSW online information page.



Applications for the 2021 intake for the ALIA Mentoring Scheme open this month, with the program starting in July 2021. For more information, go to: www.alia.org.au/mentoring