

FEATURE

AuthorAID – A GLOBAL NETWORK OF RESEARCHERS FROM 174 COUNTRIES



Jennifer Chapin | Programme Manager | AuthorAID

“... members of AuthorAID are really lucky to have the kind of selfless help that we get through this medium.” Tabinda Hasan, researcher, India

Indonesian researchers discuss grant proposal writing at an AuthorAID-funded workshop. Finding funding is often identified as one of the main challenges for researchers in developing countries.



Researchers in the developing world have long been under-represented in published research. This isn't a huge surprise. They face many of the same intense pressures to publish as academics in the UK, yet they lack access to the fundamental resources needed to communicate their research: access to information and training, writing support and mentorship. How can they manage the pressure of publishing rigorous scientific research while at the same time communicating findings in a way that meets publisher expectations?

In order to address some of these issues, the AuthorAID programme was launched in 2007 by Oxford-based organisation INASP to support researchers in these countries to publish and otherwise communicate their work. It also serves as a wider global forum to discuss and disseminate research. Since 2007, the programme has grown by leaps and bounds, now comprising more than 13,000 researchers from 174 countries.



13,000 RESEARCHERS



174 COUNTRIES

Over the years, AuthorAID has evolved its support and developed a number of different ways to support researchers:

- One primary aim is to **embed research writing skills** training into curricula and professional development schemes in universities and research institutes, with the objective of building local training capacity – face-to-face and online. We are currently working with 10 partner institutes in 4 countries, namely Ghana, Tanzania, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.
- In recent years, AuthorAID has launched free **Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)** in research writing. So far, these courses have attracted over 2,800 researchers from 79 countries, and from as far afield as Somalia, Yemen and El Salvador.
- The AuthorAID web platform offers an **online mentoring system**, linking volunteer academics

Guinean researcher Alexandre Delamou (white shirt, fourth from right, front row) won an AuthorAID grant to run a recent medical writing workshop in Conakry, Guinea in July. Alexandre is currently researching the effects of the Ebola virus in rural Guinea, but he has also found the time to register as an AuthorAID mentor.



devoting time and skills to guide less experienced researchers through the challenges of communicating and publishing. The platform is open to researchers from all subject areas, and currently comprises almost 2,000 active mentors and mentees.

- Small grants are offered twice annually. **Workshop grants** provide opportunities for experienced academics to host research writing or proposal writing workshops at their own institutions. **Travel grants** give early career researchers the chance to present their research at international conferences and network with other researchers in their field.
- An increasing number of our members also provide informal mentoring by replying to questions about publishing on the **Discussion Group**. Authorship, influencing policy makers, publishing in suspect journals and writing grant proposals are some of the recent

topics discussed by members, now numbering over 1,500.

- Over the last year, AuthorAID has focused on supporting women in research to address gender inequalities they face in progressing in their careers. Through a small grant, the University of Dodoma hosted a workshop on the gender gap in academia in Tanzania. Out of this, AuthorAID has produced a **Gender Mainstreaming in Higher Education Toolkit**, which we hope will be a valuable resource for universities and institutions tackling gender inequality in academia.
- AuthorAID also provides **training materials and resources** free of charge online. Resources are available in English, Arabic, Chinese, French and Spanish. E-resources include training materials, case studies, presentations and articles, and how-to videos.

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED?

Whether you're an early career researcher in a developing country who could benefit from support and mentoring, an established academic with a strong track record who wants to give something back to the research community, or are just keen to get involved in some stimulating discussions, you can easily register now on the AuthorAID website at www.authoraid.info

For more information on other programmes run by INASP, notably on evidence-informed policymaking and improving access to e-resources, visit: www.inasp.info