



**AFRICA CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR INFECTIOUS DISEASES OF HUMANS  
AND ANIMALS (ACEIDHA)**



**AAU TRAINING WORKSHOP ON COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND STRATEGIES  
FOR ACEs COMMUNICATION OFFICERS – 24-26 APRIL 2019 ACCRA, GHANA**

Name of the training: Communication Skills and Strategies

Programme Sponsor: Association of African Universities (AAU)

Implementing Agency: AAU

Venue: AAU Head Office, Accra, Ghana

Dates: 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> April 2019

Total Participants: 52

Duration total: 3 Days

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The document on hand is a narration of the detail, the events and proceedings of the training of communication Officers from Africa Centres of Excellence I & II that was facilitated by the Association of African Universities (AAU). The training was conducted at the AAU Headquarters in Accra, Ghana, and was opened by Prof. Etienne Ehouan Ehile, Secretary General of AAU. The training was facilitated by renowned presenters from the University of Ghana. The whole session lasted for three (3) days.

The three-day training aimed at equipping the Communication Officers from the ACEs with relevant skills how to strategically communicate success stories of the projects to all they stakeholders of African Centres of Excellence. Communication officers learnt the Principles of Communication and were taken through the stages of how to develop effective communication strategy.

Additionally, the participants learnt how to effectively use various social media platforms to communication activities of their Centre of Excellence. The issue of branding and website content management were discussed. It was emphasised that proactive media relations were critical to disseminating the success stories of the project.



Prof. Etienne Ehouan Ehile, Secretary General of AAU opening the Training Workshop on Communication Skills and Strategies.

## **2.0 ABOUT PARTICIPANTS**

There were over 51 Communications Officers from ACEs of ACE I & II and three (3) Project Managers from across the African continent who attended the training, and learnt more about how they can increase visibility of their centres. The participants represented ACEs from Zambia, Malawi, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Ghana, Togo, etc.

Three Officers were sponsored by ACEIDHA to attend this training were:

- a) Mrs Marjorie Phiri, Project Manager;
- b) Mr. Damaseke Chibale, Communications Officer and
- c) Mrs. Patricia Sakala, Communications Officer.



Mrs. Marjorie Phiri, Mr. Damaseke Chibale, and Mrs. Patricia Sakala, during the training.

## **3.0 TIME SCHEDULE**

The three-day training workshop was conducted on three (3) consecutive days. The training was conducted on 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of April, 2019. Each day the session would start at 08:30 am and



end on 17:30 pm. Each day there were 20-minute tea breaks at 10:30 am. There was an hour lunch break at 13:15 pm daily.

#### **4.0 TRAINING CONTENTS**

The following core concepts were covered in the training program:

- World Bank Communication Strategies for the ACE Project
- Principles of Communication & Role of a Communication Expert
- Creating Visibility for the ACEs
- Developing Communication Strategies, Planning and Implementation
- Use of Various Social Media Tools
- Website Content Management (website review – key findings & recommendation)
- Developing an Effective and Practical Communication Action Plan
- Importance of Communication and Branding Materials
- Designing Communication and Branding Materials
- Improving Internal and External Communications
- Media Relations

The training sessions were anchored by experienced trainers from the Ghana's renowned university – The University of Ghana and AAU senior trainers. The first day session started with introduction of the trainers which was followed by every individual participant then introducing himself/herself by mentioning their name and the ACE they came from. Then the participants were asked about their expectations from the training and what they expected to learn during the three (3) days. Each trainee shared their views which they also noted down in the space provided in their work books. After the introductions, the session was proceeded further by the trainer explaining the main purpose of the training of communication Officers and what the trainees will learn about communication. The rest of the days of the training went ahead normally where there were presentations used by the display of major points of discussion and the points were then discussed by the trainers and the participants shared their views and experiences about the topics discussed.

There used to be a tea break every morning at 10:30 am which lasted for fifteen minutes and then a lunch break for one hour at 13:15 pm. This was done by asking the participants about what they had learnt and what were the main points discussed.

#### **5.0 FACILITATION TECHNIQUES USED (METHODOLOGIES)**

There were several facilitation techniques used by the trainers which included question and answer, brainstorming, case study discussions and practical implementation of some of the topics. Some method of delivery took the form of lecture set-up in order to make sure all the participants get the whole concepts and they practice what they learn.



Participants from ACEIDHA at UNZA and ACE-SM at CBU took a group photo with AAU Secretary General, Prof. Etienne Ehouan Ehile and AAU Director, Communication, ICT & Knowledge, Ms Nodumo Dhlamini.

## **6.0 PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS**

The ACEIDHA team also looked for opportunities for collaboration and partnerships the University of Zambia and ACEIDHA with other universities and ACEs in Ghana. With the support from AAU, the team made inquiries of meeting people from the University of Ghana, particularly the department of International Link and any ACE dealing in infectious diseases.

So on Tuesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2019, the team visited the University of Ghana, International Programmes Office for the purpose of beginning discussions with the possibility of striking a general memorandum of understanding between the University of Zambia and the host university, which would provide many opportunities for other UNZA schools and ACE to sign memoranda of agreements with schools and ACEs at the University of Ghana. The Department of International Programmes Office at University of Ghana, headed by Mr Daniel Hormeku, had been considering of partnerships with universities in Africa, especially southern Africa.



The ACEIDHA team with staff from the University of Ghana, International Programmes Office, headed by Assistant Registrar, Mr Daniel Hormeku (centre).

It was like pushing an opened door. The first visit was so fruitful that it led to a second visit where the ACEIDHA Team visited an ACE dealing with Cell Biology and Infectious Pathogens. It was so inspiring and motivation to tour their facilities, although could not understand fully some of the Science jargons. However, it was very clear that this ACE has been existing for some good years now and doing well. Initially, it received a grant from their Government to construct an impressive two-story build and then, with funding from the World Bank, built another two-story building just next to the first one. They showed the team modern laboratories with study rooms, and a beautifully furnished conference room.





ACEIDHA team with Centre Leader of West African Centre for Cell Biology of Infectious Pathogens, Prof. Gordon A. Awandare (far left) in one of the laboratories.



An impressive conference room for West African Centre for Cell Biology of Infectious Pathogens



One of their modern laboratories.

So it was agreed that the University of Zambia Department of International Link and Liaison would arrange and coordinate the main memorandum of understanding with University of Ghana to open opportunities for further collaborations with various schools and ACEs between the two universities.

## 7.0 CLOSING OF THE TRAINING

The AAU Secretary General, Prof Etienne Ehouan Ehile, thanked all the participant and urged them to put into practice what they have learned to produce results – create visibility for the ACEs. After the vote of thanks by one of the participants, Certificates of completion were then given to the participants by Prof. Etienne Ehouan Ehile.

## 7.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The training programme was conducted successfully and all the participants took active part in all the three days of the training. The following are the recommendations arising from this training:

- ACEIDHA should facilitate the development of the Centre's communication Strategy by 30<sup>th</sup> May 2019



- ACEIDHA should develop a website and ensure that it is running by 15<sup>th</sup> May 2019
- ACEIDHA should open other social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter etc by 15<sup>th</sup> May 2019.
- ACEIDHA should procure a high quality camera and video recorder