

A Report on Grant Writing skills' Workshop 2005 held on the 24th to 26th August 2005

From 24th to 26th August 2005, Uganda Society for Health Scientists held a grant writing skills workshop at the Infectious Diseases Institute (IDI) Mulago. The Chairperson of the Society, Ms. Jayne Byakika welcomed participants to the workshop. She said that the workshop was going to be different from the previous ones in that it was going to focus on practical skills of writing. Ms. Byakika said that she was privileged to have

Dr. Bangsberg who had flown all the way from San Francisco to facilitate the workshop. Dr. Bangsberg has successfully written several grants.

The workshop's objectives were to equip participants with skills of writing publishable papers, give information to participants on how to access NIH grants and emphasize the role of mentoring in writing and publishing.

Dr. David Bangsberg from the University of California, San Francisco, Prof. J.C. Munene from Makerere University Department of Psychology, Dr. Fred Nuwa and Prof. Fred Wabwire; all from Makerere University Institute of Public Health facilitated the workshop.

The workshop which was attended by 23 participants focused on how to access research grants, anatomy of NIH grants, the role of a mentor, research writing and publishing: the energies of growth and development, choosing a journal and responding to reviewers' comments, writing successfully: practical experiences, overcoming writer's block, abstracts and authorship.

Participants were drawn from Mulago Hospital, Makerere University Medical School, Infectious Diseases Institute, Ministry of Health, University of California San Francisco and Makerere University Institute of Public Health

A panel discussion of distinguished writers concluded the workshop. Panelists shared their practical experiences with workshop participants. Dr. Moses Kamya, Dr. Harriet Mayanja, Ms. Jayne Tusime Byakika, Dr. Daves Thomas, Dr. Fred Kironde and Dr. Mary Sepi formed the panel discussion team.

At the end of the workshop, an evaluation was conducted; participants were asked to comment on how they benefited from each session, aspects of the workshop that interested them, certain expected aspects that were not covered and how the workshop improved their writing skills. Participants commended the Society for organizing such a workshop, which was fruitful to their quest for being good writers.

Grant Writing Skills' Workshop Evaluation

LOGISTICS

Activity / Item	Average	Good	Excellent
Venue		40%	60%
Food	14%	36%	50%
Administrative support	27%	40%	33%
Responsiveness of organizers	335	33%	34%

THE PROGRAM

The Anatomy of NIH Grants

1. How have you benefited from this session?
 - Learnt the various aspects of the requirements for NIH grants
 - Acquired more knowledge about grant writing about
 - Created awareness of the requirements processes and rigor involved.
 - Need to prepare over a long period of time and lots of help from those with experience in getting NIH grants.
2. Mention aspects of the workshop that interested you.
 - The actual writing concepts; preamble, aims, background, methods
 - The introduction and aims
 - Dr. Bangs berg's experience and expertise on the subject of discussion
 - NIH grant reviewing
 - Structure of grant application and illustration of a good and bad application
 - To follow instructions when applying for a grant; strict on required font, margins, number of words and pages
3. What aspects did you expect that were not covered?
 - How non – US citizens can access NIH grants
 - Sample proposals
 - The details of “hands on”
 - The explicit guidelines on grant writing skills
 - The role of collaborators in a grant application process
 - More details of potential sources funders and provide websites
 - Grants for small research projects i.e. for master's thesis
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4. How has the session improved your grant writing skill?
 - Will enable me to practice writing skills
 - Know what to include in the application and what to emphasize
 - By applying the learnt skills and consulting experts
 - Will pay more attention to details of an application process
 - Got a starting point, learnt that I have to find reputable collaborators

- Because iam still a learner, I will need to build more skills. With time, I will be a great writer
- Know what to write, when, where and what are the most important
- Not to be in a hurry when writing

The role of mentor

1. How have you benefited from this session?
 - Learnt what my responsibilities as a mentor are.
 - How to be mentored well
 - Appreciate the role of a mentor in professional development
 - Knowing that to progress, I need a mentor
 - Learnt that a mentor has to be proactive
 - For career development and research, a mentor is essential
2. Mention aspects of the workshop that interested you.
 - Mentor – mentee relationship
 - Mentor qualities
 - Thinking about the future before starting on the project
 - Benchmarks that mentors have to evaluate progress
 - The pinnacle of success being measured at who is your mentor and how much he / she has succeeded
 - Discussion with facilitators
 - The candid and simple approach of Prof. Bangs berg
3. How has the session improved your search for a mentor?
 - Will improve my relationship with my mentor
 - How to chose a right mentor and relate well with him/her
 - Widened the options of mentors, not limiting myself to a field.
 - Need a mentor who is accessible, successful and an expert in the area of study
4. How has the session improved your grant writing skills?
 - Expected to do better
 - Knowing how to work with others
 - A mentor is needed to progress
 - Confident enough to write grants

Any other comment

- Thank the facilitators for their expertise and for being brief and precise.
- The anatomy of NIH grants session was too short. Need more exposure to the details
- Important practical skills not specified to grant writing
- Bring other facilitators of Dr. Bangsberg's caliber
- Such trainings should continue

Research, Writing and Publishing: the energies of growth and development

1. How have you benefited from this session?
 - Improved knowledge in writing and publishing
 - New skills in writing
 - A lot of insight into practical issues in research

- Learnt to write and rewrite and accept rejection not to take it personal
 - Learnt how to publish and the different types of writing
 - Publishing going to be my goal
2. Mention aspects of the workshop that interested you
 - Research, writing and publishing section
 - Successful key factors to writing
 - Researching, writing and publishing by Prof. Munene
 - Academic writing and consultancy
 - Importance of writing simple, understandable English
 - Both the theoretical basis and practical difficulties in research
 - Focus should not be on research but publishing
 - Publishing
 3. What aspects did you expect that were not covered?
 - How to chose a journal
 - Searching for grants
 - Practical sessions at writing manuscripts
 - Anatomy of a proposal
 4. How has the session improved your grant writing skills?
 - Motivated and therefore will work harder
 - Encouragement that succeeding is possible
 - Going to rewrite the draft that I had started on
 - Improve my writing style

Choosing a journal and responding to a reviewers' comment

1. How have you benefited from this session?
 - Choosing a journal and responding to reviewer's comments not properly handled
 - How to chose a topic / title for research, publication
 - Will write better
 - Aim for top quality journals
2. Mention aspects of the workshop that interested you
 - Journals are graded so you must know which journal you want to publish in
 - The work of a reviewer
 - Experiences of other people
 - Sometimes you can fluke and have your paper published but not always
3. How has the session improved your writing skills?
 - Understanding the processes involved
 - Improved my desire to publish quality work
 - Very informative and encouraging

Comments about "writing successfully; practical experiences"

- Very enriching and useful

- Good and practical
- Learnt some of the writers' challenges and how to face similar challenges
- Very competent group of professionals

Overcoming writer's block

1. How have you benefited from this session?
 - How to overcome common impediments to writing
 - Learnt about challenges facing the author
 - Learnt the factors which affect writing and how one should write to suit the audience
 - Learnt how to endure while writing
 - Gaining insight into the personal characteristics and interests that can influence writing
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2. Mention aspects of the sessions that interested you
 - Preventing blocks
 - Abstract writing
 - Writer's block always comes but it can be overcome
 - The structure of abstracts
 - Primary and secondary preventive ways of overcoming writer's block

Authorship

1. How have you benefited from this session?
 - A lot of new information has been acquired about authorship
 - The way to have abstracts orderly
 - Learnt the meaning of authorship
 - Being an author is fulfilling with personal rewards
 - Learnt that to be an author, you must contribute significantly to the research
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2. Mention aspects of the session that interested you
 - Number of authors
 - Order of authorship
 - Preparing abstracts and presenting them
 - Encouragement to be the first author
 - Requirements of authorship
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3. How has the session improved your writing?
 - Motivated me into becoming author
 - Learnt the importance of 1st author
 - Learnt the different types of abstracts and key issues of writing abstracts
 - Learnt that the abstract must be precise
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Any other comments about future workshops

- Proposal writing
- Need for working groups for practice

- Should be a little practical. This will help people be able to remember easily what they learnt

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Participants who attended the workshop

	Name	Address
1.	Dr. Worodua	Mulago Hospital
2.	Daniel Kyabayinza	Makerere University Medical School
3.	Paul Bangirana	CM Project, Department of Pediatrics, MUK
4	Wandera Bonnie	Infectitious Diseases Institute
5.	Nicholette Nabukera	Mulago Hospital
6.	Noor Lule Sekimpi	Academic Alliance for AIDS Care and Prevention in Africa
7.	Namasopo Sophie	Jinja Hospital
8.	Nshimye Angella	Makerere University
9.	Dr. Pauline Byakika	Mulago Hospital Department of Medicine
10.	Peter Kyambadde	STD /ACP / MOH
11.	Jayne Tusiime Byakika	University of California San Francisco
12.	David Bangs berg	University of California San Francisco
13.	Kyeyagarire Robert	Makerere University Institute of Public Health
14.	Balyegisawo	The AIDS Support Organization
15.	Achan Jane	MU – UCSF
16.	Kyomugisha Trinah	Institute of Public Health
17.	Denise Njama Meya	MU – UCSF
18.	David Meya	Mulago Hospital
19.	Jackson Ojera	STD/ACP/MOH
20.	Loy Guroyita	Clinical epidemiological Unit
21.	Kyebambe Peterson	Kabale Hospital
22.	Amanya John V	ADAPT Consults
23.	Nakayima Flavia	Clinical epidemiological Unit
24.	Turyahebwa Anthony	Uganda Society for Health Scientists
25.	Cissy Namakula	Uganda Society for Health Scientists
26.	Isabella Achokotho	Uganda Society for Health Scientists