

***Effective Mentorship in Research Communication* Toolkit**

**Facilitation Notes**

Resources to run a case-based mentorship workshop in research communication at your institution

INASP designs and runs capacity development activities that cater for both women and men’s interests and needs. We use methods that increase active participation and an inclusive learning environment, adopting attitudes and behaviours that value differential experiences and perspectives and ensuring listening and respect for each other’s experiences and views.

**Introduction to the workshop materials-for the trainer/s**

Thank you for your interest in the AuthorAID mentorship in research communication toolkit, designed for established researchers in low- and medium-income countries, who mentor PhD students or junior colleagues in research communication.

For the purposes of this toolkit, we define research communication as the process of interpreting or translating scientific research into a language, format and context that specialists and non-specialists can understand. It involves a network of stakeholders for example researchers, editors, journalists, policymakers, governments generally, user organisations and the public who are all potential users of research.

At the outset, please go through the toolkit and understand the materials, which have been designed by AuthorAID Associate Dr Barbara Gastel together with the Capacity Development Advisor, Annelise Dennis at INASP. You will then be in a better position to select the modules and materials in the toolkit that are most relevant to your context and audience and in turn, will be able to design an AuthorAID workshop that is fit for purpose.

Please do the following at least one month before your AuthorAID workshop:

* Carefully go through the facilitation notes, referring to the other materials (especially the participant handbook, handouts and trainers’ PowerPoint slides) wherever indicated in the facilitation notes. We strongly recommend that you print this document along with the participant handbook as these documents are somewhat lengthy and call for intensive reading.

After going through the facilitation notes, think about your own AuthorAID workshop:

* How long is your workshop going to be?
* What is the profile of the participants who will attend your workshop? What do they already know about the topic and what would they expect to learn or do during your workshop?
* Which modules would be the most relevant for your workshop? Do you have a good rationale for selecting some modules and leaving out or adding others?
* Would you need to include modules or activities on any other topic not included in these materials? If so, who will develop the materials for these modules or activities and who will facilitate them at the workshop?
* Decide who is going to be part of the workshop team, for example, the workshop administrator (the person in charge of logistics and arrangements), a co-trainer and/or resource person. Share your thoughts with your team and seek their feedback.
* Design a selection process to recruit the right participants for your workshop. Tell the workshop candidates what the workshop is about and what they will be expected to do during the workshop.

Then, at least two weeks before your AuthorAID workshop, please do the following:

1. Draft the agenda (plus intended learning outcomes) for your workshop and share it with your workshop team.
2. Select the participants for your workshop.
3. Share the workshop agenda (plus intended learning outcomes) and pre-workshop information (including any pre-workshop task) with your workshop participants.
4. Put together the materials for your AuthorAID workshop by using or adapting the materials in this toolkit and by developing materials you may need for any new modules or activities you have designed.

**Guidance for trainer/s**

***Background knowledge and skills for trainer/s***

Those who are looking to facilitate this workshop should ideally have:

* Authored at least three original research articles that have been published in reputable peer-reviewed journals.
* An awareness of current issues in scholarly publishing.
* Experience in mentorship or developing other people’s skills in research communication.
* A positive attitude towards active learning and an interest in using active learning techniques in the training room.

***Organization of workshop***

* This is a workshop design for 10-15 people to optimize discussion. However, the workshop can also be reasonably delivered to up to 25 participants.
* This workshop is primarily for established researchers who are or will be mentoring PhD students or junior colleagues. It also may be of use to others, such as education staff who can share content with current or prospective mentors.
* It is strongly recommended that the lead trainer of this workshop is supported by a second resource person or co-trainer who can facilitate group work and write up activity outputs.
* The trainer/s might want to send to participants, in advance of the workshop, a short video clip (lasting 4 mins 27 sec) related to mentoring in research communication (the link is also provided in the participant handbook [www.youtube.com/watch?v=gNlCivj46d8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gNlCivj46d8). It is recommended that the clip is accompanied by one or two questions for participants to consider, for example, *in what ways does the mentor help authors improve their work? in what other ways do and/or will you help your mentees to improve and communicate their research?*
* Every participant should receive, at the start of the workshop, a copy of the participant handbook (edited by the trainer/s) and the finalized agenda (plus intended learning outcomes) ideally placed inside a slim ring binder folder (so papers can be removed and new ones added using a hole punch).
* Some example intended learning outcomes for the workshop, might include:

By the end of the workshop, participants should be able to: a) state guidelines for mentors and mentees to follow, in order to have a constructive mentoring relationship, b) demonstrate sound, up-to-date basic knowledge of aspects of research communication on which they may guide mentees and c) devise valid approaches to guiding mentees on research communication issues.

* The participant handbook consists of resources that will be drawn upon during the modules, for example exercises, guidance notes and templates, and boxed sources of information related to research communication for further investigation by participants.
* The trainer/s can insert relevant photos/images into the PowerPoint slides and, edit or re-format text and content so that it is better tailored to the participant audience.
* It is recommended that if any PowerPoint slides are shared with participants, then this is done after rather than before the workshop (as some outputs from group activities will be added directly to the slides during the course of the workshop).
* The timings are an approximate guide and trainer/s are expected to make adjustments during the course of the workshop.
* The trainer/s need to print out the facilitation notes and the participant handbook to support the preparation of the workshop.
* As good workshop practice dictates, trainer/s need to spend time in advance of the workshop, to study the facilitation notes, training resources and participant handbook. It is also recommended that trainer/s consider how best to format the facilitation notes so that they are easy to use on a day by day basis and that they match the trainer/s’ preferred note format.
* The trainer/s will need to monitor the atmosphere in the training room, and use energizers when a change of pace or in energy levels is required.

***The training room***

The trainer/s together with the workshop administrator, need to ensure that a suitable training room and layout is organized in advance of the workshop. If possible, the room layout should be one that facilitates interaction.

It is recommended that, for the smooth and successful delivery of the workshop, the following training room and layout arrangements are made, if possible:

* Small, moveable tables are sourced, comfortably sitting up to four participants (for example if a total of 20 participants, five tables are required).
* Three small extra tables are provided: one to house the laptop and projector and one for the trainer/s’ workshop materials.
* Light, movable chairs are sourced, enough for each participant and three as spare.
* The tables and chairs need to be placed in roughly one half of the training room, and are at least two or three leg strides apart. The remaining half of the space is left free for other workshop activities.
* Find a training room, with lots of wall space on which flipcharts and training resources can be attached.
* Identify a blank wall to act as a screen if no screen for the projector is available at the training venue.
* Remove any raised platform or stage at the head of the room, it is not required.

***Workshop stationary and resources***

Please make sure the following are available:

* Slim ring binder folders
* Hole punch
* Stapler
* Sticky notes (or post-it notes) - a few sets of large and small notes
* At least two sets of flipchart paper pads and two flipchart stands
* Five sets of colour marker pens
* Projector and screen
* Computer to connect to the projector (in case the trainer/s will not be using their own laptop computer)
* A few flash drives (in case internet connectivity is not available for the activities where the participants might need to share documents with each other)
* Optionally, a whiteboard (in this case, make sure the whiteboard markers are different from the markers used for flipcharts as the latter kind could have permanent ink!)

***The active learning approach***

The design of all eight modules in this toolkit, is based on the active learning approach and trainer/s of this workshop might want to refer to the AuthorAID training of trainers toolkit, which provides more detail on what active learning looks like in practice.

Active learning is an approach, rather than a fixed set of activities. It can include any activity that encourages learners to take an active, engaged part in the learning process, such as: group discussions, participatory presentations, cases, problem-solving and role-play. It involves providing opportunities for learners to meaningfully talk and listen, read, write and reflect on the ideas being studied. This is in contrast to more traditional methods of teaching such as a instructor trying to ‘transmit’ knowledge to learners as they sit and listen.

It concerns itself with “creating an environment where students can take charge of their learning, see relevance in it and engage in it, instead of having information just delivered to them”[[1]](#footnote-1)

From time to time, certain individuals and/or groups of participants, can dominate workshop discussions and activities. It is the trainer/s’ responsibility to be pro-active in managing these types of situations. Strategies can be adopted by trainer/s to ensure that there is equal participation by both women and men, as well as by junior and senior researchers. It is recommended that when trainer/s take questions and/or comments from the full-group, that female-first contributions are prioritized, particularly at the start of the workshop. In addition, trainer/s should focus on the whole room, and maintain as much balance as possible, with respect to gender and seniority of the participants posing questions and/or making contributions. Also keeping questions and answers short will allow more questions to be asked during a given question and answer session, allowing a greater balance in the questions asked. For more background and the research behind these strategies, the trainer/s might want to read the Oxfam blog here: [www.oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/how-to-stop-men-asking-all-the-questions-in-seminars-its-really-easy/](http://www.oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/how-to-stop-men-asking-all-the-questions-in-seminars-its-really-easy/)

***Cases to distribute***

The document **HO1 cases to distribute.doc** is provided in Word so that trainer/s can modify cases or insert some cases of their own, if desired.There are 25 cases to choose from, trainer/s need to select in advance the most relevant modules of the toolkit to deliver and in turn the cases, so that the training is tailored to the needs and profile of the participant audience.

The complete Word file or only the cases selected by the trainer/s for discussion can be distributed to participants at the start of the workshop.

Currently the names used in the cases are mainly American names. The trainer/s may wish to replace them with names more commonly used in the country where the workshop is to be held. However, some trainer/s in the past have noted that the use of such names might be awkward, for example if the names in the cases coincide with those of participants. Of course, if trainer/s feel it is appropriate, they can change the names as they see fit.

***Case discussion methods***

Throughout the modules, discussion of one or more brief cases are introduced in which the participants advise the mentor and sometimes the mentee on a challenge related to research communication.

In general, the cases do not have a single correct solution. Rather, participants should be encouraged to identify various possibilities and discuss pluses and minuses of each. In general, a brief presentation relating to the subject matter either proceeds or follows each case or set of cases.

Trainer/s may choose among various methods for participant discussion of cases. Different methods may suit different stages of the workshop or different settings. It is recommended that the trainer/s vary the methods used throughout the modules. Case discussion methods that may be suitable are noted for ease of delivery, however the trainer/s are encouraged to select alternative methods if more appropriate.

Among methods to consider are the following:

* Pairs of participants discuss the cases, and then each pair shares their thoughts with another pair (this approach can be especially suitable early in the workshop, as it helps ensure that everyone participates).
* Small groups discuss the cases, and then members of different groups present their ideas, avoiding repetition of the same points (this approach makes it easier for quieter members to contribute and can help build their confidence before speaking in front of the full-group).
* Assign groups different cases, the groups write their ideas on flip charts, and then members of other groups circulate and write additional ideas (this can be particularly effective when time is limited and encourages participants to build on each other’s knowledge and ideas).
* Post different cases on the wall in different parts of the room, and then participants write their ideas on sticky notes and post them beneath the case (like above and focuses more on individual rather than group reflection).
* Have the full-group brainstorm about a case (can work well once all participants are comfortable working with each other and sharing their ideas in front of the full-group).

1. A. Walsh and P. Inala, *Active Learning Techniques for Librarians: Practical Examples* (Oxford: Chandos Publishing, 2010). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)