AuthorAID: Supporting developing country researchers in publishing their work

Website: authoraid.info

Ravi Murugesan

Associate, INASP

About INASP

- An international development charity established in 1992 and based in Oxford, UK

- Funded by international development agencies (DFID of the UK and Sida of Sweden)

- Mission: "Putting research knowledge at the heart of development"

- Working closely with higher education institutions in 20+ partner countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America

- Areas of work: Publishing support for researchers (AuthorAID); networks of regional journals; research access and availability; library development; evidence-informed policy making

About me

- Joined INASP in March 2011

- Organize and facilitate AuthorAID workshops on research writing in developing countries

- Helped initiate e-learning at INASP

- Now largely involved in e-learning strategy, administering the e-learning system, and developing and facilitating online courses

- Relocated from London to Mumbai in August 2012; a happy telecommuter!

Components of AuthorAID

- Training: Workshops and online courses
  - Writing research papers for publication
  - Writing grant proposals
- Online mentoring scheme
- Knowledge community – blog, e-resources, etc.
- Small grants – travel, organizing workshops
- Email discussion list

Goals of AuthorAID training

- Present authoritative material on how to write research papers for publication

- Discuss trends and tricky issues in scholarly publishing

- Discuss problems faced by developing country researchers and explore solutions

- Enable participants to write up their research for publication in ethical, peer-reviewed journals

Training – Workshops

- Dozens of workshops conducted in developing countries in Africa, South Asia, and Latin America since 2007

- Workshops led by

  - AuthorAID staff (Prof. Barbara Gastel or me)

  - Participants who attend train-the-trainer workshops

  - Researchers who use free e-resources on our website (workshop materials freely available)

  - Recipients of AuthorAID workshop grants

- Current emphasis on train-the-trainer workshops and embedding training on research writing within institutions in partner countries

From the AuthorAID workshop in Rwanda in June 2011

Training – Online courses

- Four online courses conducted since 2012 on AuthorAID Moodle:

  http://authoraid.info/moodle

- Completed by ~130 researchers from ~30 developing countries

- 90% completion rate

- Lots of interaction on the discussion forum

Applying to our online courses

- Watch the AuthorAID website – http://authoraid.info – for calls for applications

- Applicants are selected for each course after a competitive selection process

Helping teach online courses

- We're looking to collaborate with institutions and experienced researchers to develop new online courses or teach existing courses in a local context

- Example: Collaboration with Blacksmith Institute to develop the "environmental health research writing course" (customization of existing course)

- Recently published facilitators' notes for leading online courses

- Please write to me if you're interested: rmurugesan@inasp.info

Online mentoring scheme

- Anyone can create a profile on our website as a mentor or mentee

- Mentees: Early-career researchers in developing countries

- Mentors: Experienced researchers, journal editors, manuscript editors, etc.

- Mentees can find mentors using a search feature and contact mentors to propose a mentoring relationship

- Goal of a typical mentoring relationship: Writing up a research paper for publication in a journal

"...my experience with AuthorAID has been great! Through the AuthorAID website, I met my mentor Jackie Goodrich - a PhD student at the University of Michigan. Jackie has been very dedicated in offering me guidance on how to improve my writing skills."

Rhoune Ochako, Kenya

"...being an AuthorAID mentor goes beyond a conventional teacher-student relationship - it is a really stimulating and worthwhile learning process for both mentee and mentor."

Dan Korbel, United Kingdom

Email discussion list

- Hosted on Dgroups:
  http://dgroups.org/groups/authoraiddiscussion

- Active and self-regulating

- Anyone can join

Small grants

- Travel grants ($1500) for researchers to present their work at conferences

- Workshop grants ($2500) for researchers and administrators to organize local workshops on research communication

- Grants announced and awarded twice a year

- Next grants cycle: Begins January 2014

- Grants available only for people in our partner countries: http://www.inasp.info/en/network/country/partner-countries

Knowledge community

- Several posts every week on the AuthorAID blog: http://authoraid.info/news

  - On topics related to research communication

  - Mostly authored by Prof. Barbara Gastel

  - Guest posts welcome!

- Free e-resources on the AuthorAID website: http://authoraid.info/resource-library

Ravi Murugesan
INASP Associate

Email: rmurugesan@inasp.info
Blog: http://blog.inasp.info/author/rmurugesan
Twitter: @RaviMurugesan