

**THE TANZANIA COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
(COSTECH)**

**REPORT OF THE TRAINING WORKSHOP ON SCIENTIFIC PAPER WRITING**

**HELD FROM 25<sup>TH</sup> TO 27<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2020 AT THE AGENCY FOR THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION MANAGEMENT (ADEM) IN  
BAGAMOYO, PWANI**

**3RD DECEMBER, 2020**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Publishing a scientific paper in a reputable and peer-reviewed journal is one of the important goals for any researcher and the markers of research success. It is a clear fact that in Tanzania few researchers communicate their findings or find relevant information from journal articles. In the current academic climate, publishing papers is imperative for career advancement and survival of a researcher. In a number of institutions, publications are used as a measure of promotion criteria and research productivity. As such, publications are a fundamental marker of accountability and researchers in the country are necessitated to publish their research findings.

The need for the workshop arose from the fact that most young researchers and early career professional in Tanzania and Africa in general had difficulties in writing scientific papers and publishing their works in reputable peer-reviewed journals. These difficulties were partly due to lack of adequate training in conducting scientific research, critical thinking and academic writing skills. It is in response to these challenges that the scientific research writing and training workshop was organized by The Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH). The workshop was held at Agency for the Development of Education Management (ADEM) in Bagamoyo (Pwani) from 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and drew a total of 33 participants from different academic and research institutions in the country and with different specializations (Appendix 1). The main aim of the workshop was to strengthen the capacity of young and early career professionals (researchers) on how to prepare scientific research articles that could be published in reputable international journals. The specific target was for workshop participants to come up with draft manuscripts that would be worked on, polished and submitted to international scientific journals in three months after the workshop.

The training was conducted by three senior academics and researchers with extensive experience in conducting scientific research and publishing. These were Prof. Salome Misana from the University of Dar es Salaam, Prof. Stelyus L. Mkoma from Marian University College and Dr. Ahmad Kipacha from Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology.

### **The terms of reference were:**

1. To prepare training material that will cover on the understanding of the principles of academic writing and the science of publishing culture and why it is important to publish research results in a peer-reviewed (preferably high impact international journals)
2. To prepare some practical sessions where the trainees will be engaged in reading published scientific articles, identify different scientific research article writing styles, logically think on research problems and come up with their own styles for writing scientific articles.
3. Create an environment for interactive learning by providing several hands-on activities and/or group discussions along with assignments that will help scholars in addressing many issues in the publishing process.
4. Train how to respond to editorial decisions and the peer-review process

5. Train young researchers and early career professionals on how to avoid plagiarism trap during the preparation of their manuscripts.
6. Become available for three months after the workshop and keep in touch with the trainees to provide them guidance as they write critical sections of their manuscripts for submission in different international journals.

## **TRAINING APPROACH**

The three-day workshop was conducted in three modules per day with a purpose to improve understanding of the challenges in academic writing and the difference between academic writing and other writings. The modules covered all aspects of scientific writing and scientific article publication processes as illustrated in the training programme (Appendix 2). Intensive, interactive hands-on training sessions were conducted during which participants worked on their manuscripts with the goal of submitting them to a journal for publication within three months of completing the workshop. The participants were required to bring along to the training a project report, a dissertation as well as figures and tables or any other illustrative materials that have been generated from data analysis for conversion into a full blown research paper or review article.

The trainers used different ways of presentations aimed at enhancing the level of understanding of the participants. In addition, participants also did some exercises that involved writing different sections of their manuscripts. They were also assigned individual home-works such as writing an abstract as well as the results and discussion sections of their manuscripts. The following day they were required to make brief presentations of their works. Each participant was also required to identify a potential journal to which he/she will submit the manuscript, check the instructions to authors and download some papers from the journal for the purpose of understanding the requirements of the journal as well as the style of writing. Unfortunately time and space did not allow participants to work and discuss among themselves in groups.

## **WORKSHOP EVALUATION**

At the end of the workshop, an evaluation exercise was done by the participants by filling in the evaluation forms (Appendix 3) to gauge whether or not the workshop was helpful and if their expectations had been met, which topic(s) were useful and to identify areas that needed improvement. The participants were also required to identify any challenges faced and make suggestions/comments for future training. Overall all the participants indicated the workshop was very useful and an eye opener to some as far as publication was concerned. Almost all the participants said that their expectations had been met by 80-100%. One of the participants said,

*My expectation was met to the extent that I plan to publish as many papers as possible the coming year.*

Another participant also commented:

*The workshop was so informative and educative in such a way that sometimes I felt like I have been trained to become not only an author but also a reviewer and or Journal editor. Thank you so much*

The above remarks illustrate the general level of satisfaction of the participants with regard to the workshop. Participants found the workshops content to be interesting and relevant. But the majority of them said that time was too short to enable thorough learning and proofreading the first draft manuscript and hence they recommended a minimum of at least 5-day long training duration.

## **CHALLENGES**

The training venue was not comfortable; it was a classroom than a conference facility with very poor internet connectivity. To participants and the trainers, accommodation was also a challenge, hence suggesting that in future COSTECH should reserve the accommodation to all participants to easy the logistics and keeping time for the programme schedule.

## **CONCLUSION**

The trainers wish to express their gratitude and appreciation to COSTECH for entrusting them with the task of providing mentorship to the young and early career researchers in writing scientific research articles for publication. It is believed that this is just the beginning of the many similar workshops to come, and are more than willing to continue with the mentoring task. The demand for such training is high in improving the publication record of young scholars and researchers as also suggested by the workshop participants.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The team is suggesting the following for future training:

1. The scientific writing training workshop should be sustainable and an annual exercise as the demand is quite high. Future training should be allocated five days or more. Participants should be trained first and be able to present their papers and peers to criticize so as to sharpen their knowledge and publication process of manuscripts. More time for exercise, presentations and hands on practice.
2. Information on the workshop to participants should be sent earlier to allow participants to come with draft manuscripts. Participants should be instructed and confirm to have a draft manuscript before the workshop day rather than some participant coming with raw data and start to write the manuscript on the training days.
3. COSTECH as organizers should issue certificates of attendance to trainers and trainees.
4. A compendium or training hand-book be compiled as a guide book for future references

**The workshop training team submits the report:**

1. Prof. Salome B. Misana ..... Chairperson

Signature: ... 

Date: .....3<sup>rd</sup> Decembeber 2020

2. Prof. Stelyus L. Mkoma ..... Member
3. Dr. Ahmad Kibacha ..... Member