

Research and knowledge at the heart of development



AUTHORAID

A global network supporting researchers in lower and middle income countries to publish and communicate their work

# Global network of researchers

**INASP's AuthorAID project is a global network that provides support, mentoring, resources and training for researchers in lower and middle income countries.**

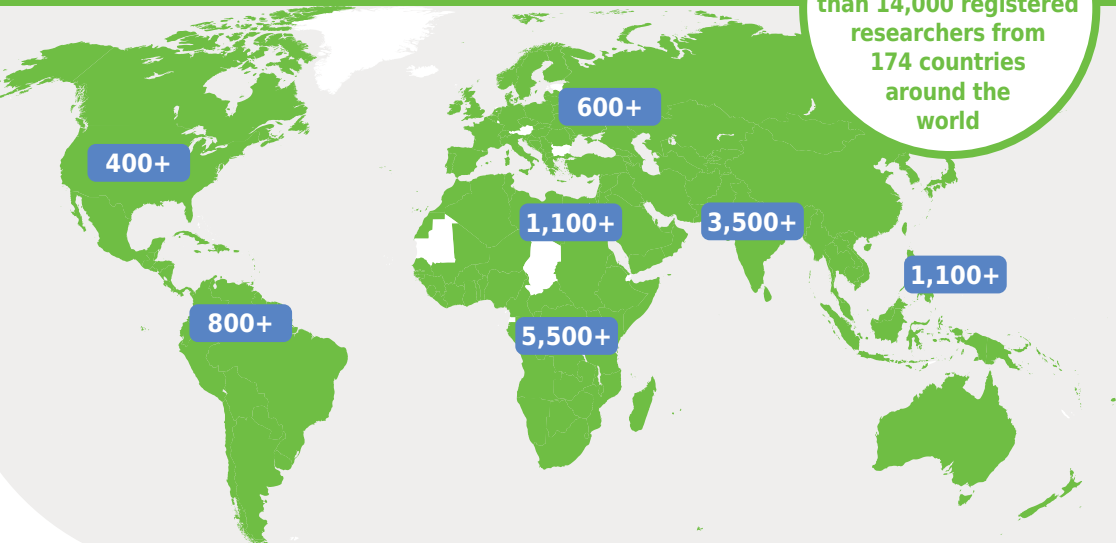
In many lower and middle income countries, researchers face the same pressure to publish as their colleagues in developed countries but they often don't have access to the resources, information, training, and support networks that are common in high-income countries.

An AuthorAID survey conducted in 2015 confirmed that researchers face many challenges in getting their research published. These include lack of funding, the necessity to write in the English language and difficulties in identifying suitable journals for publishing their research.

AuthorAID is a pioneering programme from INASP that addresses this problem by supporting researchers in lower and middle income countries through:

- Free online training in research and proposal writing
- Mentoring support
- Networking and collaboration
- Funding for workshops and travel
- Embedding research and proposal writing within institutions
- Addressing gender inequalities in academic institutions.

The AuthorAID community comprises more than 14,000 registered researchers from 174 countries around the world



# Online training

AuthorAID offers free open online courses in research and proposal writing. The online courses are interactive and moderated, with peer-review exercises and discussion forums. All course completers receive a certificate.

The six-week open online courses are hosted on the free open-source learning platform Moodle, and cover topics such as:

- Literature reviews
- Publishing ethics
- Writing your paper
- Getting published in a journal
- How to write a grant proposal

The courses have attracted up to 1,600 researchers from over 79 countries. The courses are particularly popular with participants from Mexico, Kenya,

*“The online course has positively affected almost every aspect of my academic life. The effect is particularly visible in my research writing, information sharing, networking and supervision of students' projects”*

**Ghanaian participant, Online Research Writing Course, October 2015**

Ghana, Sri Lanka and India but they have also attracted researchers from fragile and conflict states such as Somalia, Afghanistan, Syria and Yemen.

The courses normally run twice a year, in May and October, and course dates are advertised on the AuthorAID website.

AuthorAID also offers online courses twice a year in Spanish through a partnership with Latindex in Central America. There are also plans to develop the online course into French in 2017.

*Our online courses have attracted 4,784 participants from 121 countries since April 2013 (46% women). Of these, 2,457 completed the course and again 46% of these were female.*

*Molly, AuthorAID online course participant, Zimbabwe*



# Mentoring and collaboration

**One of the main challenges that early-career researchers face is the shortage of mentors: senior researchers and more experienced peers who can provide them with advice on getting their research written and published.**

A key goal of AuthorAID is to support early-career researchers in lower and middle income countries to find mentors who can help them progress in their careers.

- The mentoring system helps pair experienced mentors with researchers who need support at any stage of their writing project.
- Mentoring relationships can be short or long-term, and mentors and mentees have the option of signing a mentoring agreement to set out clear objectives for both parties.
- Mentees can request help with a wide range of tasks, from specific activities such as planning the structure of an article, language editing and interpreting

data, to longer-term help such as developing a grant proposal, and career planning.

- The mentoring portal can also be used to find fellow researchers interested in collaborating on a research project.

The mentoring system is particularly valued by women researchers who often struggle to get the support needed in their institution. Currently, 33% of AuthorAID mentees are women and we are working to increase this percentage to ensure that female researchers get the support they need.

**The AuthorAID mentoring platform currently has nearly 2,000 active members**



*"Personally and professionally, AuthorAID has helped [me] to grow in my scientific career. I'm now giving back to the AuthorAID community."*

**Joshua Okonya, former AuthorAID mentee and now mentor, Crop Entomologist, International Potato Center, Uganda**



*"Aside from potentially building connections for future research, I think the work I've done with AuthorAID has absolutely made me a better writer. It's really made me think more systematically about how I communicate my own research design and results."*

**Rachel Strohm, AuthorAID mentor, Political Science Researcher, University of Berkeley, California, US**



Professor Flora Fabian presenting a poster in Sri Lanka on a Scientific Research Writing course held at University of Dodoma, Tanzania

# Capacity building: embedding research writing

A key aim of the AuthorAID programme is to embed research writing and proposal writing skills in institutions in lower and middle-income countries, to develop a sustainable institutional writing programme and support network.

AuthorAID is currently working with 10 partners in four countries. We work with institutions in **Ghana, Tanzania, Vietnam and Sri Lanka**. The two-year embedding programme aims to establish regular research-writing training for researchers, faculty and students.

A key element of embedding is capacity development – at the end of two years it is anticipated that local trainers and institutional staff will be fully trained in

managing the workshop programme, mentoring early-career academics and facilitating regular courses.

Main elements of an institutional embedding programme are:

- **Training of local trainers**
- **Developing and implementing successful writing clubs**
- **Creating institutional mentoring support**
- **Online course coordination and facilitation skills to aid distance learning**
- **Developing a plan for long-term sustainability**

*"We just concluded a three-year partnership with AuthorAID. We learned a lot and it was a very satisfying experience. Now, when I go to conferences, I hear researchers from all over Sri Lanka telling me how this helped them."*

**Dr. Anuruddha Abeygunasekera, Sri Lanka Medical Association, Colombo**

# Grants and resources

AuthorAID offers small grants twice yearly to researchers in lower and middle income countries:

- **Travel grants** provide early-career researchers the chance to present their research at international conferences, and network with other researchers and learn from the leaders in their field.
- **Workshop grants** provide opportunities for experienced researchers to hold training in research writing, proposal writing or communicating evidence to policymakers, in their own institution or organization.

Over 2,300 people participate in the **AuthorAID Discussion Group**, which provides a forum to discuss questions of authorship, funding, engaging with policymakers, and where to publish a paper.

Since 2012 we have awarded:

**52 travel grants to researchers from 21 different countries, including 20 to women researchers**

**54 workshop grants to experienced researchers and facilitators (19 to women) from 34 different countries**

We also provide all of our **training materials and resources** free of charge on [www.authoraid.info](http://www.authoraid.info). Resources are available in English, Arabic, Chinese, French and Spanish.

*“The [grant opportunity] exceeded my expectations. Everything learned will be shared with my colleagues through our departmental seminar.... I am grateful to AuthorAID for giving me the opportunity for this rare exposure early in my career.”*

**Oluwakemi Rotimi,**  
Covenant University, Nigeria



*Guinean researcher Alexandre Delamou won an AuthorAID grant to run a medical writing workshop in Conakry. Alexandre is researching the effects of the Ebola virus in rural Guinea, and has also signed up to be an AuthorAID mentor*



# Supporting women researchers

Over the last year, AuthorAID has focused on supporting women in research to address gender inequalities in academia. These inequalities include the delicate balancing of individual career goals with traditional gender roles at home. At an organizational level and beyond, they include the fundamental challenges of managing safety on campus and breaking through the glass ceiling of promotion.

**Gender Grants** support researchers in attending a conference on the topic of gender or hosting a gender workshop in their country. Some of the recent grants AuthorAID has supported include:

- A nation-wide workshop in Kenya on addressing gender based violence in universities and developing a national policy
- Presentation of an analysis of the gender gap in Cameroon at an international conference in Maastricht

## Gender mainstreaming in higher education toolkit

AuthorAID supported the University of Dodoma (UDOM), Tanzania to host a workshop called Getting out of the Box: Creating a Gender Platform in 2015, providing an opportunity for female academics to discuss the gender issues that they face in their work, and the gender gap in Tanzania.

INASP and UDOM built on the experience of running this workshop to produce the **Gender mainstreaming in higher education toolkit**, an easy-to-use toolkit that can help institutions interested in tackling gender inequality in higher education. It is available online at [www.inasp.info/gendertoolkit](http://www.inasp.info/gendertoolkit).

**AuthorAID has awarded nine gender travel grants to researchers from eight different countries, and 13 gender workshop grants to experienced researchers and facilitators from seven different countries.**



*Grant proposal writing workshop in Indonesia, funded by an AuthorAID grant*

Founded in 1992, INASP is an international development charity working with a global network of partners in Africa, Latin America and South Asia. In line with the vision of research and knowledge at the heart of development, INASP works to support individuals and institutions to produce, share and use research and knowledge, which can transform lives.

INASP's approaches are based on the core pillars of capacity development, convening, influencing and working in partnership.

INASP promotes equity by actively addressing the needs of both men and women across all our work and addressing issues of power within the research and knowledge system.

INASP has projects in 28 countries, supporting all aspects of research and knowledge systems, from facilitating the provision of information to researchers to helping parliamentarians and civil servants to use research and evidence in policy making.

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### Front cover photos:

Medical researcher in Uganda. Photo by Chris Dobson

Researcher working on barley transformation, courtesy of Sudeep Subedi (Nepal)

Data collection on field trial of Cassava, Abia State, Nigeria, courtesy of Uchenna Okofo  
University of Dodoma gender workshop participants, 2015

