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Final Report
of the
Peer-to-peer Development and Support of
Science Journalism in the Developing World: the
SjCOOP Project
1st April 2006 to 31st March 2009

Research News

Uganda's President says better reporting of science is key to development

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni kicked off the Uganda Conference for Science Communication 2008 with a keynote speech on the importance of science journalism.

President Museveni said journalists in the region had not been active enough in reporting scientific issues, and there was no way the region could achieve accelerated socioeconomic development unless it promoted scientific research findings: "There is a need to bridge the existing gap between journalists and scientists".



by the
World Federation of Science Journalists (WFSJ)

5 May 2009



SjCOOP participants in Doha (Qatar) on 9th February 2008



The SjCOOP Donors

SjCOOP, a three-year project in peer-to-peer mentoring in Science Journalism has been the World Federation of Science Journalists' flagship project from 2006 to 2009.

SjCOOP was made possible thanks to more than US\$ 2 millions in grants from Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DfID) and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).



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Acronyms

DfID	Department for International Development (UK)
IDRC	International Development Research Centre (Canada)
SjCOOP	Science journalism Cooperation (stands for the official name of the Project Peer-to-Peer Development of Science Journalism in the Developing World)
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
WFSJ	World Federation of Science Journalists

All amounts are in Canadian dollars

Executive Summary

SjCOOP¹ objectives were to (1) develop a network of professional science journalists in Africa, North Africa and in the Middle East; (2) put in place national and regional associations of science journalists; and (3) strengthen the World Federation of Science Journalists as a supportive partner of science journalists in the developing world.

In 2009, at the end of SjCOOP, networks of science journalists are now in place in Africa and in the Arab World. Each network is made of one regional association complemented by national associations. The African network includes nine national associations (6 created by SjCOOP) with a total membership of 408 journalists. The Arab network is mainly represented by a pan-Arab association with two national associations (created through SjCOOP) representing some 215 journalists.

The 32 journalists who succeeded the SjCOOP training, and the African and Arab SjCOOP coordinators and mentors who participated in providing the training, now represent the hard core of these two networks of professional science journalists in Africa and in the Arab World. They work in 17 African countries (Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Congo (RDC), Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Uganda, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, and Zambia) and 5 Arab countries (Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon).

While supported by SjCOOP, these journalists have created the first pan-African science magazine, five new science TV programs, six new science radio programs, and seven new science beats in newspapers, magazines and news agencies. Fifteen of them have been promoted by their editors because of their new skills. Seventeen now freelance internationally. Their professionalism has been recognized by 44 prizes, awards, scholarships and internships awarded to 22 of them.

This hard core of African and Arab science journalists has learned to work together, across the frontiers of their respective countries, reporting on a few regional issues in 'transborders' articles. They have also established contacts with editors to publish these stories. They now use internet technologies like Skypechats and Skypecasts to keep in touch with scientists and colleagues. Through SjCOOP, they have introduced Skype news conferences with scientists in their respective regions.

Seven SjCOOP journalists have contributed to create the first ever online course in science journalism (8 lessons available in Arabic, English, French, and now in Portuguese and Spanish). The course is being used in universities. Two SjCOOP journalists have become professors of science journalism in universities in Egypt and Madagascar.

Five of the associations have organized their own conferences, workshops and training activities with SjCOOP support. This was done for the first time in Rwanda and Uganda. Several have done so in close collaboration with local science departments and academies.

With SjCOOP's conclusion, the African and Arab science journalists, individually and through their associations, are now active members of the world community of science journalists. Twelve associations from the developing world are now official members of the World Federation of Science Journalists and eight are twinned with associations in Asia, Europe and North America. This new global network in science journalism creates an incentive for better reporting and increased recognition of science journalists in the developing world.

¹ SjCOOP stands for **S**cience journalism **COOP**eration

SjCOOP Results in a Nutshell

Mentors

- One mentor has created a **new pan-African science magazine *ScienceAfrica***, Otula Owuor based in Kenya using SjCOOP mentees as correspondents
- One mentor now teaches science journalism at the University of Cairo in Egypt
- One is the new president of the Arab Science Journalists' Association

Mentees

- **12 have created new TV or radio science programs or newspaper science beats:**
 - **5 new TV science programs** in Algeria, Cameroon and the Arab World
 - **6 new radio science programs** in Algeria, Benin, Cameroon and Sudan
 - **7 new science beats or pages** in newspapers in Cameroon, Congo-Kinshasa, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, and Sudan
 - 5 in the African Francophone group
 - 1 in the African Anglophone group
 - 1 in the Arabophone group
- **15 have been promoted** to a higher position in their media
- **18 freelance internationally** in publications from **Nature** to **SciDev.net** and **La Recherche**
- **7 have won prestigious scholarships**
 - 3-year Masters in Belgium
 - IDRC Research Africa Internship
 - MIT Knight Fellowship – 1 Year in Boston (3)
 - IDRC \$60K Internship (2)
- **22 have won** a total of **44 prizes** for their articles or programs on radio and TV
- **20 do more and better science reporting**
- **10 journalists claim to have influenced the following policies or decisions:**
 - Unfreeze funds for mitigating CO₂ overflow of lake Nyos (Cameroon)
 - Installation of filtering system on a cement plant (Jordan)
 - Debunking false scientific claims (Benin, Nigeria and South Africa)
 - Stopping Health Minister from smoking in public (Jordan)
 - Funding of scientific research (Algeria)
 - Speeding up of water treatment in Baghdad (Iraq)
 - Recognition of needs of people displaced by war (Côte d'Ivoire)
 - Firing of corrupted AIDS drugs distribution official (Uganda)
- **One mentee** now teaches science journalism at the university of Antananarivo in Madagascar

Associations

- **Seven new associations of science journalists established** in the Arab World, Cameroon, Ghana, Rwanda, South Africa, Sudan and Uganda
- **Eight associations** of science journalists in the making in Algeria, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Jordan, Madagascar, Morocco, Qatar, and Senegal
- **Eight associations from Africa and the Middle East twinned** with associations of science journalists in the industrialized world: African Federation, Arab Association, Algeria, Cameroon, Kenya, Nigeria, Qatar, and Uganda.

1. SjCOOP Achievements

Overall achievement

African and Arab science journalists are now part of the world community of science journalists. They now freelance internationally, compete for prizes; organize national and international events, while contributing more and better articles, radio, and TV programs locally. More than 600 African and Arab science journalists are now part of national, regional and international networks through national and regional associations and membership in the World Federation of Science Journalists.

As stated November 24th, 2009, at the opening of the Uganda Conference for Science Communication by President Yoweri Museveni, African journalists have not been active enough in reporting science: *“There is a need to bridge the existing gap between journalists and scientists”*.



SjCOOP contributed to close this gap. Since June 2008, there is a new pan-African science magazine called **ScienceAfrica** produced by SjCOOP mentor Otula Owuor, using the African network of SjCOOP mentees. Five new science TV programs were launched by mentees, in Algeria, Cameroon, and Egypt. Six new science radio programs now cover science in Algeria, Benin, and Sudan while seven newspapers in Cameroon, Congo-Kinshasa, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria and Sudan now have science pages and columns.

Fifteen of the journalists trained through project SjCOOP have been promoted to increased responsibilities in their news agency, newspaper, and radio or TV station because of their increased skills. Eighteen now freelance internationally while 22 of the 32 journalists who graduated from the SjCOOP program have won some 44 prizes, scholarships, internships and other awards for their reporting.

Sure, there were African and Arab science journalists before.

SjCOOP, conjugated with the advent of the internet, has broken their relative isolation. They now can meet and organize thanks to seven new associations and eight new informal groups of science journalists. Six of these associations have taken the initiative to train other journalists and organize conferences with local scientists and science academies. In a telling proof of their new found assurance, one Arab and two African associations are now competing to host the 2011 World Conference of Science Journalists.

African and Arab science journalists still face extremely difficult circumstances: non-collaborating scientists and governments, limited access to the internet and information, and appalling work conditions. At least, now, dozens more know what the best among them can do. They have competed against each other, but they have also worked together on stories, across national borders. They have met, learned about themselves and their peers. Now, they tell themselves: “If she can do it, why not me!”

It is this new found sense of community but also of emulation to report science that is probably the main and most promising achievement of SjCOOP.

SjCOOP Firsts

- **First online course in science journalism:** in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish (<http://www.wfsj.org/course/>)
- **First Transborders Teams of African Editors and Journalists to Publish Science Stories:** editors of eight African newspapers, three magazines, two national news agencies, and SciDev.net published stories written by teams of mentees from different countries.
- **First Skypecast (voice conferencing) science news conferences in Africa**
- **First Uganda Conference on Science Communication and Science Journalism** (25 November 2008, Kampala)

Yoweri Museveni, President of Uganda, praises the work of the Uganda Science Journalists' Association during the 2008 Uganda Science Communication Conference which brought together 150 science journalists, science communicators and scientists.
- **First Rwanda Workshop on Science Journalism** (15-18 Dec. 2008, Kigali)
- **First Conference of Arab Science Journalists** (25 October 2008, Fez Morocco)
- **First twinning** of the Arab Science Journalists Association with the US National Association of Science Writers
- First Guidebook on How to Create an Association of Science Journalists
- First Guidebook on How to Mentor in Science Journalism
- **First Associations of Science Journalists in seven regions & countries:**
 - **the Arab World:** Arab Science Journalists Association (ASJA)
 - **Cameroon:** Association of science journalists and communicators (SciLife)
 - **Ghana:** Association of Science Journalists and Communicators
 - **Rwanda:** Rwanda Association of Science Journalists (RASJ)
 - **South Africa:** South African Science Journalism Association (SAS)
 - **Sudan:** Sudan Association of Science Journalists
 - **Uganda:** Uganda Science Journalists' Association (USJA)
- **First informal groups of science journalists** established in Algeria, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Jordan, Madagascar, Morocco, Qatar, and Senegal
- **First bidding by African countries** to host the 7th World Conference of Science Journalists in 2011: Kenya and Uganda
- **First bidding by an Arab country** to host the 2011 7th World Conference of Science Journalists: Egypt
- **First implementation of Evaluation and Monitoring Outcome Mapping Methodology** to a media training project.

1. Professional achievements of SjCOOP mentees and mentors

- New science magazine **Science Africa** (June 2008) by mentor Otula Owuor (Kenya)
- Most discussed story published on www.SciDev.net, by mentee Alex Abutu (Nigeria)
- Five new television programs:
 - **Invention and Innovation** and **Green World** (Le Monde vert) by Fatiha Nour (Algerian Radio and Television)
 - Nehal Lasheen (Egypt) promoted manager of science programs for new satellite television channel **Ana TV**
 - **Health First** and **Talking the Science that we live**, a new English-French 2-hour weekly science program by Dora Shey on Cameroon TV
- Six new radio programs:
 - **Invention & Innovation**, radio version, with Fatiha Nour (Algeria Radio & TV)
 - Radio **news bulletin** now includes science and weekly program **The Lantern**, by Godefroy Macaire Chabi (Benin Radio)
 - Mentee ElKheir Fadl Alla Musa hosts two new science radio programs on Sudanese National Radio: **Man and Environment** and **Health in Focus**
 - **Science at Your Doorstep**, by Dora Shey, Cameroon Radio
- 7 New Newspaper Science Pages and Beats:
 - **Karthoum Daily** newspaper, with Moussa (Sudan)
 - **La Nouvelle Expression**, with Christophe Mvondo (Cameroon)
 - **Fraternité-Matin**, Théodore Kouadio (Côte d'Ivoire)
 - **Le Révélateur** Newspaper, David Ilunga (Congo – Kinshasa)
 - Newspaper **L'Avenir**, Anselme Nkinsi (Congo-Kinshasa)
 - **Cameroon-Tribune**, with Aimé Francis Amougou (Cameroon)
 - **The Daily Independent**, with Michael Simire (Nigeria)
- **14 journalists who received promotions:**
 - Kimani Chege (Kenya), Editor of TechNews Africa
 - Alexander Abutu (Nigeria), promoted to supervise health news
 - Mabutho Ngcobo (South Africa), new anchor on Zulu South African TV Channel
 - Onche Odeh (Nigeria), Science Editor
 - Dora Shey (Cameroon), put in charge of producing new 2-hour weekly science TV program
 - Haidar Njim (Baghdad), promoted to Deputy Editor
 - Nehal Lasheen (Egypt), promoted in charge of health and science at new satellite TV channel AnaTV
 - Christophe Mvondo (Cameroon), Editor of the Science Pages
 - Godefroy Chabi (Benin), promoted Chief, desk Culture, Society and Science
 - Théodore Kouadio (Côte d'Ivoire), promoted in charge of science, web edition of newspaper Fraternité-Matin
 - Aimable Twahirwa (Rwanda), promoted member of the Editorial Desk
 - David Ilunga (Congo-Kinshasa), now in charge of health, environment and science
 - Anselme Nkinsi (Congo-Kinshasa), promoted Deputy Chief Editor
 - Rivonala Razafison (Madagascar), promoted Editor-in-Chief
 - Aimé-Francis Amougou (Cameroon Tribune), promoted in charge of the science pages.

- 12 journalists who are much better at writing about science, and
- 20 journalists who are better at writing about science
- **18 journalists who now freelance internationally;**
 - Kimani Chege (Kenya), Nature magazine, Mail & Guardian (South Africa)
 - Abiose Adelaja (Nigeria), SciDev.net, Islamonline, Research Africa
 - Alexander Abutu (Nigeria), SciDev.net
 - Esther Nakazi (Uganda), Real Health News
 - Onche Odeh (Nigeria), SciDev.net
 - Justus Wanzala (Kenya), SciDev.net, Research Africa
 - Michael Simire (Nigeria), SciDev.net
 - Michael Malakata (Zambia), SciDev.net, The New York Times online
 - Hanan al-Kiswany (Jordan), Al-Bia Wal-Tanmia (Environment and Development) Magazine
 - Fatiha Chara/Nour (Algeria), Al-Bia Wal-Tanmia (Environment and Development) Magazine, Agence Science-Presse
 - Hadi Essami (Iraq), Reuters
 - Hanin al-Ramahi (Jordan), SciDev.net
 - Hichem Boumedjout (Algeria), SciDev.net
 - Christophe Mvondo (Cameroon), La Recherche
 - Jérôme Bigirimana (Burundi), Inter Press Service, Afrique nouvelle magazine
 - Godefroy Chabi (Benin), SciDev.net, PlusNews.org
 - Aimable Twahirwa (Rwanda), SciDev.net, Africa Science News Service, IPS
 - Rivonala Razafison (Madagascar), SciDev.net, WHO Newsletter
- **44 prizes, scholarships, internships, rewards, travel, awarded to 22 SjCOOP journalists**, of which some of the most prestigious are:
 - 3 SjCOOP graduates earn the prestigious MIT Science Journalism one-year Knight Fellowship: 2007 Esther Nakazi (Uganda), 2008 Kimani Chege (Kenya), and 2009 Onche Odeh (Nigeria)
 - 2 SjCOOP mentees win successive prestigious IDRC 10-month internship and travel scholarship: Cathy Yogo (Cameroon) and Fatiha Chara/Nour (Algeria)
 - Best Science Article for mentee Mame Aly Konte (Senegal) from the Senegalese Science Academy
 - 2008 Dan Moussa Prize for journalist who most promoted peace, awarded to mentee Théodore Kouadio (Côte d'Ivoire).

Full list of prizes awarded to SjCOOP mentees;

- Kimani Chege (Kenya), MIT Knight Fellowship in Science Journalism 2008
- Abiose Adelaja (Nigeria), Hubert Humphrey Fellowship, German internship
- Alexander Abutu (Nigeria), One Campaign
- Esther Nakazi (Uganda), MIT Knight Fellowship in Science Journalism 2007, Best HIV Writer, ICT Prize
- Mabutho Ngcobo (South Africa), Vodacom Journalist of Year 2007 and 2008
- Onche Odeh (Nigeria), MIT Knight Fellowship in Science Journalism 2009, scholarship to attend Forum Research for Health, One Campaign
- Justus Wanzala (Kenya), IDRC Research Africa Fellowship, 2 scholarships to attend seminars in Addis Ababa and Geneva, InWent internship in Germany
- Michael Simire (Nigeria), Reuters scholarship, LEAD Fellow, scholarship for Poznan Climate Change Conference
- Mahmoud al-Dwairi (Jordan), best radio environment program in Arabic
- Hanan al-Kiswany (Jordan), King Hussein Award for article on cancer, Award for best article on pharma
- Fatiha Chara/Nour (Algeria), IDRC Scholarship, best radio program
- Hadi Essami (Iraq), bonus for article on water

- Nehal Lasheen (Egypt), best article of the year on Islamonline
- Christophe Mvondo (Cameroon), EcoHealth Forum travel scholarship
- Godefroy Chabi (Benin), AISI Media Award, best article Doha competition
- Jérôme Bigirimana (Burundi), Masters Scholarship in Belgium
- Théodore Kouadio (Côte d'Ivoire), Dan Moussa 2008 Prize, Mexico World Water Forum scholarship
- Anselme Nkinsi (Congo-Kinshasa), UNDP Prize for article on environment
- Rivonala Razafison (Madagascar), two prizes for articles on Biodiversity and Climate Change, Education Award 2007 and Transparency International Prize
- Mame Aly Konte (Senegal), Senegalese Science Academy Prize
- David Ya (Côte d'Ivoire), prize for best articles
- Cathy Yogo (Cameroon), IDRC Scholarship

2. Training

- 8-lesson online course in science journalism in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish (<http://www.wfsj.org/course/>). The course is being used to train journalists in Australia, Canada and South Africa.
- 32 SjCOOP graduates in science journalism in:
 - Africa: Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Congo-Kinshasa, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda, and Zambia
 - the Middle East: Algeria, Egypt, Emirates, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Sudan
- 3 coordinators trained in managing training projects in science journalism in Africa and the Arab World
- 5 mentors trained in mentoring science journalists in Africa
- 4 mentors trained in mentoring science journalists in the Arab World
- One mentee became a mentor
- Mentee Ms. Hanan Al-Kiswany becomes a trainer in science journalism for Jordanian Ministry of Health and USAID.
- 2 University Lecturers in Science Journalism:
 - mentor Hatem Sedky (Egypt) at Cairo University and
 - mentee Rivonala Razafison (Madagascar) at University of Antananarivo
- Coordinator Gervais Mbarga asked to consult for Unesco programs in journalism
- Coordinator Nadia El-Awady asked to join Board of Trustees of SciDev.net
- Coordinator Diran Onifade invited to May 2009 Africa Knowledge Management Conference in Dakar (Senegal)
- Dr. Jan Lublinski trained in the Evaluation Methodology Outcome Mapping
- WFSJ Secretariat trained in the management of distance training and mentoring projects
- Six associations organize training activities for local science journalists, five of them with SjCOOP support, in Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda and for the Arab Science Journalists' Association (regional conference held in Morocco).

3. Building and Sustaining Associations of Science Journalists

- More than 600 African and Arab science journalists networked nationally, regionally and internationally through the creation of national and regional associations and their twinning with associations in Europe, North America and Asia.
- Seven (7) associations of science journalists established in the Arab World, Cameroon, Ghana, Rwanda, South Africa, Sudan, and Uganda
- Eight (8) associations of science journalists in the making in Algeria, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Jordan, Madagascar, Morocco, Qatar, and Senegal
- Two (2) associations of science journalists reinvigorated in Kenya and Nigeria
- Twinning of 8 developing world associations of science journalists with well established associations of science journalists in the developed world:
 - African Federation of Science Journalists with Germany (TELI)
 - Algeria with Québec
 - Arab Science Journalists with United States' science journalists
 - Cameroon with France
 - Kenya with Canada
 - Nigeria with Germany (WPK)
 - Qatar with Japan
 - Uganda with United Kingdom
- Three (3) associations of science journalists from the developing world (Egypt, Kenya and Uganda) bidding to host the World Conference of Science Journalists
- Linking associations of science journalists with science organizations:
 - Arab Science Journalists' Association with Islamic World Academy of Science
 - African Federation of Science Journalists with African network of Science Academies (project ASADI)
- Sixteen (16) associations of science journalists from the developing world now official voting members of the World Federation of Science Journalists:
 - **African** Federation of Science Journalists
 - Network of African Journalists on earth science (Tanzania)
 - **Arab** Associations of Science Journalists
 - **Bangladesh** Science Writers & Journalists Forum (BSWJF)
 - **Cameroon's** Association of science journalists and communicators (SciLife)
 - Chilean Association of Science Journalists (ACHIPEC)
 - Chinese Society for Science and Technology Journalism (CSSTJ)
 - Colombian Association of Science Journalism (ACPC)
 - **Ghana** Association of Science Journalists and Communicators
 - **Kenya** - Media for Environment, Science, Health and Agriculture (MESHA)
 - **Nigeria** Association of Science Journalists (NAJS)
 - Pakistan Medical Writers' Association (PMWA)
 - Philippines Science Journalists Association (PSciJourn)
 - **Rwanda** Association of Science Journalists (RASJ)
 - **Sudan** Association of Science Journalists
 - **Uganda** Science Journalists' Association (USJA)
- Major strengthening of the World Federation of Science Journalists: web site and secretariat

4. Influencing policy making and decision-making:

Although it was not an objective of the SjCOOP project, there is some evidence that at least 10 of the SjCOOP mentees' reporting has influenced policy and/or decision-making:

- Installation of mitigating equipment to prevent carbon dioxide overflow (Cameroon)
- Filtering system installed on cement plant (Jordan)
- Debunking false scientific claims (Benin, Nigeria and South Africa)
- Breaking story on misallocation of AIDS funds (Uganda)
- Breaking story on natural sickle cell medicine fraud (Nigeria)
- Setting up water treatment equipment (Iraq)
- Promoting support to science and innovation (Algeria)
- Stopping Health Minister from smoking (Jordan)
- Recognition of needs of persons displaced by war (Côte d'Ivoire)

5. Technology

- Proof of concept of distance mentoring in science journalism in Africa and the Middle East
- Introduction of Skypechats and Skypecasts to hold science news conferences for African scientists
- Production and testing of first online course in science journalism in Arabic, English and French
- Training of 70 African and Arab scientists, editors and journalists in the use of Skypechats and Skypecasts.

6. Funding and Partnerships

- Close to \$300 000 of additional funds raised to complement funding provided by SjCOOP's three main donors: IDRC, DfID and SIDA and another \$300 000 in kind from different partners. One thirds of that amount was a partnership with the Qatar Foundation and the Al Jazeera Media Training and Development School for holding the second face-to-face meeting in Doha, Qatar 4 – 10 February 2008.
- Additional funding was contributed by UNESCO to facilitate board meetings, the Robert Bosch Foundation to cover meetings of mentors and board members, and Elsevier which covered the costs of the translation into Chinese of the 8-lesson Online Course in Science Journalism.
- The Agence nationale de recherches sur le SIDA et les hépatites virales (France) provided some \$50K to support the training workshop in Paris for 15 mentees, in March 2007
- We also benefited from additional funds from IDRC for evaluation and monitoring, online course, publishing, and bringing science journalists to the 5th World Conference of

Science Journalists in Melbourne (Australia), and from DfID to bring some 26 mentees to the 6th World Conference of Science Journalists in London (UK).

7. Publications

- **A Guide for Peer to peer Mentorship in Science Journalism** by Kathryn O'Hara
- Guidebook to set-up an association of science journalists: **Setting up your own Science Journalists' Association**, by Barbara Drillsma
- Repertoire of associations of science journalists: **2007 Science Journalist Association Guide**, by Jessica White

8. Communications and publicity

Presentations of the SjCOOP project by Coordinators and the Executive Director of WFSJ have been made at the following conferences and meetings:

- SjCOOP coordinators Gervais Mbarga and Nadia El-Awady present the SjCOOP project during a news conference held during the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Annual Meeting, in Chicago, 15th February 2009.
- BBC science journalist Pallab Ghosh, president of the World Federation of Science Journalists, presented the SjCOOP project during a panel attended by several hundred participants at the Annual Meeting of AAAS, on 13th February 2009, in Chicago.
- SjCOOP Project Director JM Fleury presents SjCOOP at the 2008 EcoHealth Conference, 2nd December 2008, in Merida (Mexico)
- Presentation of SjCOOP to the communications team of the WHO/Path/Gates Meningitis Vaccine Project on 25th November 2008, in Accra (Ghana)
- Yoweri Museveni, President of Uganda, praises the work of the Uganda Science Journalists' Association at the opening of the 24th November 2008 Uganda Science Communication Conference, in Kampala (Uganda)
- Presentation of the SjCOOP Project at OECD Global Science Forum Workshop on Improving the Dialogue with Society on Scientific Issues and meeting with Benoît Miribel, Director of the Mérieux Foundation in Paris, 14 – 19th September
- Coordinator Ms. Nadia El-Awady and Project Director Jean-Marc Fleury present SjCOOP at the 16th Science Conference of the Islamic World Academy of Sciences, 26 August 2008, in Kazan (Tatarstan – Russia)
- SjCOOP coordinators present at the Euroscience Open Forum, ESOF 2008, Barcelona, 20th July 2008
- Coverage of the opening meeting of the SjCOOP face-to-face meeting held the 4th February 2008, in Doha (Qatar) by Al Jazeera's 24-hour news channel (CD available and posted on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/WFSJorg>)

- SjCOOP coordinator Diran Onifade presents the SjCOOP project at the Third Annual Conference of the African Science Academy Development Initiative (ASADI), 12 – 17 November 2007 in Dakar (Sénégal)
- SjCOOP coordinators Nadia El-Awady and Diran Onifade, as well as Pallab Ghosh (President of the World Federation of Science Journalists) and Board members Valeria Roman (Argentina) and Jia Hepeng (China) present the SjCOOP project and other WFSJ activities at the World Science Forum, in Budapest, 10 - 11 November 2007, in Budapest (Hungary), thanks to support from UNESCO
- Executive Director of WFSJ presents SjCOOP at the annual conference of German science journalists Wissenwerte, 25 – 29 November 2007, in Bremen (Germany)
- Nadia El-Awadi (Regional Coordinator) and Dr. Jan Lublinski (Evaluator) present the SjCOOP evaluation methodology at Symposium “Measuring Change: Planning – Monitoring – Evaluation in Media Development”, 27-28 September 2007, in Bad Honnef (Germany). Ms. Abigail Mulhall and Megan Lloyd Laney represented DfID at the Forum, while IDRC was represented by Ms. Jean Woo.
- WFSJ Executive Director presents the SjCOOP Project to the 5th Meeting of the Inter-American Committee on Science and Technology (COMCYT).
- SjCOOP Coordinator Dr. Gervais Mbarga presents SjCOOP at two panels – one organized by Unesco – during the 5th World Conference of Science Journalists, 15-19 April 2007, in Melbourne (Australia)
- In a two-page article on science journalism in the developing world, the journal **Nature** highlighted the SjCOOP mentoring program of WFSJ in its 28th September 2006 edition. Mike Shanahan quotes several science journalists from Africa, Asia and Latin America. After describing the difficulties they face in reporting science, the author describes the mentoring program recently initiated by the World Federation of Science Journalists. Then, he writes that "Many believe this (program) could make a difference".
- Wilson da Silva, Editor-in-Chief of the Australian magazine **Cosmos** and then President of the World Federation of Science Journalists, announced the launch of project SjCOOP at the AAAS Annual Meeting, in St. Louis (USA), on 19th February 2006.

2. SjCOOP: the Project

SjCOOP: the Objectives

SjCOOP had four main sets of objectives:

- professional development of science journalists,
- the establishment of associations of science journalists,
- the establishment of the World Federation of Science Journalists, and
- the establishment of sustained relationships between journalists and scientists.

SjCOOP: the Plan and the Methodology

SjCOOP, the Peer-to-Peer Development and Support of Science Journalism in the Developing World project of the World Federation of Science Journalists (WFSJ) was an experience in mentoring and training at a distance individual science journalists and associations of science journalists, in Africa and the Middle East.

Mentoring: the SjCOOP (Science journalism Cooperation) mentoring program initially brought 60 mentees -- aspiring science journalists from 30 countries in Africa and the Middle -- together with 16 mentors -- experienced science journalists from Africa, America, Europe and the Middle East. There were three groups: English-speaking Africa, the Middle East, and French-speaking Africa. The work of mentors was coordinated by three regional coordinators, respectively based in Abuja (Nigeria), Yaoundé (Cameroon) and in Cairo (Egypt). They were supported by the project management team at the WFSJ Secretariat (Canada) which was made of full-time Project Director and Project Manager and a part-time information technology specialist.



Mentoring was done at a distance, mainly via a dedicated WFSJ website, emails, as well as Skype and telephone. Mentors assisted with all aspects of the work of a science journalist: identifying good stories and sources, commenting on writing and editing, finding outlets for freelancing, as well as advising on career moves and on how to manage editors.

Numerous activities and strategies were implemented to support the distance mentoring. Mentees followed an 8-lesson online course in science journalism. At least once a year, during the two years of the mentoring, participants met face-to-face, in Nairobi (November 2006) and Doha (February 2008).

SjCOOP began with a one-week training workshop for mentors in Munich, Germany, in July 2006. The individual mentoring itself started in September 2006 and ended in September 2008. The whole project ended in March 2009.

Mentoring associations

Another SjCOOP component was to support the establishment of associations of science journalists. This was mainly done by the mentees and the mentors. The young associations were then twinned with long-established ones. Mentoring of associations was mainly done through meetings, sharing of experience and twinning. During its last year, SjCOOP also provided grants to support the activities of five African and Arab associations, who organized their own conferences and training workshops.

That was the plan!

SjCOOP: the Reality ... Step by Step

The following section describes how the project unfolded. It highlights the main evolution of the project which moved from rather unstructured mentoring to a more structured mentoring supported by some teaching and group discussions. Basic skills in science journalism were reinforced through the 8 lessons of the online course in science journalism. Mentees had more opportunities to exchange and then worked together on transborder stories.

In the second year, more structured mentoring was implemented in parallel with a more rigorous process of evaluation. Mentoring of individual journalists ended with groups of journalists working as teams on transborder stories: i.e. articles on the same topic written by teams of journalists from several countries.

Finally, the third year saw the brand new associations organizing their own training conferences and workshops.

Planning SjCOOP

- **January 2005 to April 2006**

The Board of the World Federation of Science Journalists asks WFSJ Program Committee members to develop proposals for projects. The priority is given to supporting colleagues in the developing world. IDRC also asks Jean-Marc Fleury, who is planned to retire from IDRC in May 2006 and is the Executive Director of WFSJ, to develop a project proposal to support science journalism in the developing world. He is authorized by the Board to travel to Europe and the United States to raise funds.

The core team of SjCOOP is formed with the recruitment of the three regional coordinators.

SjCOOP Starts

2006

- **1st April 2006:** Official starting date of the mentoring project thanks to funding from IDRC, confirmed funding from DfID and commitment from SIDA.
- **April to June:** Mentors Recruited

15 mentors recruited in Africa, North Africa, the Middle East, Europe and North America.

Mentors Trained

- **May 2006:** Jean-Marc Fleury travels to Germany to meet with local science journalists association TELI which accepts to partner in organizing the training session for the mentors.
- **10-14 July 2006:** Training Session for Mentors in Munich, Germany

Mentoring Starts

- **August-September 2006:** mentees recruitment and confirmation (60)
- **End of September-October:** first contacts between mentors and their mentees via emails and the dedicated WE website. Mentoring starts
- **4-10 November 2006:** First face-to-face meeting in Nairobi, Kenya. The Nairobi meeting was the first opportunity for mentees and mentors to meet, except for those stopped at the airport. It was the opportunity to introduce the Evaluation and Monitoring Methodology into SjCOOP, plant the seeds for the creation of associations, and bring everyone on the same shared agenda ... except for those that demonstrated no real commitment and were let go. Coordinator Gervais Mbarga, mentor Isaac Njifakue and 10 mentees were stopped from entering Kenya while four of the 60 mentees who were supposed to be there did not make it due to personal engagements or lack of interest.

2007

- **February-mid April 2007:** Dismissed 6 mentees not committed to the program and recruited 6 new ones
- **29 March (Paris, France): Fifteen (15) SjCOOP mentees** are invited to a one-day training session on how to cover HIV-AIDS. Travel and per diem are covered by the French Agence nationale de recherches sur le sida et les hépatites virales. The session was organized by the French Association of science journalists which is twinned with Cameroon.
- **6 April (Morocco): Fourteen (14) SjCOOP mentees and mentors** from Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan, and Yemen are invited to cover research activities in Morocco and participate in a one-day SjCOOP training workshop in Casablanca, all expenses supported by the Cairo IDRC Regional Office. **April 2007:** asked Mr. Akin Jimoh to increase the traffic on the WE website, help the relationship between mentors and mentees and prepare the second face-to-face meeting with the coordinators
- **April 2007:** asked Mr. Akin Jimoh to increase the traffic on the WE website, help the relationship between mentors and mentees and prepare the second face-to-face meeting with the coordinators.

Associations Twinned

- **16 - 19 April (Melbourne, Australia):** The **5th World Conference of Science Journalists** brings more than 600 science journalists and science communicators from 54 countries to Melbourne. The three SjCOOP regional coordinators present the project to UNESCO. WFSJ brings 31 representatives of associations to Australia to participate in two special workshops on the management and sustainability of associations of science journalists. Nascent associations are twinned with well established associations from Asia, Europe and North America.

WFSJ supported the participation of:

- 3 Coordinators (Mr. Mbarga, Ms. Al-Awady and Mr. Onifade) and the internal evaluator Mr. Lublinski
- 3 Board members. The other members were supported by the Conference organizers

- 16 representatives of science journalists associations: nascent associations from Africa and established ones from the West and members of WFSJ.
- 7 representatives of science journalists associations from Asia and Latin America: Supplement grant from IDRC.

Evaluation of Mentors and Mentees Implemented

- **May - June 2007:**
 - Dismissed one mentor from the French-speaking group and recruited a new one.
 - Dismissed five mentees and recruited new ones (1 from the French-speaking group and 4 from the English-speaking group)
- **July-September 2007:** Mentees evaluation: who deserves to stay within the program
- **26 – 28 September** (Ban Honnef, Germany): Nadia El-Awady and Jan Lublinski present the SjCOOP results and evaluation methodology to our donors DfID and IDRC and at the **Symposium Measuring Change: Planning – Monitoring – Evaluation in Media Development**
- **October 2007:**
 - Dismissed the TV group: one mentor and 4 mentees. The fifth mentee was promoted to a mentor.
 - Dismissed another mentor who had a personal problem and could not continue with the project
 - Dismissed 6 mentees
 - Some mentees were transferred to another mentor

Mentoring becomes more structured

- **10-11 November 2007:** World Science Forum in Budapest, Hungary
 - Board and Program Committee meetings
 - Management team meeting to discuss the project second year.
 - Second year highlights: Customized mentoring, Skypechats or discussion forums, one article per month, one chapter of the online course each two months
 - Planning for the second face-to-face meeting
- **14 November** (Dakar, Sénégal): Diran Onifade, SjCOOP Regional Coordinator for Anglophone Africa, presents SjCOOP at the last plenary session of the 3rd Annual International Conference of the African Science Academy Development Initiative (ASADI). Following Mr. Onifade's presentation, the ASADI organizers ask WFSJ to organize one half-day of its next annual meeting, in 2009.
- **27 November** (Bremen, Germany): The Executive Director of WFSJ is invited by the Bertelsmann Foundation to present the SjCOOP project at the annual meeting of German science journalists Wissenswerte.

Skype takes off!

- **8 December:** Some 41 mentees and mentors participate in a Skypechat and a Skypecast to review, discuss and approve plans for the second year of SjCOOP.
- **12 December** (Doha, Qatar): Aljazeera Network and the Qatar Foundation confirm that they will partner with WFSJ to host the **second SjCOOP face-to-face meeting in Doha, 4 – 10 February**. The Qatar Foundation will cover all local costs.

- **December-February 2007:** Dismissed 6 other mentees who were given a second chance but were not committed.

Survivors Meet for Final Stretch

2008

4 – 9 February 2008 (Doha, Qatar): the second face-to-face meeting bringing all mentors and mentees together was held 4 – 10 February 2008 in Doha (Qatar), in cooperation with the Qatar Foundation and the Al Jazeera Media Training and Development Centre.

- With the Project Director and Project Manager, a total of 80 persons participated in the Doha meeting: 3 regional coordinators, 15 mentors, 37 mentees, 2 consultants (IT and Evaluation), and 17 representatives of associations of science journalists. Japan sent one representative, Australia funded two participants, and the USA sent one speaker. Including mentees and mentors, there were representatives from 24 associations of science journalists. IDRC delegated three representatives, including Dr. Rohinton Medhora, its Vice-President Programme.
- Doha was a second opportunity for most mentors and mentees to meet face to face and strengthen their relationship. The Doha Program included a) Taking stock of SjCOOP mentoring and confirming the Evaluation Criteria of Mentees, b) Training on managing an association of science journalists; c) Presentations by associations' representatives, d) Review of science journalism basics, e) Reporting and Writing Competition, f) Training on how to freelance, sell stories and manage editors.
- Thanks to the collaboration of the Al Jazeera Media Training and Development Centre, we were able to videotape mentees doing their pitch to sell stories to editors (several mentors are editors and played the role of editors). These videos were presented to the whole group and used to illustrate the 'dos' and 'don'ts' of pitching stories to editors. These exercises were excellent to review in a dramatic way many basic characteristics of a successful story.
- In Doha, some 29 participants represented 24 different associations of science journalists. Fifteen (16) of these associations were from the developing world, at various stages of development: Algeria, Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda including the two regional associations, the African Federation of Science Journalists and the Arab Science Journalists Association, as well as Indonesia, whose representative's participation was supported by the Association of Australian Communicators. Ten of these associations are now official members of the World Federation of Science Journalists; eight have been twinned with an association from a developed country; which had a representative in Doha.
- Representatives of the different associations had the opportunity to present their achievements, share experience and benefit from a presentation on how to organize and maintain an association by the Executive Director of the United States' National Association of Science Writers (whose travel was supported by the US association).
- WFSJ supported the participation of 71 participants:
 - Management team
 - 14 mentors and the WE moderator
 - 38 mentees out of 40
 - 11 representatives of science journalists associations.

Launch of Online Course

- **4 February 2008** (Doha, Qatar): Launch of Online Course in Science Journalism

Three (3) completed versions of the first online course in science journalism -- 8 lessons in Arabic, English and French -- are officially launched during the official opening of the Doha face-to-face SjCOOP meeting: www.wfsj.org/course

The mentees, members of the test class, also received a certificate for their help in making this course a success.

The Doha Meeting included a debate on science journalism covered by Al Jazeera. Panellists included (from left to right) Dr. Gervais Mbarga, Professor of Science Journalism, University of Yaoundé (Cameroon); Mr. Patrice Goldberg, Producer of science TV program 'Matière Grise', Radio Télévision Belge, Brussels (Belgium); Ms. Zeinab Ghosn, Science Editor, As-Safir newspaper, Cairo (Egypt); Mr. Ahmed El-Sheikh, Editor in Chief Al Jazeera Network, Doha (Qatar). Shereen El Feki, of Al Jazeera International, was the moderator.



You can watch the panel on the World Federation of Science Journalists' YouTube page at <http://www.youtube.com/WFSJorg> and see pictures on the WFSJ website at <http://www.wfsj.org/news/news.php?id=100>

- **April 2008:** Mid-term evaluation: the mentors were asked to rate their mentees (%). The idea was to tell the mentees who did well to continue their good work and to inform those who are lagging behind that they needed to work harder during the remaining months if they wanted to graduate.

Transborders Stories

- **April to September 2008** (Africa and the Middle East): Transborders Stories

In order to maintain the Doha momentum and keep challenging mentees, the concept of Transborders Articles is introduced. These articles are written collaboratively by teams of mentees from different countries. A dozen different teams comprised of two to nine journalists from different countries collaborated on stories. Editors from eight (8) African newspapers, three magazines, two national news agencies, and SciDev.net published the transborders stories. These transborders stories were the first ever published by SiDev.net.

Editors from eight (8) African newspapers, three magazines, two national news agencies, and SciDev.net publish 'transborders stories', written by teams of SjCOOP journalists from different countries.

- **May-July 2008:** Article evaluations: In each group, three assessors are asked to evaluate two articles of the mentees, one when they joined the program and a recent one. There was only one assessor for the English speaking group
- **May 2008:** The **Microsoft Share Point dedicated website** (called WE) was winded down. Most mentees and several mentors complained of difficulties in accessing the website. Mentees accessing the internet from cybercafés were particularly at a disadvantage. The delays in getting Share Point pages open, -- conjugated to the continuous request to input passwords --, made the use of such specialized website extremely frustrating. Mentees and mentors resorted to using emails and attachments.

- **May – September: Distance Mentoring:** Mentoring at a distance is completed by **Skype casts and Skype chats**. All mentees and mentors benefited from further training in the use of Skype during the Doha meeting, 4 – 10 February 2008 and received a **headset**. Skype accounts were opened for all coordinators and mentors to facilitate exchange with the mentees.
- **18-22 July (Barcelona): All three (3) SjCOOP coordinators** present SjCOOP at the European Science Open Forum (ESOF2008), in Barcelona, during a panel held Tuesday morning 22nd July 2008. The panel was titled: Building Networks - How to Support Science Journalists in Developing Countries.

Focus on Support to Associations

- On **20th July 2008**, in Barcelona, the Board of the World Federation of Science Journalists approves funding varying between \$15K and \$25K for 5 proposals, submitted respectively by the Arab Science Journalists' Association, the Uganda Science Journalists' Association, MESHSA (Kenya's association of science journalists), the Nigeria Association of Science Journalists and the Rwanda Association of Science Journalists.

Individual Mentoring Ends

- **September:** Individual Mentoring ends
- **September to December 2008:** Monitoring, Evaluation and Report Writing
 - Interviews of editors and scientists in African and the Middle East
 - Mentors' evaluation by mentees
 - Coordinators' evaluation by mentors
 - Final evaluation of the mentees and graduation of 32 science journalists from the SjCOOP program
- **17 September: More than fifty (50) mentees and mentors** participate in a Skypechat to confirm the SjCOOP graduation criteria.

Associations hold Training Workshops

- **25 October (Fez, Morocco): More than thirty (30) writers and editors from 16 Arab countries** hold the first-ever conference of the Arab Science Journalists Association (ASJA). A share of the SjCOOP grant is used to support the participation of science journalists from other Arab countries in order to share experience and reinforce the pan-Arab nascent network of science journalists. ASJA succeeds in complementing the SjCOOP support with funds from IDRC while the US National Association of Science Writers (which is twinned with the Arab Association) funded the participation of four of its members to attend Fez.



- **24 November (Kampala, Uganda): Yoweri Museveni, President of Uganda**, through his speech read by his Minister of Information, praises the work of the Uganda Science Journalists' Association during the 2008 Uganda Science Communication Conference which brought together 150 science journalists, science communicators and scientists. A share of the grants supports the participation of science journalists from other African countries in order to share experience and reinforce the pan-African nascent networks of science journalists' associations.

- **1st December** (Johannesburg, South Africa): **Forty (40) South African science journalists** launch the South African Science Writers' Association. SjCOOP mentor Christina Scott is vice-president of SAWA while president George Classens participated in the Doha meeting organized by SjCOOP.
- **8 to 11 December** (Nairobi, Kenya): **Forty (40) journalists working in Kenya's regions** attend hands-on training organized by the Kenyan Association of Science Journalists (MESHA). A share of the grant supports the participation of science journalists from other African countries in order to share experience and reinforce the pan-African nascent networks of science journalists' associations.
- **11 December** (Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire): **SjCOOP mentee Théodore Kouadio**, journalist with newspaper *Fraternité-Matin*, wins Dan Moussa Prize as the journalist who contributed the most to peace in West Africa, in 2008.
- **15 to 18 December** (Kigali, Rwanda): Fifty (50) journalists reporting in print, TV, radio and online gather at the first ever workshop on science journalism in Kigali. A share of the grants supports the participation of science journalists from other African countries in order to share experience and reinforce the pan-African nascent networks of science journalists' associations.

32 SjCOOP Mentees Graduate

- **24 December: Thirty-two (32) mentees** are officially confirmed successful graduates from the SjCOOP mentoring project.

2009

- **12-16 February 2009:** AAAS meeting in Chicago, USA
 - Board meeting
 - Team meeting to discuss SjCOOP phase II : Mr. Fleury, Mr. Mbarga, Ms. Al-Awady, Mr. Denis and Ms. Labassi

SjCOOP Ends

- **March-May:** External Evaluation



3. SjCOOP Questions and Answers

Who has benefited already and how?

Forty-four (44) journalists in 23 countries of Africa and the Middle East are now recognized as science journalists in their own country. Many of them now freelance internationally. They are now part of the international community of science journalists. Fifteen have received promotions. More than 600 journalists are now members of seven new associations of science journalists and others are connected through eight still informal groups initiated in as many countries.



These journalists have benefited from promotions, prizes, and increased income through freelancing and teaching. They are now recognized by editors and local scientists as competent to report on health, environmental and science.

Who are the indirect beneficiaries?

Indirect beneficiaries are the African and Arab scientists who can now be interviewed in a more competent way and can therefore contribute more actively to evidence-based public debates. Policy makers can implement better policies and the general public can benefit from a better environment and health.

Their communities and countries have also benefited since these journalists have also caused changes to policies and decisions: award-winning reporting to promote peace, a corrupted AIDS drugs official was dismissed, funds to fix potential threats from Lake Nyos in Cameroon were unfrozen, a health minister stopped smoking in public, an industrial plant had to install anti-pollution equipment and several instances of false scientific claims have been debunked in Benin, Nigeria and South Africa.

What is the actual or potential impact of the research?

The project has demonstrated that, within two years, it is possible to train, at a distance, developing country general reporters in the skills of science reporting. This is possible with a mentoring approach through the use of internet, emails, Skypechats and Skypecasts, as well as occasional face-to-face meetings.

Trained journalists evolve gradually while working in their milieu, **in situ**. Editors see them improving their skills, and start giving them more space. They also become trainers in science reporting for their colleagues and even teach at local universities. SjCOOP's ultimate impact is a better informed public debate leading to evidence-based policy making by connecting the media, in Africa and in the Middle East, to local and international scientific expertise.

Why is SjCOOP research novel?

For the first time, SjCOOP offered sustained and comprehensive **in situ** distance training in science reporting to dozens of African and Arab journalists. The training was based on a mentor-mentee approach. The journalists received training in the basic skills of science reporting but – because the training was offered by peers – they also received ‘real-time’ advice on how to develop their careers as science journalists.

The combination of **in situ** training with the **extended two-year** support simultaneously changed the journalists **and** their environment, i.e. editors gave them more space or time to report on scientific issues as the journalists were growing in expertise.

This approach is also novel because it eliminates trainees lost to the program since trainees remain in their work environment.

What made SjCOOP research successful?

The peer-to-peer approach assured that trained journalists would get relevant advice, not only in the basic skills of science reporting but also in how to develop their career, i.e. how to pitch stories to editors and how to freelance.

The large scale of the project created a strong network of colleagues motivated to move forward together. Journalists were networked within their own country through the creation of local associations; regionally through Skype conferences and the production of transborder stories; and internationally through the twinning of their association with European and North American associations of science journalists.

Continuous monitoring and evaluation using the Outcome Mapping methodology also made sure necessary adjustments were made regularly.



4. SjCOOP Results per Objective

Objective 1: Professional development of science journalists

SjCOOP's first objective was to train and develop a network of science journalists in Africa and in the Arab World. Ideally, this training activity would also put in place the framework of a long-term relationship between experienced science journalists and aspiring science journalists from the developing world.



Results

External evaluators have found that 12 journalists are now much better at writing about science, while 20 have improved more or less.

The improvement in the quality of their reporting is confirmed by the fact that 18 now freelance internationally while 22 have been awarded some 44 prizes, internships, scholarships and awards.

During the project, three SjCOOP graduates earned the prestigious MIT Knight Science Journalism one-year Fellowship in 2007, 2008 and 2009: Esther Nakazi (Uganda), Kimani Chege (Kenya), and Onche Odeh (Nigeria) while two SjCOOP mentees won the prestigious IDRC 10-month internship and travelling scholarship: Catherine Yogo (Cameroon) and Fatiha Chara/Nour (Algeria).

Mentee Mame Aly Konte (Senegal) won the 2008 Prize for best Science Article from the Senegalese Science Academy and mentee Théodore Kouadio (Côte d'Ivoire) won the 2008 Dan Moussa Prize for the reporting contributing the most to peace in his region.

SjCOOP managers, coordinators and mentors insisted and prodded participating journalists from Africa and the Arab World to compete internationally for prizes and awards. WFSJ held two international competitions where one mentor (3 weeks in the Arctic) and one mentee (EcoHealth Conference in Merida, Mexico) were winners. (There would have been a much larger number of African winners in the second competition if it had not been of the impossibility for them of getting their visas on time).

Professionally, SjCOOP was a boost to the career of several mentors and mentees. Fifteen SjCOOP journalists received promotions in their newspaper, news agency, radio or TV station because of improved skills

Mentor Otula Owuor (Kenya) launched a new pan-African science magazine: **ScienceAfrica**, in June 2008, tapping the SjCOOP network of science journalists.

The most discussed story ever published on www.SciDev.net was written by SjCOOP mentee Alexander Abutu (Nigeria).

Five new television programs (**Invention and Innovation** and **Green World**, by Fatiha Nour, Algeria), the health programs of the new Arabic satellite television channel **Ana TV**, and two

new science programs by Dora Shey, **Talking the Science that We Live** and **Health First** are productions of SjCOOP mentees.

Mentees in Algeria, Benin, Cameroon and Sudan launched six new science radio programs: **Invention & Innovation**, radio version, with Fatiha Nour (Algeria Radio & TV); Radio **news bulletin** and weekly program **The Lantern** (La Lenterne), by Godefroy Macaire Chabi (Benin Radio); **Man and Environment** and **Health in Focus** by ElKheir Fadl Alla Musa, in Khartoum, (Sudan); and **Science at Your Doorstep** by Dora Shey, on Cameroon national radio.

And their print colleagues created seven (7) new newspaper Science Pages and beats.

A lasting legacy of the SjCOOP training exercise is the first ever 8-lesson online course in science journalism: in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish (<http://www.wfsj.org/course/>). The course is being used directly or complementing courses to train journalists in the Arab World, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, South America, and South Africa.

SjCOOP started as a mentoring project but evolved to include teaching and training and eventually adopted graduation criteria for the participating journalists (mentees).

In the end, 32 of the mentees were graduated and awarded the SjCOOP diploma in science journalism. These 32 journalists work in 14 African countries: Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Congo-Kinshasa, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda, and Zambia; and seven North African and Middle Eastern countries: Algeria, Egypt, Emirates, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Sudan.

SjCOOP was also an opportunity for the development of trainers in science journalism. A legacy of the project is the three high level and high profile coordinators, Gervais Mbarga (Cameroon), Diran Onifade (Nigeria) and Nadia el-Awady (Egypt) who now all have extensive hands-on experience in managing regional training projects in science journalism in Africa and the Arab World, using distance education technology and methodology.

Coordinator Gervais Mbarga has been asked to consult for UNESCO programs in journalism. Coordinator Nadia El-Awady joined the Board of Trustees of SciDev.net and Coordinator Diran Onifade was invited to the May 2009 Africa Knowledge Management Conference in Dakar (Senegal). Gervais Mbarga and Diran Onifade have also been invited to sit on the organizing committee and speak at the African Science Communication Conference, in 2006 and 2009.

The five (5) mentors in Africa and the four (4) mentors in the Arab World trained in mentoring science journalists in the Arab World are another lasting legacy of SjCOOP. These resources are already taped regionally with mentee Ms. Hanan Al-Kiswany (Jordan) becoming a trainer in science journalism for the Jordanian Ministry of Health and USAID and mentor Hatem Sedky (Egypt) teaching science journalism at Cairo University and mentee Rivonala Razafison (Madagascar) at the University of Antananarivo (Madagascar). Several other mentors and mentees participated in organizing and delivering training workshops in science journalism in Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Qatar, Rwanda, Syria, and Uganda.

All of these new trainers in science journalism are also practicing professional science journalists.

SjCOOP achieved training, training of trainers and also developed an evaluation and monitoring methodology for distance training in science journalism. This was accomplished by science journalist Dr. Jan Lublinski (Germany) who, for the first time, applied the IDRC Outcome Mapping Evaluation and Mentoring Methodology to a media training project.

Objective 2: Establishment of associations of science journalists

SjCOOP also aimed at putting in place and supporting national and regional associations of science journalists in Africa and in the Arab World.

Results

By the end of SjCOOP, seven (7) associations of science journalists had been established in the Arab World, Cameroon, Ghana, Rwanda, South Africa, Sudan, and Uganda. Another eight associations of science journalists are still in the making in Algeria, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Jordan, Madagascar, Morocco, Qatar, and Senegal.

Three associations of science journalists have been reinvigorated at the national level in Kenya and Nigeria and at the pan-African level (African Federation of Science Journalists).

In order to provide long term support for the developing world associations, eight of them have been twinned with well established associations in the developed world:

- African Federation of Science Journalists with Germany (TELI)
- Algeria with Québec
- Arab Science Journalists with American science journalists
- Cameroon with France
- Kenya with Canada
- Nigeria with Germany (WPK)
- Qatar with Japan
- Uganda with the United Kingdom

The scope of the project was such that SjCOOP also led to the twinning of associations outside the regions targeted by the project: Indonesia with Australia and Qatar with Japan.

Sixteen (16) associations of science journalists from the developing world are now official voting members of the World Federation of Science Journalists: the African Federation of Science Journalists, the Network of African Journalists on Earth Science (Tanzania), the Arab Associations of Science Journalists, as well as the science journalists associations of Bangladesh, Brazil, Cameroon, China, Colombia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Rwanda, Sudan, and Uganda

The level of self-confidence and acceptance of the new African and Arab science journalists' associations is demonstrated with Kenya, South African, Uganda and the Arab Federation of Science Journalists working to bid for the 7th World Conference of Science Journalists, planned for 2011. Such ambitious goals would not exist if it were not for the unprecedented networking, exchanges and collaboration that SjCOOP made possible between science journalists from the developed world and their colleagues in the developing world.

The associations of science journalists in Anglophone Africa are estimated to represent some 320 journalists: African Federation (55), Ghana (6), Kenya (54), Tanzania-NAJES (25), Nigeria (130), Uganda (27), and South Africa (23). In Francophone Africa, a total of 88 journalists are members of associations: Cameroon (20), Rwanda (43), Senegal (15) and Benin (10). And some 215 journalists are presented by the associations of science journalists in the Arab-speaking countries: Arab Science Journalists' Association (175), Sudan (35) and the nascent association of science journalists being established in Jordan.

Objective 3: Establishment of the World Federation of Science Journalists

A third objective of the SjCOOP project was to put on firm footing the World Federation of Science Journalists (WFSJ), establish WFSJ as a supportive partner of science journalists and associations of science journalists in developing countries, and provide a framework to transfer developing world science journalism expertise to other parts of the world.

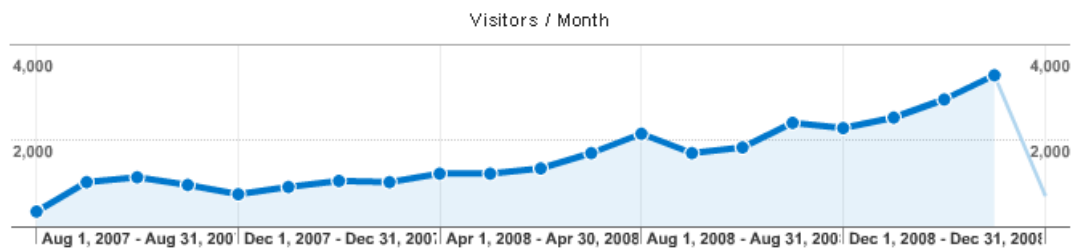
Results

Designing and implementing the SjCOOP project has been a rallying point for the board and the associations which are members of the World Federation of Science Journalists. Supporting their colleagues in the developing world struck a cord with the science journalists in the industrialized countries of Asia, Europe and North America.

During SjCOOP, the Federation's membership increased from 27 to 40 associations, with 12 new member associations from the developing world (8 from Africa, one each from the Arab World and Latin America, and two from Asia), and 5 from Europe.

The WFSJ web site is a crucial activity of the World Federation. As SjCOOP unfolded, it was highlighted on the public website of WFSJ. The number of pages on the web site increased from an initial 50 pages to 1,380 pages (of which some 1,000 pages are taken by the 5 language versions of the online course!). Some 110 news items were published of which 49 cover or are related to project SjCOOP. There are now 16 science journalists from all over the world who are contributing to the blogs, of which 7 are from the developing world (3 from the Arab World, 3 from Latin America and one from Africa).

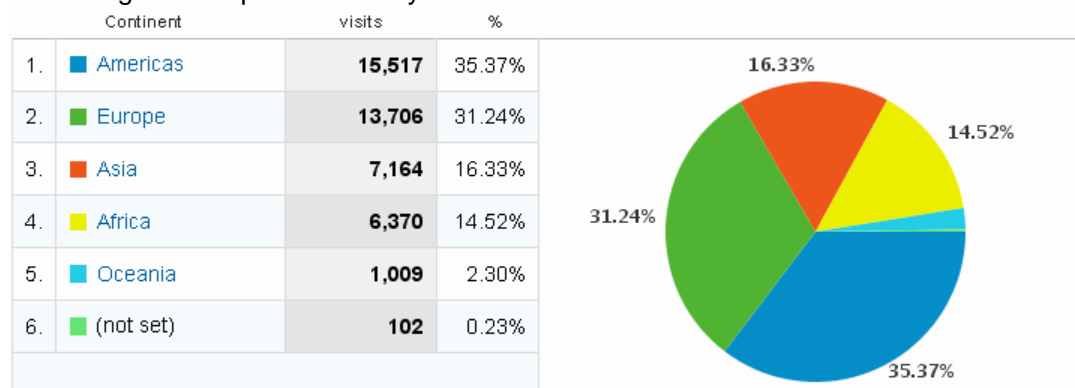
The numbers of visits has only been tracked since August 2007, but shows a definitive increase in the number of visitors and page views



A most satisfying data from the website metrics is the relatively high percentage of visitors from the developing world.



WFSJ.org visitors' provenance by continents



When comparing numbers of monthly visits per continents during the last 12 months (April 2008 to April 2009), Africa shows the largest increase.

Continent	Visits	Visits
Americas	1,406	119.34%
Europe	1,067	127.99%
Asia	731	198.37%
Africa	707	288.46%
Oceania	68	195.65%
(not set)	2	100.00%

Finally, SjCOOP strengthened the WFSJ Secretariat in providing a major opportunity to learn how to manage a multi-continent large-scale training project. Thanks to the project, WFSJ has now on its staff a Project Director and a Project Manager with skills in managing such projects in Arabic, English and French; an information technology specialist perfectly attuned with the technological realities and circumstances of the developing world, and a small network of consultants in several countries who can provide specific expertise.

Objective 4: Establishment of relationships between scientists and the media

Because of the generally poor relationship between scientists and journalists in the developing world, a final goal of SjCOOP was to make scientists in Africa and the Arab World benefit from better reporting of their research. Ultimately, true to its Constitution which states that the World Federation of Science Journalists “seeks to further science journalism as a bridge between science, scientists and the public” and “promote the role of science journalists as key players in civil society and democracy”, a final goal of SjCOOP was to insert the ideas and research results of local scientists in local public arena to enlighten public debate and policy-making.

Results

However tense the relationship between scientists and journalists in the developing world, they interact.

Analysis of a sample of 200 articles produced by SjCOOP science journalists demonstrated that some 70% of the sources quoted are local, with two thirds of the quotes from local scientists, researchers and doctors.

SjCOOP improved specific relationships between its participating journalists and the local scientific community. Numerous quotes of appreciation from scientists towards the SjCOOP-trained science journalists can be found in the Portraits of Mentees section of this report. The 2008 Prize for Best Science Article awarded to mentee Mame Aly Konte by the Senegalese Academy of Science is only but one indication of the scientists' recognition of the improved reporting of science.

Beyond the improved interpersonal relationships and the increased thrust in the reporting abilities of the trained journalists, SjCOOP took opportunities to promote institutional collaboration, by promoting interactions of associations of science journalists with science organizations.

In November 2007, SjCOOP Coordinator Diran Onifade presented SjCOOP at the African science academies' meeting in Dakar under the auspices of the African Science Academies Development Initiative (ASADI). The academicians then decided to invite the African science journalists to participate in their Fifth Annual International Conference of the African Science Academy Development Initiative (ASADI) scheduled to be held in Accra, Ghana on November 10-11, 2009. Mr. Onifade was also invited by the African scientific community at the African Knowledge Management Conference, in Dakar, in May 2009.

The Arab Science Journalists Association (ASJA) has also now established relationship with the Islamic World Academy of Sciences which invited the SjCOOP Project Director and the SjCOOP Middle East Coordinator to present SjCOOP at their 16th Conference, in August 2008, in Kazan, Tatarstan (Russia). ASJA also partnered with the Arab Science and Technology Foundation to organize the First Conference of Arab Science Journalists, 25th October 2008, in Fez (Morocco).

The Board of the World Federation of Science Journalists, which includes two SjCOOP coordinators is now regularly invited to participate in the Budapest World Science Forum, held every second year, and they also participate and are invited to the Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (USA), and the Open Science Forum (ESOF) held every second year in an European country.

The Arab Science Journalists' Association, which is bidding to organize the 7th World Conference of Science Journalists, has also the full support of several Arab scientific organizations like the Arab Medical Union, Egypt's National Research Centre, the Arabian Gulf University, the National Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries, and the Center for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe.

On 24th November 2008, the Uganda Science Journalists' Association (USJA) succeeded a major coup in having the country's president, Yoweri Museveni, highlight the importance of science journalists at the opening of the November 2008 Conference for Science Communication, which USJA organized in collaboration with Uganda's scientific bodies and ministries, with support from SjCOOP.

Research News
Uganda's President says better reporting of science is key to development

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni kicked off the Uganda Conference for Science Communication 2008 with a keynote speech on the importance of science journalism.

President Museveni said journalists in the region had not been active enough in reporting scientific issues, and there was no way the region could achieve accelerated socioeconomic development unless it promoted scientific research findings: "There is a need to bridge the existing gap between journalists and scientists".



Similarly, in Rwanda, the Rwanda Association of Science Journalists (RASJ) held the first ever workshop on science journalism, 15 – 18 December 2008, in Kigali, in collaboration with Rwanda scientists. In Nigeria, the Nigeria Association of Science Journalists has organized weekly science forums featuring experts from the Science and Technology Ministry and the National Science Academy. All these activities received small SjCOOP grants.

Though it was not an explicit objective, there were several examples of articles or programs produced by science journalists participating in SjCOOP that had an influence on policy making and decision making. Here are some examples:

- Installation of mitigating equipment to prevent carbon dioxide overflow (Cameroon)
- Filtering system installed on cement plant (Jordan)
- Debunking false scientific claims (Benin, Nigeria and South Africa)
- Breaking story on misallocation of AIDS funds (Uganda)
- Breaking story on natural sickle cell medicine fraud (Nigeria)
- Setting up water treatment equipment (Iraq)
- Promoting support to science and innovation (Algeria)
- Stopping Health Minister from smoking (Jordan)
- Recognition of needs of persons displaced by war (Côte d'Ivoire)

Finally, SjCOOP elicited support from several scientific bodies and foundations.

The Qatar Foundation supported local costs of the second face-to-face meeting in Doha, Qatar 4 – 10 February 2008.

Additional funding was contributed by UNESCO to facilitate board meetings, the Robert Bosch Foundation to cover meetings of mentors and board members, and Elsevier and the Brazilian Ministry of Science & Technology and the Fundação Oswaldo Cruz which covered the respective costs of the translation into Chinese and Portuguese of the 8-lesson Online Course in Science Journalism.

5. Evaluation

This chapter presents the evaluation criteria that were developed to measure the progress of the SjCOOP participants, captured through the Monitoring and Evaluation Methodology **Outcome Mapping** that was implemented throughout the project.



Coordinators

Coordinators were evaluated according to the following three main criteria:

Coordination skills: improvements in management skills and leadership, i.e. improvement of their relationship with mentors and mentees and how they helped their respective groups go forward;

Project ownership: engagement beyond what was agreed in the contract, i.e. working on the online course, helping the establishment of new associations in their regions, helping management team with new ideas; and

Career development: increased recognition as a science journalist, as a trainer in science journalism, and international recognition.

The coordinators, who were responsible for monitoring the mentor-mentee relationships in their groups, were not formally evaluated and monitored as boundary partners through the evaluation and monitoring methodology implemented during the project (Outcome Mapping).

However, they played such an important role and since they were all from the developing world, we include them in the report. The following portraits are made from a survey of mentors and mentees and the SjCOOP secretariat.

Mentors

Mentors were a mix of experienced journalists from developing countries and developed ones. Those from developed countries certainly learned from the experience, but the project was mainly concerned about training trainers in science journalism in the developing countries. Their progress was evaluated according to the following three main criteria:

Mentoring skills: improvements in mentoring skills, improvement of the relationship with mentees and abilities on how to deal with problems;

Project ownership: engagement beyond what was agreed in the contract, i.e. working on the online course, helping other mentees outside those in one's own group; and

Career development: increased recognition as a trainer in science journalism.

In the terminology of the evaluation and monitoring methodology implemented throughout the project (Outcome Mapping), these portraits of mentors present the data captured in relation with the following progress markers:

Expect to see:

- Mentors getting in touch with mentees and establish a working relationship

Like to see:

- Mentors actively changing and re-shaping their mentoring-relationship over time
- Mentors supporting mentees in taking part in the online course
- Mentors helping overcome important professional problems of mentees, advising in their career and counselling
- Mentors using the network of the project for their work.

Love to see:

- Mentors engaging in the project beyond plans and contract and showing additional activity to develop their mentoring relationship
- Mentors/mentees doing joint projects: series/trainings
- Mentors being involved in “babies” of this project.

Most of the quotes and material used for these portraits are available in questionnaires and reports produced through the implementation of the Outcome Mapping monitoring.

**Mentees**

The progress of mentees was analysed according to the following three main criteria:

Quality (Writing skills): improvements in writing skills, i.e. improvements in the quality of their science reporting;

Quantity (Production): increases in their production of science reporting in their own media and for new outlets, and

Career: progress in becoming recognized science journalists, either by becoming responsible for science pages or science programs, or by winning awards and scholarships, or by becoming trainers in science journalism.

In the terminology of the evaluation and monitoring methodology implemented throughout the project (Outcome Mapping), these portraits of mentees present the data captured in relation with the following progress markers:

Expect to see:

- Mentees improving writing skills

Like to see:

- Mentees doing more science reporting
- Mentees working for new news outlets

Love to see:

- Mentees winning journalism awards
- Mentees creating a new science beat or enlarging old ones
- Mentees making a career: becoming head of science beats / departments or chief editors
- Mentees becoming mentors or trainers



6. The Arabophone Group

Having an Arabic Group, which represented initially only one third (26) of the 77 initial participants (1 coordinator, 5 mentors and 20 mentees) created major challenges but was a wonderful blessing in the end.

Historically, geopolitically, economically and cooperation-wise there are tremendous complex interactions and relations between Black Africa, or Sub-Saharan Africa, and Arabic North Africa and the Middle East. The project capitalized on that.

The Arab journalists benefited from the African English-speaking participating journalists, which were the strongest and most experienced in science journalism. The Arab journalists also brought their own experience and superb contacts. It is thanks to the participation of the Arab Group that SjCOOP had the immense benefit of hosting its second extremely successful face-to-face meeting in Doha, with the tremendous support of the Qatar Foundation and Al Jazeera Network.

It was initially extremely difficult to recruit Arab participants. It was nearly impossible for several to create an association in their own country. Participation was initially tepid. But under the exceptional leadership of Nadia El-Awady, the very strong and dedicated Arab mentors made the whole process a success.

The Arab Group of graduated mentees is smaller than expected, 10 out of 20. One of the reasons is the problem of initial selection. But this number is also due to the fact that the TV journalists' group was terminated and that there was a larger portion of TV journalists in this group.

At the end of SjCOOP, the whole Arab World has a superb regional association, the Arab Science Journalists' Association. ASJA is now firmly established and benefiting journalists in the whole developing Arab World.



Arab-speaking Mentors and Mentees			
Name	Country	Position	Employer
Musa Fadl Alla	Sudan	Environmental Journalist	Sudanese Environment Conservation Society
Mahmoud Mustafa Al-Dwiri	Jordan	Editor and producer of Earth & Roses Program	Aman.Net Radio Station
Hanin Fahmi Al-Ramahi	Jordan	Program producer and reporter for IT and youth Issues	Amman.net Radio Station
Musa Fadl Allah	Sudan	Science Journalist	Khartoum Daily newspaper and Radio
Raghida Haddad	Lebanon	Executive Editor	Al-Bia Wal-Tanmia Magazine
Hadi Essami	Iraq	Reporter	Attaakhi newspaper, Iraqi News Agency, and Newspaper Fraternity
Hanan AL-Kiswany	Lebanon	Science Journalist	Al-Ghad newspaper
Nehal Lasheen	Egypt	Editor and manager of science programs	Ana TV
Magdy Said	Egypt	News Editor	IslamOnline. Science and Cultural Department
Hichem Boumedjout	Algeria	Sports Reporter	Almassaa newspaper
Fatiha Chara	Algeria	Science Journalist	Algerian National Radio
Hatem Sedky	Egypt	Science editor and Chief editor's assistant	Al-Ahram Newspaper
Haider Nigm Abdelzihra	Iraq	Press Reporter	Asharq Alawsat newspaper
Zeinab Ghosn	Egypt	Science Editor	As-Safir Newspaper

Coordinator: Nadia El-Awady (Egypt)

Freelance Science journalist and Media Consultant



“SjCOOP has opened up so many opportunities for me. It first gave me experience in program management and in monitoring and evaluation. It was directly because of this that the International Center for Journalists hired me to work as program manager for one of its projects in Egypt.

SjCOOP also gave me tremendous experience in organizing larger face-to-face meetings and in fundraising. It is due to this,

the huge network of contacts that I have accumulated during the two years of SjCOOP, and the credibility that my name has gained because of my work with SjCOOP that I was able to organize the 1st Arab Conference for Science Journalists. And that credibility also resulted, in my opinion, in me being chosen as a member of the board of trustees of SciDev.net.

Because of SjCOOP and its many side activities, I have also been provided with many opportunities to speak at international conferences. When I started speaking, I had complete and utter stage fright. While I still have stage fright, it doesn't show as much anymore and I have more self-confidence on the podium. Basically, the past two years have been a tremendous boost not only to my career but also to my own inter-personal skills.

And now that this project has ended, with a major component of it being helping us build the Arab Science Journalists Association (ASJA), I am pleased to announce that ASJA will be bidding to host the 7th World Conference for Science Journalists!

Wish us luck!”

Nadia El-Awady

Mentor: Raghida Haddad (Lebanon)

Executive Editor, **Al-Bia Wal-Tanmia** Magazine

“Of course I benefited from SJCOOP. It was mutual interest. I believe I learned from my mentees as much as they learned from me: Picking their enthusiasm, experiencing their journalistic problems with them while trying to solve them together. As an editor, I know difficulties that journalists face, especially in our part of the world where sources of good information are often hard to get and where some scientific facts and figures that should be open to the public are treated like state secrets.



“It was also rewarding to see my mentees get national and international awards.

“I should also mention that I really benefited from the online course myself, going through it and discussing it with my mentees. It’s an excellent, free and handy tool for any journalist or editor to improve their skills, even after years of professional experience.”

Mentee: Hanan Al-Kiswany (Jordan)

Reporter at the daily newspaper **Al-Ghad**

Mentor’s Comment

“Excellent investigative science journalist, especially in medical issues. Many of her articles stirred the Jordanian community and helped change medical policies. Winner of numerous awards, bold, courageous and well informed, Hanan was recently commissioned by USAID to train 15 Jordanian journalists on health reporting.”



Raghida Haddad, Executive Editor, **Al-Bia Wal-Tanmia** Magazine, Beirut (Lebanon)

IMPACT

(1) -- Hanan wrote a story about AIDS orphans, in December 2007. Because it was a new and touching subject, the story was published on the first page. It was highly appreciated by her chief editor; it was re-published in international outlets such as BBC, Monte Carlo, and www.Alarabiya.net. There was a lot of feedback, especially from UNDP and UNESCO. Hanan asked to work as a volunteer in a new NGO association which was established to support AIDS infected people. **The Minister of Health, Dr. Bassam Hajjawi, established a special unit for AIDS fighting within his Ministry.**

(2) -- Hanan also wrote a story about smoking in the Health Ministry’s premises that **led to the Health Minister stopping smoking in public and the installation of ‘No Smoking’ signs in the offices and corridors of the Ministry of Health.**

Mentee: Essami Hadi (Iraq)

Reporter and editor with the **Attaakhi** newspaper

(<http://www.taakhinews.org/>)

Mentor's Comment

"In spite of risky conditions that Iraqi journalists encounter, and having to write about all types of topics, Hadi never failed to write science articles. Still taking courses to improve his English, he is now reporting to Reuters, in addition to his newspaper job. Hadi got a national award for his anti-smoking campaign."



Raghida Haddad, Executive Editor, Al-Bia Wal-Tanmia Magazine, Beirut (Lebanon)

IMPACT

In April 2007, Hadi wrote an article on 'What the people of Baghdad drink'.

It talked about the suffering of six million people on getting clean water to drink. His article was extremely popular and re-published in many outlets, in AL Hayat daily (the most respected newspaper published in Arabic), Islamonline.net, and also in all the ten major daily newspapers of Baghdad.

Hadi got a special bonus from the magazine and was promoted from reporter to editor.

Because of this story, the project of water treatment of Baghdad was speeded up and it will be completed by May 2008.

Mentee: Lasheen Nehal (Egypt)

Deputy science editor at **Islamonline.net's** Arabic Web site

Mentor's Comment

"Her articles used to be limited to medical issues. During the program, she was motivated to write about other scientific topics, such as environmental issues, and built her capacities in interviewing scientists and in editing. She later shifted to a new satellite TV and is now responsible for the production of a medical/health education program."

Raghida Haddad, Executive Editor, Al-Bia Wal-Tanmia Magazine, Beirut (Lebanon)



Mentor: Hatem Sedky (Egypt)

Science editor, **Al-Ahram** Newspaper,

“There is no doubt that my career has developed a lot after being involved with the mentoring program. ... As a direct result I was invited by the Faculty of Information and Mass Communication at Cairo University to teach science journalism. I was also invited to carry out a one week training course on science journalism for 30 journalists in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

“I must say that many other international organizations asked me to work with them for some of their projects. I do believe that all this came-up as a result to what I have gained from the SjCOOP project.”



Mentee: Abdalzhira Haider Nigm (Iraq)

Press reporter for international newspaper **Asharq al-Awsat**

“I can doubtlessly say that we have gained a new outstanding science reporter in the Gulf area newspapers, as he writes mainly for more than three daily newspapers in Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, which surely helps in raising scientific information among the people in this area. All this has been achieved though he was not originally a science reporter.”

Hatem Sedky, Haider’s mentor



IMPACT

In November 2007, Haider published an article on the prevalence of mental disorders in Iraq. His article led to coverage by the TV channel **Al Hurra**. Haider was applauded for his audacity since it is not usual to shed light on mental disturbances. It was shocking for the public but led the Ministry of Health to acknowledge the struggle of the mentally ill and of their families.

Haider also published “Dust storms damage Iraqis’ environment”, which was a real success. His editor explained that Haider came up with the idea and did a huge investigation. “As you know, said his editor, Iraqi politicians are concerned by political issues; nothing else!”. Ms. Huda explained that this article was appreciated by ordinary citizens. This was shown by surveys done during the same period. She added that some specialists in the Ministry of Environment kept the article as a reference in their archives.

Mentee: Ghosn Zeinab (Egypt)

Science editor of **As-Safir** Newspaper and managing editor, **Al-Insani**, the magazine of the Red Cross in Egypt.

“I started being more interested in the impact of economy on health and science especially in the third world.”

Zeinab Ghosn

Zeinab was already a science editor at her newspaper when she joined and she was in the same position at the end of 2008.

During the year 2007, on top of her job as editor of the weekly science and IT page of daily newspaper **As-Safir** (<http://www.assafir.com/>), based in Beirut, Zeinab became managing editor of **Al-Insani**, the magazine of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Egypt.



Zeinab played an active role in the establishment of the Arab Science Journalists' Association where she is the board member in charge of communications.

Mentor: Magdy Said (Egypt)

Editor, **Islam Online** Net's Science and Cultural Department

Coordinator's Comments:

“Before this project started, Magdy mentored many of his younger colleagues within IslamOnline.net. Mentoring comes natural to him. SjCOOP, however, honed his mentoring skills. It gave him more of a framework and a structure to work with.

Magdy also has become a strong advocate of distance learning and is now working, as the new president of the Arab Science Journalists Association, on setting up a distance learning project using e-learning software for Arab science journalists.”

Nadia El-Awady



Mentee: Chara Fatiha – (Algeria)

Fatiha Nour is her pen name

Journalist at **Algerian National Radio**

Mentor's Comment

“Fatiha is very proficient in choosing science stories that have relevance to people’s daily lives. She has developed from a radio broadcaster and journalist who thinks in French and who writes Arabic the way she thinks, to a science writer who writes eloquently in Arabic for many media organizations using her strong narrative skills.”

Magdy Said, Editor, **Islam Online** Net's Science and Cultural Department



IMPACT

Fatiha Chara is now the leading force in science journalism in Algeria where she is heading efforts to create an association of Algerian science journalists. Her programs are also contributing in a major way to promote the concept of an Algerian 'Knowledge Economy, she receives a lot of feedback from entrepreneurs and innovators.

Also her reporting on the decline of the traditional water management technology of 'fougaras' (chains of wells connected underground), led to the government implementing a program for their revival.

Mentee: Boumedjout Hichem (Algeria)

Reporter at the newspaper **El Massan**

“Hichem developed from a sports journalist to a sports and science journalist who focuses on general science issues in addition to those that are related to sports. Hichem worked very hard on developing his skills as a journalist.”

Magdy Said, **Islam Online** Net's Science and Cultural Department Editor



Mentor: Musa Alkhir Fadlalla (Sudan)

Environmental Journalist, Freelance and with Sudanese Environment Conservation Society

Note: Musa started as a mentee and became a mentor.

Coordinator's Comments:

“Musa started SjCOOP as a mentee. By the time the project reached its mid-point it became clear to SjCOOP management that Musa was better placed as a mentor. Musa only really had the opportunity to mentor for a few months near the end of the project. But his mentees highly appreciated the work he did with them and he was well-respected by them.”

Nadia El-Awady



Mentee: Al-Dwiri Mahmoud Mustafa (Jordan)

Editor and producer of Earth & Roses Program at **Amman.Net Radio**
(<http://www.ammannet.net/>)

“...my program became more popular and well known, so that the radio station now broadcasts each episode of my program twice a week during 2007. It was repeating it once a week only during 2006.

In addition to that, my program is broadcast on a local radio station in Italy.”



IMPACT

Mahmoud produced a program on the pollution in (Al Fhais) town, near the capital Amman, where a cement factory impacts badly on the environment. It was broadcast over several episodes from June to August 2007.

He visited the area and talked to people. Mahmoud says: “the feedback of the public at that town was great because it was about a problem they have and nobody was trying to solve it. I was praised and supported by Mr. Yasser Akroosh, the president of Jordan Environment Association in Al Fhais. My editor-in-chief said that he will support me against any pressure I may get from the government.

The manager of the factory participated in the program and promised to solve the problem by installing a filtering system, and it was installed late 2006.

Mentee: Al-Ramahi Hanin Fahmi (Jordan)

Program producer and reporter for IT and youth issues at **Amman Net Radio** Station

“As you know, science journalism is still weak in the Arab World, but we are the only media in Jordan who has two specialized pages for science issues. Mahmoud (Mahmoud is another SjCOOP mentee) and Hanin are both in charge of these pages, Mahmoud tackles environment issues and Hanin is our technology and health specialist.”



“The radio is a media for the public and it is one of our missions to tackle science issue with simple vocabulary and make information easy to attract listeners.”

“Hanin deals with the news differently compared to her colleagues. She has energy and she is able to influence for science issues.”

Ms. Sawsan Zyadah, Chief Editor, Amman net radio

IMPACT

In December 2007 she did a story on a young man infected by AIDS.

“He was 26 years old and the interview was focusing on how he manages to live a normal life in spite of his disease. It was a new subject, very touching, and I got a lot of feedback and comments from the public. It was also highly appreciated by my chief editor.

For her AIDS report, Hanin received very positive comments and feedback from Dr. Bassam Hajjawi, who is on charge of the section responsible for combatting AIDS in the Jordan Ministry of Health. She says: “I received many comments and feedback from the public. They are all available at the following link:

<http://ammannet.net/look/itarabic/archive.tpl>

Mentee: Elkheir Fadl Alla Musa (Sudan)

Environmental journalist, Khartoum Daily newspaper, Radio and Sudanese Environment Conservation Society

Note: Musa replaced one of the mentors we had to drop out of the program and took charge of eventually three mentees.

“As a result of what I learned through the mentoring project, my managers assigned me to be in charge of health and environmental issues in the radio. Moreover, I became responsible to produce and edit a weekly science page in Khartoum Daily.”



“SjCOOP helped me to build a network with new science journalists even the Arab ones, recently I was elected as a Board member of the Arab Association of Science Journalists.”

7. The African Francophone Group

The French-speaking African Group had much in common with the English-speaking African Group but was also strikingly different.

None of the journalists of the Francophone group had a background in science. Not one of them was already an established science journalist. Several of them, particularly in Congo-Kinshasa, work under appalling conditions where doing basic journalism is already a daily miracle.

But the Francophone group had also an extremely capable and hard-working leader with Coordinator Gervais Mbarga. It also had a very good team of mentors, particularly Senegalese mentor Armand Faye who became the leading force behind the wide adoption of Skype in the project, a major innovation.



In the end, several leaders emerged in the Francophone group, particularly in Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire and Rwanda. While Cameroon and Rwanda were the only two francophone countries where participating journalists established bona fide associations of science journalists, the mentees worked in teams to produce the transborder articles and sell them to editors in several countries. They made a success of the transborder stories and this success has opened a very promising window into influencing policy-making and decision-making in Africa.

The Francophone group is probably the group that made the biggest improvements of the three groups. Eleven of them completed the whole SjCOOP program and graduated.

“I was lucky to deal with a tremendous team of dynamic and meticulous mentors during the first phase of the SjCOOP project. Their work had a very powerful influence on the job done, and I'm convinced that they gave the best means to our mentees to become excellent science journalists.

“Not only were they mentoring, but they also showed leadership by proposing initiatives, by leading their mentees to original achievements.”

Gervais MBARGA, Regional Coordinator, Francophone Africa.

French-speaking Mentors and Mentees			
Name	Country	Position	Employer
Sophie Coisne	France	Senior editor	Magazine La Recherche
Mvondo Christophe	Cameroon	Science Journalist	La Nouvelle Expression newspaper
Razafison Rivonala Albin	Madagascar	Science Journalist, Editor in Chief	Ny Vaovaontsika
Armand Faye	Senegal	Freelance science journalist	
Bigirimana Jérôme	Belgium	Journalist	Burundi National Radio
Ilunga David Kabanga	RDC	Journalist	Le Révélateur newspaper
Twahirwa Aimable	Rwanda	Science Journalist	Rwanda News Agency
Patrice Golberg	Belgium	Editor-in-Chief, TV	Matière Grise
Kouadio Théodore Yao	Côte d'Ivoire	Journalist	Fraternité-Matin newspaper
Nkinsil Anselme	RDC	Journalist	L'Avenir newspaper
Isaac Njifakué	Cameroon	Media Consultant	
Aly Konte Mame	Senegal	Journalist Geographer	Sud Quotidien newspaper
Gilles Provost	Canada	Television Science Journalist	Société Radio-Canada
Amougou Aimé- Francis	Cameroon	Desk Editor	Cameroun Tribune newspaper
Chabi Ogouloui Godefroy Macaire	Benin	Producer	Benin Broadcasting Corporation
Ya David	Côte d'Ivoire	Journalist	Fraternité-Matin newspaper

Coordinator: Gervais Mbarga (Cameroon)

Professor in Science Journalism, University of Yaoundé, Cameroon and Research Associate, Bell Globemedia Chair in Science Journalism, Laval University, Québec



“The SjCOOP project not only brought expertise to mentees, not only trained for science reporting, but was, for the regional coordinator I am, a source for a new vision of my personal career and a time for my academic achievements to change up to next gear.

“Before the project, there were simple things I hadn’t, I couldn’t do: writing an online lesson, having a Skype cast, monitoring people scattered in many countries around the world, etc.

“Mentoring was a concept I knew just by the word. I experienced it.

“Not only I wrote my first online course, thanks to the SjCOOP, but I had my first public presentation in an international conference in English, I used Outcome Mapping as a project evaluation method and a non-formal training approach with the in situ model for the first time.

“Seeing my performances in the SjCOOP project, UNESCO invited me in 2006, to be part of its team for a curriculum on science journalism training in Africa. UNESCO and ISESCO (Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) also asked me in 2007, to lead their workshops on science journalism in West Africa.

“Thanks to the job we did in SjCOOP, I was asked twice by SAASTA (South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement) to present communications in the 1st and the 2nd African Science Communication Conference (2006 and 2009).

“Now, with a network of ex-mentees in more than 30 countries in Africa and in Middle East, today fully colleagues, with friends around the world who were mentors, evaluators, coordinators or resource persons, I feel wholly and, in more concrete terms, an academic in science journalism.”

Career development

Gervais Mbarga has become a research associate with the Bell Globemedia Chair in Science Journalism, at Laval University, Québec, Canada.

Not an evaluation, a testimony

Gervais Mbarga
Regional Coordinator, Francophone Africa.

“My experience with mentees in the SjCOOP project makes me look at journalism in Africa and in the developing world in a new way.

At the beginning of the experience, there was a kind of *déjà vu* and a sceptical impression in our attitudes. Like to say, ‘This is another project just trying to organise encounters for journalists, teaching them their job in a democratic world (even if they hide the bone in science journalism) and spending money, pinning everything on poor countries’.

“I think, that’s why the project started very slowly and, sometimes with a little bit confusion. Due to the fact that mentees, mentors and the management had no previous real-life experience of what to do, we observed some hesitations. But the apprenticeship was very short. Just to discover the originality of the concept and the fact that everybody could contribute to enhance the project.

“I talked to some mentees by phone in September 2006, without knowing anyone of them and before the first face-to-face meeting in Nairobi. They were all eager, asking what «science journalism» is and, above all, asking how they are going to get inside it. Some of them, remembering science at school, were even really scared and nervous and, in January 2007, when we excluded 4 or 5 of them not doing enough, this primary impression came again in my mind.

“But since January 2007, things changed radically. Mentees became more reactive, more implicated in the relationship with their mentors. The face-to-face in Nairobi was the first exercise which squeezed the trigger and liberated mentees from their fear and their nervousity. Staying in their newsroom, but with help in a large network of colleagues from Africa and around the world, with people they know, people they had met, people who can understand their professional situation.

“They didn’t wait so long to take initiatives. One of these initiatives, at the end, was the transborders stories. I discover then mentees as leaders, committed to write on science, ambitious, happy and proud to be science journalists, and I realized that, the SjCOOP project has created a new generation of journalists in Francophone Africa.”



Mentor: Sophie Coisne (France)

Chief of Information, magazine **La Recherche**

Sophie Coisne was a very tough and demanding mentor; she works in a prestigious monthly science magazine that covers science for well educated readers.

She invested tremendously in SjCOOP though she had an extremely demanding job; coming to face-to-face meetings on her holiday time (like many other mentors!).

Her frank assessment of articles might have sometimes been too much to handle from some mentees, but those who engaged with her benefited tremendously; like Christophe Mvondo who, thanks to unrelenting support from Sophie, had a 3-page article published in La Recherche, a first ever for an African journalist.



Mentee: Mvondo Christophe (Cameroon)

Science Reporter at newspaper **La Nouvelle Expression**

Mentor's Comment

“Christophe was strongly motivated by SjCOOP mentoring. He used it as a lever to become in charge of new science pages in his newspaper. He is a rigorous journalist. His articles are short, precise and from a good angle. He usually quotes at least one interviewee, often several. He will not be deterred from contacting scientists outside his own country. Most of his articles are on climate change, health, and information technology; not much on natural sciences. But Christophe delves into the science, explaining the clinical trials. I think he understands more and more how science is made.”

Sophie Coisne, Chief of information, monthly magazine La Recherche



Mentee: Razafison Rivonala Albin (Madagascar)

Editor in Chief of **NY VAOVAONTSIKA** and journalist at **Le Quotiden**

In the course of SjCOOP, Rivonala Razafison became 'the' science journalist in Madagascar.

His new skills were recognized by several prizes.

Also, as a testimony of his new expertise, he now teaches science journalism at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at the University of Antananarivo, in Madagascar, using the online course developed with the SjCOOP project.



Mentor: Armand Faye (Senegal)

Freelance science journalist and consultant

“I learned to write very short paragraphs of piece stories, accordingly to the audience’s new reading habits. I performed my training skills as mentor and as tutor, i.e., how to use Skype and Yahoo Messenger. I discovered more than 100-attendees conference tools to use for press conferences with scientists worldwide”.

“Marvellous friendship with my four mentees even if we are not the same age (generation). It is interesting to fill the gap between two generations and to see the young journalists’ expectations and how they meet perfectly the wide public’s information needs.”



Mentee: Bigirimana Jérôme (Burundi)

Radio Journalist in Burundi but presently studying in Belgium

Journalist and producer of series on VIH/AIDS at the **Burundi National Radio**

Jérôme is now doing a Masters degree on Information and communication in Belgium, thanks to a three-year scholarship.

Early in 2007 and while 10 of the 17 cities in burindi were suffering from famine Jérôme wrote and article about Spiruline, an urgent solution for the crisis. His article was very well received, praised and published widely: in *Grand Lacs echos* magazine, www.arib.info and www.burundibwacu.org.



Mentee: Twahirwa Aimable (Rwanda)

Journalist at the **Rwanda News Agency**



Aimable is now the founding president of the Rwanda Science Journalists' Association

“With the associations, the Press Centre (Maison de la Presse), I am now perceived as the (Rwanda) science journalist.

“I now enjoy more credibility and a status that no other journalist has in my country.

“Scientists and researchers want to read my articles.”

Mentee: Ilunga David Kabanga (Congo)

Journalist with newspaper **Le Révéléateur**. République démocratique du Congo (RDC)

Mentor's Comment

“The two years of the mentoring were in two phases. During the first phase, mentees were free to choose topics, angles and style of articles. With their mentor's advice, they learned how to write articles on research, articles reporting field trials, articles on institutions and feature articles. ... In a second phase, the mentor chose the topics of articles, focusing on scientific research. This second phase was too demanding for one mentee who dropped out, and did not lead to improvement with another one. But two mentees improved their capacities as science journalists, David Ilunga was one of them.”

Armand Faye, Freelance Science Writer and Consultant



Mentor: Patrice Golberg (Belgium)

TV Editor in Chief, **Matière Grise**, Belgium Broadcasting Corporation

Patrice Goldberg joined SjCOOP as a mentor in 2007, while the project had already been in place for one year.

Coordinator's Comments:

"He came, sparkling with a new dynamism. Straight in his way of saying what he thinks, sometimes a little bit provocative for the management team, Patrice is someone who keeps things moving. Science journalist in all aspects of the title, he brought a special energy to his mentees and some of them became very rapidly leaders of the francophone group. He was also a very close friend for, not only his mentees, but for all mentees of the francophone group and of the project, and for his colleagues' mentors. He welcomed warmly some of our participants when they stayed in Brussels."



Gervais Mbarga

Mentee: Kouadio Théodore Yao (Côte d'Ivoire)

Journalist at newspaper **Fraternité-Matin**

Mentor's Comment

"Let's say it clearly: it was (and it is!) a joy and a real honour to be the mentor of Kouadio.

"He was amongst the laureates of the competition in Doha; he took also rapidly the leadership of a group concerning the transborder articles and was the very first to obtain a green light of his hierarchy to publish several papers; he was even able to substitute his Editor-in-Chief as general manager of the different stories for his newspaper. In addition, his external evaluation is extremely positive too. Therefore, difficult not to be enthusiastic with him! He did a great job and deserves largely to receive a Graduation Certificate, with the special congratulations of all the jury."



Patrice Goldberg, Editor-in-Chief, Belgium Television

IMPACT

1. In November 2007, Théodore published a dossier on the reintegration of people who have been displaced by war and lack psychological support. It is a big issue in his country. He researched this story for 3 months. His article showed to people that it is not too late to accept psychological treatment. At first, his editor did not want to print the story. It was attacking the government too directly. He then discussed it with his SjCOOP mentor. They came up with a different, more narrative introduction that was more indirect, but the article still made the main point.

He received calls from the Ministry of War Victims. They told him that they did want to do something and even had a plan of action but they were lacking money. The associations (NGOs) who are trying to help the victims called his boss to thank him for the article. He also received anonymous calls from victims who didn't like the issue to be raised again, which shows he really stirred something.

2. Théodore also published a well researched dossier on children born with one tooth, of cleft palates or other deformities. These children are abandoned because it is claimed they will bring bad luck. He tried to show that these things can be explained scientifically. He received very positive feedback from various actors.

Théodore was tackling taboos in his society: the stigmatization of these children who are very often killed.

Mentee: Nkinsi Anselme (République démocratique du Congo - RDC)

Journalist at daily newspaper **L'Avenir**, Anselme started as a generalist. He is now a full time journalist and 'grand reporter', in charge of health and the environment, at the newspaper **L'Avenir**.

Beginning in September 2007, he also started writing for a new weekly publication called **Info Environnement** where he is Deputy Editor.

Because of his participation in the SjCOOP training and mentoring project, Anselme was also asked to be put in charge of the health and environment page of his newspaper L'Avenir, in July 2007,



Mentor: Isaac Njifakué (Cameroon)

Director, International Media, Conseils & Services



Coordinator's Comments

"Isaac Njifakue had a great influence. His maturity gave him the place of the wise person who used to try to calm down in case of tense atmosphere and difficult situations. Unfortunately, most of his mentees were excluded from the project due to their poor participation or did not follow the beat as needed. Probably these exclusions did not allow him to run a constant mentoring. For those who continued with him, they had his experience on their side, and the advantage of being with a highly cultured person, but also highly structured man in his writings."

Gervais Mbarga

Mentee: Aly Konte Mame (Sénégal)

Journalist Geographer for newspaper **Sud Quotidien**, Dakar, Sénégal

Mame Aly Konté has 15 years of career behind him.

Quite regularly, Mame is invited by Senegalese radio and interviewed on his articles on topics like the management of wastes, small dams and nuclear energy.

He is very actively working towards the establishment of an association of science journalists in Sénégal.



In February 2008, he was awarded a new prize for The Best Science Article in Sénégal by the Senegalese Academy of Science and Technology.

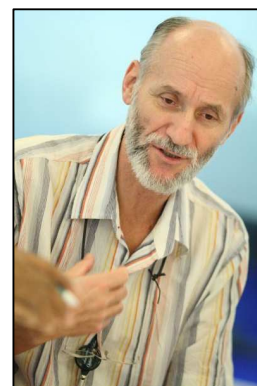
Mentor: Gilles Provost (Canada)

Television Science Journalist, **Société Radio-Canada**, Montréal

SjCOOP Management Comments:

Gilles Provost had many years of mentoring in science journalism behind him. SjCOOP was his first cross-cultural experience. He brought his straight forward and honest 'in your face' and always important comments and opinions to the project.

He was a true reference for the management team to evaluate what was working and what was not working throughout the duration of the project.



Mentee: Chabi Ogoulou Godefroy Macaire (Benin)

Chief Desk Culture, Society and Science at the Benin Broadcasting Corporation (Radio)

Mentor's Comment

"Godefroy Chabi has been my best mentee. He made tremendous progress. At the beginning of the SjCOOP program, he was mainly doing radio reporting about art and didn't even have any idea about the nature or usefulness of science reporting.

"Two years later, he has created a science desk in his media and is writing a lot of science stories both for radio and the written press. He is also selling many science articles to Scidev.net and to various other international news agencies.



He won the AISI Media Award in Kuala Lumpur. He wrote the best French article during the SjCOOP meeting in Doha."

Gilles Provost, Science Journalist, Radio-Canada Television

Mentee: Amougou Aimé-Francis (Cameroon)

Head Political Desk of newspaper **Cameroon Tribune**

Mentor's Comment

“Aimé-Francis came late in the SjCOOP program and we had our first contact many months after the Nairobi meeting. So, he only benefited from the second year of the program. For him, it was a bit difficult to write on science since he was officially in charge of the political desk at the Cameroon Tribune.

“In any case, he submitted one article each month and participated to most skypecasts. He also took part actively to the transborders stories. His article on the problems of the meningitis vaccination program in Cameroon was very well researched and magnificently written. He also wrote the best article I received from my mentees, a text on the drugs selling on the street.”



Gilles Provost, Science Journalist, Radio-Canada Television

Mentee: Ya David (Côte d'Ivoire)

Journalist at newspaper **Fraternité-Matin**

Mentor's Comment

“David Ya has been hampered by coming late in the SjCOOP program: he was not included yet when we had our first meeting in Nairobi and his boss at Fraternité-Matin prevented him from participating to the Doha Meeting. This is why we never met and only had web contacts.

“I am sure he would have made more progress in science reporting if he had benefitted from the whole program. During the last year, David has written regularly on the impact of technology on the economy in Ivory Coast or on various health topics. He attended to the skypecasts and skypechats and contributed to the transborders stories.”



Gilles Provost, Science Journalist, Radio-Canada Television

8. The African Anglophone Group

The African Anglophone Group was by far, at the outset of SjCOOP, the strongest group. Several of the participating mentees had training in science. Several were also well-established science journalists, particularly the Nigerian mentees.

It was purposefully decided to have several already strong science journalists participating in the SjCOOP project. Their involvement was to make sure the project was connected to the reality of what is feasible, but these journalists were also seen as role models for the other mentees.



In the end, as in the Francophone Group, only eleven graduated, though some of the most striking and significant journalistic achievements were made by the English-speaking mentees.

The Nigerian science journalists, under the leadership of Coordinator Diran Onifade, himself Nigerian, and with the support of mentor Akin Jimoh, have become a very strong team of African science journalists. They now are a critical mass of science journalists in Nigeria that can make a difference in the largest country of Africa.

It is in that group that the organizers of the 6th World Conference of Science Journalists recruited the African panellist Alexander Abutu as one of the four journalists who will be on the panel “Four Science Journalists who changed the World”, 29th June 2009, in London, United Kingdom.

The Uganda mentees created the Uganda Science Journalists’ Association (USJA) which then organized the extremely successful first ever Conference of Science Communication in Uganda, 24 to 26 November 2008, in Kampala (Uganda). As the conference opened, some 150 participants listened to a message from Uganda’s President, Yoweri Museveni who thanked USJA and the World Federation of Science Journalists for promoting science and technology for development in Uganda.



English-speaking group			
Name	Country	Position	Employer
Hanns-Joachim Neubert	Germany	Freelance Science Journalist and Author	
Augustine Alexander Abutu	Nigeria	Environment desk reporter	News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)
Peter Owuor Otula	Kenya	Science writer and consultant	
Mubiru Esther Nakkazi	Uganda	Reporter	The East African Newspaper
Ngcobo Mabutho	South Africa	Senior Health reporter	SABC Nguni radio, Radio Kaya FM
Shey Dora	Cameroon	Health Reporter	National Television news
Simire Michael	Nigeria	Environment Editor	Punch Newspaper in Lagos
Dagmar Rohrllich	Germany	Freelance Science Journalist	German radio
Adelaja Abiose	Nigeria	Editor	Health New Age
Malakata Michael Amos	Zambia	Science Journalist	Today Newspaper Zambia
Wanzala Bahati Justus	Kenya	Assistant News Editor	Kenya Broadcasting Corporation
Christina Scott	South Africa	Africa News Editor and Freelance journalist	SciDev.net
Chege James Ezekiel Kimani	Kenya	Editor, Freelance Science Journalist	TechAfrica News
Odeh Onche	Nigeria	Science Reporter,	Daily Independent Newspaper, Nigeria
Opoku Frederick Baffour	Ghana	Freelance writer	

Coordinator: Diran Onifade (Nigeria)

Assistant Manager News, Current Affairs, Nigerian Television Authority Network News, Lagos.



“Personally I have made a lot of progress over the last three years.

“In all, I coordinated 6 mentors, 3 of which are Europeans. One of them is the main organizer of the WCSJ’09 (the 2009 World Conference of Science Journalists in London, United Kingdom) and another heads the organization that will (hopefully) coordinate SjCOOP-II. The others are equally distinguished professionals.

“Add to that the array of change-making and award-winning mentees. That was the calibre of people I was privileged to lead and you don’t do that without some of the individual qualities and group characteristics rubbing off on you.

“In addition to the numerous leadership roles I now play, I am on the programme committee of the African Science Communication Conference (ASCC) which has been held in 2007 and 2009 in South Africa. Our plan is to hold the 3rd ASCC in another African country.

“This April, I will join the Committee on Development Information Science and Technology (CODIST) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, at the Invitation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

“With all modesty I can claim to have become a leader in the journalism profession and a voice for science journalism on the African continent as a result of my role in SjCOOP.”

Mentor: Hanns-Joachim Neubert (Germany)

Freelance Science Journalist



“I brought into the project my experiences as a teacher in science journalism, as a science journalist, and my practice from teaching at African universities.

“However, my intercultural sensitivity has been sharpened even more and my awareness for African topics and procedures in science journalism increased”

Mentee: Augustine Alexander Abutu (Nigeria)

Science and Education reporter for the **News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)**

Mentor's Comment

“Alexander made excellent progress on his way from an agency journalist to a real science journalist. Already after one year he turned out to have learned all the necessary skills and tools of science journalism. To gain more practice in writing longer science stories beyond his full-time agency employment, he even successfully wrote very good styled and thoroughly researched stories for SciDev.net, although he had to use a pseudonym for understandable reasons. Outstanding were his own achievements, even to kick off a discussion inside his agency about a better agency writing style, which resulted in the forming a working group.”



Hanns-Joachim Neubert, Freelance Science Journalist and Author

The article published on SciDev.net: 'Sickle cell drug mired in controversy', published 30th June 2008

Mentor: Peter Owuor Otula (Kenya)

Freelance Reporter, science writer/editor, and media consultant

“Definitely I benefited a lot both as mentor and science journalist. Much of my mentoring was confined to East Africa and Kenya in particular but it expanded effectively to other African regions.”

“Mentoring also puts pressure on one to update and improve journalistic skills by providing a forum to compare with those from other regions.”



Mentee: Mubiru Esther Nakkazi (Uganda)

Reporter at **The East African Newspaper**

Esther became a **Knight Science Journalism Fellow at MIT**. She was named best HIV writer in Uganda. She also received awards for ICT and business writing as well. She thanks the SjCOOP Mentoring for helping her achieve these successes through improving her stories and then her mentor writing letters of recommendation.

Editor’s Feedback

“She already was a professional science news journalist when I got to know her 5 years ago. But in the past two years she has learned to be more critical and investigative. Her stories go to greater depth. So she made an enormous step forward and gained much more visibility as a science reporter.”



Robert Walgate (UK), Real Health News (funded by the Global Forum for Health Research)

IMPACT

Her story on expired ARVs (antiretrovirals) distributed by government stores and leading to deaths, published in The East African, exposed the problem, and saved lives.

As a consequence the director of the ARVs distribution scheme lost his job.

Mentee: Ngcobo Mabutho (South Africa)

Senior Health reporter for **Health-e News Service**

In September 2008, just as he was completing the SjCOOP mentoring, mentee Mabutho Ngcobo was hired as anchor for the Zulu segment of South Africa's e.tv eNews bulletin at 6 p.m.

This move was a key transition for Mabutho who started his journalism career in community radio in KwaZulu-Natal and went on to work for media giants Amarc Africa radio, Cape Talk and Kaya FM.



Mentee: Shey Dora (Cameroon)

Executive Producer of Health Programmes for **Cameroon Radio Television (Radio)**

On 11th May 2009, Dora Shey started producing a new 2-hour science program on national TV: **Science at your Doorstep**. She also is the hosts of the new program, jointly with a colleague journalist who is a member of the new association of Cameroonian science journalists that was established with the support of the SjCOOP project.



The difficulties facing a science journalist to have an IMPACT

Mount Cameroon is a source of pride for Cameroonians. But the mountain is under threat from wholesale deforestation and the loss of many animal species. The creation of a national park seems a good idea to protect the mountain. However it does mean moving a number of villages from the area.

The process has caused friction between the government, donors and the local population. The displaced communities did not have a chance to participate in decisions about their removal. They were angry, and Dora saw a chance to present these issues to a wider audience.

Dora was prepared to record 12 episodes. Dora interviewed chiefs from the displaced villages who were pleased to participate. The first two episodes involved representatives of the Ministry of Wildlife and the Environment.

They felt threatened by the project and tried to pressure Dora to drop the series. When she refused, they approached her boss, and then wrote to the general manager of the station in Yaoundé. **After that the programme was suspended.**

Mentee: Simire Michael (Nigeria)

Environment and Housing Editor for the daily newspaper **The Daily Independent** (Lagos)

Michael Simire has become an important editor and science reporter in the newsroom of his newspaper The Daily Independent. He is in charge of the weekly science and health page as well as of the environment page at the newspaper.

“Mr. Mike Simire has been one of our major links in the Nigerian media, and his works are considered very useful tools of conservation awareness.”

Mr. Tunde Dekker, Conservation Manager, Media & Public Affairs, Nigerian Conservation Foundation

**Mentor: Dagmar Roehrich (Germany)**

Freelance Science Journalist, German radio

“SjCOOP was an eye-opener in many ways. Now I am working with African topics a lot and through the contact with my mentees and the other mentors I got a much deeper insight into the problems and the beauties of the country.”

“It was and is a very valuable experience.”

**Mentee: Adelaja Abiose (Nigeria)**

Editor for **The National Daily** newspaper, Lagos (<http://www.nationaldailyng.com/>)
Abiose on You Tube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pi9Qm7nfEw>

Abiose does not write more articles that relate to science in her newspaper. But she now freelances for pan-African and international outlets like **SciDev.Net**, **Research Africa**, and **Islam Online**, producing about 1-2 stories per month freelance on new areas like biofuels, remote sensing, science education, and climate change.

Abiose Adelaja took the initiative of contacting scientists in other countries. For example, Abiose Adelaja did stories where she contacted researchers in Nigeria, Uganda and Cameroon on very promising research showing that communities can administer drugs against the river blindness parasite themselves, in regions without access to formal healthcare facilities such as clinics. She used to write exclusively on health. Now, she is covering science policy, technology and the environment for international media.



Mentee: Wanzala Bahati Justus (Kenya)

News editor and reporter at **Kenya Broadcasting Corporation** (radio and television)

Justus Wanzala is a news editor and reporter for both radio and television at the **Kenya Broadcasting Corporation**.

He produces “Health matters” - a 5 minute feature once a week -- ; an Environmental Programme - a 5 minute feature once a week --, and a 5 minute feature on HIV/AIDS once a week

Justus won a prestigious scholarship for an internship at Research Africa, in South Africa.



Mentee: Malakata Michael Amos (Zambia)

Science Journalist, Today Newspaper Zambia

In October 2008, Michael Malakata managed to get an article published in the online version of **The New York Times**.



Mentor: Christina Scott (South Africa)

Freelance science journalist and correspondent, SciDev.net

"As a tutor, you soon realise that the biggest obstacle to home grown African science journalism is (drumroll, please) home-grown African scientists.

"I swear it's easier to get an interview with a Hollywood movie star than with the malaria researchers in Tanzania, or the Angolan science department."



Mentee: Odeh Onche (Nigeria)

Science editor and correspondent at **The Daily Independent** newspaper, Nigeria

“It (SjCOOP) allows me to do science stories beyond Nigeria. I am now able to call for interviews, built contacts, they remember me, it’s been tremendously helpful.”

Onche Odeh is one of the winners of the prestigious Knight MIT Fellowship in Science Journalism for the year 2009.



Mentee: Chege James Ezekiel Kimani (Kenya)

Editor of **TechNews Africa** and 2008/2009 **Research Fellow**, Knight Science Journalism Fellowship, MIT/ Harvard,

“My future is definitively bright. With the peer to peer program and the MIT certificates, I most likely will get a good job. ... I still consider freelancing an option as it gives me the liberty to write to many people and many areas of science. ...The SjCOOP-project has helped me to look beyond the region I live in. I feel that I have become an all-African science journalist now.”



Mentee: Opoku Frederick Baffour (Ghana)

Freelancer

Career

Frederick is a mature journalist with a long career behind him. As a staff science reporter for The Ghanaian Time, Mr. Opoku’s reporting has been described as “brilliant”. But he was pushed for other positions, like presidency reporting.

Because of SjCOOP he has gone back and done more freelancing in the area of science. He has written for the science and technology magazine (The Universe), and The Network Herald.

Frederick is now trying to launch a science magazine in Ghana. He has also established an association of science journalists.



Two Special Mentors

Mentor: Akin Jimoh (Nigeria)

Akin Jimoh, one of the first Nigerian science journalists and a former MIT Knight Fellow, was part of the initial group of mentors for the anglophone group.

He began mentoring and pursued for several months. But, at the beginning of 2007, in Lagos, he was the victim of a hit and run accident that left him 9 days in coma. He survived with two broken legs that required months of convalescence and physiotherapy. Akin's mentees were assigned to other mentors.

Once he recovered, he remained in the team because of his expertise in science journalism. He was asked to contribute articles to the project's dedicated website WE and initiate discussions.

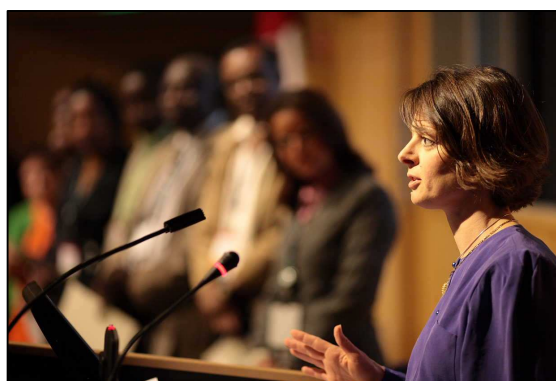
Akin Jimoh has set up his own consultancy business in science journalism and science communications, based in Lagos: DevComs. In 2008, one of his projects, involving three SjCOOP mentees, won a \$100K prize from the One Foundation, whose spokesperson is U2 singer Bono.



Mentor: Julie Clayton (United Kingdom)

Dr. Julie Clayton, freelance British science journalist, started as a mentor. She then played a key role in designing, implementing and producing the online course in science journalism with Dr. Jan Lublinski.

When the Association of British Science Writes decided to bid for the 6th World Conference of Science Journalists, they turned to Julie Clayton to become the director of the Conference, an extremely challenging and difficult task.



The SjCOOP Management team decided to ask other mentors to take care of Julie's mentees so she could focus on organizing what will be a most successful World Conference of Science Journalists. Julie has developed several sessions which are especially tailored to the needs of the journalists from the developing world, at the 29th June – 3rd July 2009 London World Conference of Science Journalists.

9. Graduation Criteria

Only 32 journalists graduated from SjCOOP, i.e. only 32 journalists stayed on the program and successfully managed all its requirements though the project started with an initial group of 60 mentees. In the first few months, mentees who were deemed not truly committed were replaced. This means that out of a total of some 81 journalists who were offered the possibility of doing the SjCOOP program, only 32 made it to the end.

Here, it must be reminded that mentoring usually does not involve getting marks. It is essentially a private relationship between mentor and mentee.

However, the mentees wanted their investment in SjCOOP to be rewarded by a certificate, ideally a recognized academic diploma. It is in trying to respond to that demand, which is a bit at odds with the essence of mentoring, that we implemented graduation criteria. It was also a signal that the SjCOOP certificate would have significance.

Each mentee was evaluated by his or her mentor according to the following criteria:

Mentor's Overall Rating	30%
Progress in reporting science	40%
Following Online lessons	15%
Participation in Skypechats/casts	15%

In order to graduate, a mentee needed to achieve a minimum of 75%.



10. Portraits of the SjCOOP Associations

This section of the SjCOOP Project final report captures the achievements regarding the support to the establishment of associations of science journalists in Africa and in the Arab World. It also describes their twinning with well-established associations and some of their activities, according to the following criteria:



Preliminary steps: discussing, exploring and taking some initial steps towards the creation of an association;

Establishment of an association: official creation of an association with a constitution and the election of a board, and

Activities of associations: meetings and activities held by the association, and twinning with another association.

In the terminology of the evaluation and monitoring methodology implemented throughout the project (Outcome Mapping), these portraits of associations present the data captured in relation with the following progress markers:

Expect to see:

- Discussing the idea of forming an association with the WFSJ and regional coordinators,
- Contacting journalists interested in setting up an association,
- Setting up informal meetings with a few interested colleagues, and report progress to WFSJ and their regional coordinators.

Like to see:

- Collaborating for setting up a constitution organizing first meetings,
- Getting more members for their associations,
- Submitting an application form to twin and partner with another associations, and
- Participating in the Australia meeting.

Love to see:

- Being role models, credible and successful as science journalists, helping their colleagues and the profession,
- Developing strong partnerships North-South (twinning),
- Being successful in making their association pay its fee to the World Federation of Science Journalists (WFSJ),
- Making their associations active in supporting local science journalists to become better and obtaining more respect and jobs,
- Making their associations becoming sustainable through fundraising, and
- Participating in the business and leadership of WFSJ.

Associations: Key interventions**4 – 10 November 2006, Nairobi****1st SjCOOP Face-to-face Meeting**

- presentations and discussions on how to set-up an association of science journalists

7th February 2007, Melbourne

5th World Conference of Science Journalists, Session “Building and Maintaining science communication association, Part 1 and 2, from 1400 to 1730.

- presentations of case studies and best practices
- twinning (First report filed)

4 – 9 February 2008, Doha**2nd SjCOOP Face-to-face Meeting**

- presentations by the associations
- presentation on how to manage and maintain associations (by NASW)

September to December 2008

Conferences and Workshops supported by SjCOOP in Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, and Uganda.

Publications:

The two publications presented below were produced on time for distribution to the mentees and coordinators, beginning with the April 2007, 5th World Conference of Science Journalists, in Melbourne (Australia).

Setting up your own Science Journalists’ Association

By Barbara Drillsma, WFSJ, 2007, 59 pages; see updated online version:

<http://www.wfsj.org/files/File/resources/documents/How%20to%20set%20up.pdf>

2007 Science Journalist Associations, by Jessica White, WFSJ, 2007,

Associations in Anglophone Countries of Africa

The SjCOOP support for the creation of associations of science journalists was most successful with the English-speaking African participants.

Thanks to SjCOOP, and the commitment of the participating journalists, there are now four new associations of science journalists in English-speaking Africa:

- **Ghana:** Association of Science Journalists and Communicators
- **Nigeria:** Nigeria Association of Science Journalists (NASJ)
- **South Africa:** South African Science Journalism Association (SAS)
- **Uganda:** Uganda Science Journalists' Association (USJA)

Or six new associations if you include Rwanda and Sudan:

- **Rwanda:** Rwanda Association of Science Journalists (RASJ)
- **Sudan:** Sudan Association of Science Journalists

The associations of science journalists in Anglophone Africa represent some 320 journalists: African Federation (55), Ghana (6), Kenya (54), Tanzania-NAJES (25), Nigeria (130), Uganda (27), and South Africa (23).

One of these associations, Uganda, held an exceptionally successful conference on science communication on 24-26 November 2008 in Kampala. It is at the opening of that conference that Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni thanked the Uganda Science Journalists' Association and the World Federation of Science Journalists for promoting science and technology for development in Uganda.

SjCOOP has also led to a reawakening of the Nigerian Association of Science Journalists which now holds more training activities and is active in both, the political capital Abuja, and in the economic capital, Lagos. The Nigerian group of science journalists is now a critical mass of writers in the media and has become a key partner of the Nigerian scientific establishment against bad science and false scientific claims.

Finally, SjCOOP has led to the establishment of the South African Science Journalists' Association.



African Federation of Science Journalists (AFSJ)

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/AfricanScienceJournalists>

Preliminary steps

Diran Onifade, then science journalist with the Nigerian Television Authority Network, discussed the idea of the African Federation of Science Journalists for the first time in October 2004, during the 4th World Conference of Science Journalists, in Montréal.

AFSJ says it was founded on 7th October 2004, at a time when Diraan Onifade was in Montréal! He organized impromptu meetings with the African and Arab science journalists in the corridors of a hotel! The seeds were planted and he struck solid and long lasting relationships with several African and Arab science journalists and with Nadia El-Awady, who would eventually become the founding president of the Arab Science Journalists' Association.



Establishment

In April 2005, Diraan Onifade contacted the World Federation of Science Journalists to join. The African Federation says it has 55 members.

The Board of WFSJ accepted the African Federation of Science Journalists as a member of the Federation on the same month.

Ghana Association of Science Journalists and Communicators

Preliminary steps and establishment

The Ghana Association of Science Journalists and Communicators (GASJC) was inaugurated on February 10, 2007 in Accra to help promote better and enhanced science reporting in Ghana. GASJC is a mix of journalists working independently or in news organizations who report on any aspect of science and information/communication or public relations persons of science related organizations. The association had an initial membership of 20. It was the first national association of this nature in the country. Affiliation with the Ghana Journalists Association has been made and response is being awaited.

GASJC joined the World Federation of Science Journalists in July 2007.

Leading officers of GASJC are elected through general elections by members. The current executive body was elected by members on February 10, 2007 with Santuah Niagia as President, Frederick Baffour Opoku: Vice-President, Saaka Seidu Sumaila: Financial Controller, and Patience Dapaah: Secretary.

In the “other board member” category is Benedict Assorow, Communications Director of Symposium of Episcopal Conference of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) and Daniel Batidam, journalist and Executive Director of Planet Ghana, a local firm.



Media for Environment, Science, Health and Agriculture (MESHAKENYA)

Kenya

www.meshanet.org

Establishment

This association was established prior to SjCOOP.

MESHAKENYA, which stands for Media for Environment, Science, Health and Agriculture, was officially founded in November 2005. In 2009, it had 54 members, half of them science journalists. MESHAKENYA has a constitution, a board, an office, and even a part-time employee.

Twinned with:
**Canadian Science
Writers' Association**



WFSJ accepted MESHAKENYA as a member on 14th December 2007.

Activities

MESHAKENYA organizes workshops, trainings, meetings and seminars for members and other journalists interested in becoming members. It says that for the last two years, it has been responsible in fundraising for a regional annual meeting held rotationally among members. Members include Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The association also offers consultancy in areas like media, science communication training and holding of events.

Leading officers are:

- Chairman – Daniel Otunge – African Biotechnology Stakeholders Forum
- Vice – Chairman – Naftali Mungai – The Leader Weekly
- Secretary – Aghan Daniel – Freelance, Coordinator MESHAKENYA
- Asst Secretary – Winnie Onyimbo – TransWorld Radio
- Treasurer – Gregory Akal – Practical Action

From 9 to 11 December 2008, thanks to a SjCOOP grant, MESHAKENYA organized two days of training for 40 journalists from all parts of Kenya, plus a field trip to examine the effects of climate change.

Twining

The vice-president of the Canadian Science Writers' Association (CSWA), Kathryn O'Hara visited MESHAKENYA in December 2008 and participated in the December 2008 workshop MESHAKENYA organized.

At the beginning of 2009, MESHAKENYA announced it would bid to organize the 2011 World Conference of Science Journalists.

Nigeria Association of Science Journalists (NASJ)

Preliminary steps

There have been several failed efforts at establishing an association of science journalists in Nigeria. The SjCOOP project reignited interest and efforts in setting up such an association.



Establishment

In January 2007, a new board was elected, with 4 of the board positions occupied by SjCOOP mentees: President: Mr Alex Abutu Augustine; Vice-President: Mr Onche Ode; Treasurer: Miss Abiose Adelaja; and Secretary: Mr Mike Simire. It then had 32 members and membership was restricted to science journalists. In April 2008, it claimed one hundred members.

In 2007, Nigeria had another association, called Science Communicators Association of Nigeria (SCAN). The difference between NASJ and SCAN is that SCAN is made up of non-practicing journalists mostly public relation officers in government organizations while NASJ members are journalists covering the science and technology beat.

NASJ has also had to establish a working relationship between the journalists based in Nigeria's economic capital, Lagos, and those in the political capital, Abuja. (This is a normal process. For example, the present National Association of Science Writers, in the United States, is an amalgam of regional groups). In 2008, the National Vice President position was abolished and replaced by two zonal coordinators referred to as National Vice President North and National Vice President South. The constitution of the association was modified accordingly.

Activities

NASJ has organized science round tables, seminars, an advocacy workshops as well as meetings between the Nigerian science community and the media.

The activities of the Associations are mainly in Abuja and Lagos. There are over 30 members in the Abuja zone. They organise weekly science forums in which Directors General of Parastatals under the Science and Technology Ministry are featured. The Abuja zone has its own patrons and Board of Trustees.

On the other hand, the Lagos zone says it has some 100 members who meet regularly. Lagos zone has a good relationship with the management of the National Science Academy as well as some private companies in Lagos.

With a grant from SjCOOP, on 24-25 November and 11th December 2008, the Nigeria Association of Science Journalists held two training workshops in Abuja and Lagos for respectively 25 and 21 journalists. The Abuja training workshop was for journalists practicing in northern Nigeria and the Lagos one for journalists in southern Nigeria. The workshops were implemented through collaboration between NASJ and DevComs, an independent training organization run by former science journalist and MIT Science Journalism Knight Fellow Akin Jimoh, who is also a SJCOOP mentor.

The large range of quality in the science reporting is matched with a similar range regarding the quality of the science proposed in Nigeria. The Lagos training included a session titled: 'Who is a good/bad journalist and Good/Bad Scientist'. "This session which was collectively anchored by SjCOOP mentees Onche Ondeh and Abiose Adelaja, deliberated on the odds

and good in journalists, especially when they meet with scientists. Same was done for the scientists, leading the way for the Director General of Nigerian Natural Medicine Development Agency, Tamunoibuomi Okujagu, to make his presentation”, says the report on the sessions.

Twinning

Twinning of NASJ with WPK has not lead to any development, but this twinning has great potential due to the dynamism and strengths of these two associations.





Uganda Science Journalists Association (USJA)

www.scienceuganda.org

Preliminary steps and establishment

The Uganda Science Journalists Association was established prior to the beginning of SjCOOP, in November 2005.

At the beginning of 2007, it has 27 members and it was accepted as a member of WFSJ in February 2007.

Activities

From 24 to 26 November 2008, USJA organized the first ever Conference of Science Communication in Uganda.

As the conference opened, some 150 participants listened to a message from Uganda's President, Yoweri Museveni who thanked USJA and the World Federation of Science Journalists for promoting science and technology for development in Uganda.

Twinned with:

**Association of British
Science Writers (ABSW)**



Research News

Uganda's President says better reporting of science is key to development

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni kicked off the Uganda Conference for Science Communication 2008 with a keynote speech on the importance of science journalism.

President Museveni said journalists in the region had not been active enough in reporting scientific issues, and there was no way the region could achieve accelerated socioeconomic development unless it promoted scientific research findings: "There is a need to bridge the existing gap between journalists and scientists".



Kathryn O'Hara, Chair in Broadcasting Science Journalism at Carleton University, Ottawa, representing WFSJ, said she was impressed by this first-ever science journalism conference in Uganda, "indeed in sub-Saharan Africa," and how "the WFSJ had envisioned this as a goal and a wish, and here it was a reality."

Graduates of the WFSJ mentoring program were on hand to talk about what the program had meant to them. Mentee Patrick Luganda, publisher of **Farmer's Voice** newspaper, told how his mentor talked him out of his temptation to abandon his journalism career for consultancy. Mentee Esther Nakkazi, who works for the newspaper **East African** and helped set up the WFSJ online science reporting course, said her mentor encouraged her to get new contacts to sell her work, boosted her confidence at press conferences and reinforced her desire to apply for graduate studies. Dora Shey of national radio and television news in Cameroon said she gained confidence and expertise and now has so much respect in her newsroom that editors and other reporters consult her regularly. And mentee Aimable Twahirwa from Agence Rwandaise d'Information said mentoring helped him develop a stronger story sense.

Twinning

USJA's president describes the benefits of the twinning with ABSW: "When USJA was organizing its 2008 conference, ABSW provided an advisory role through some of its individual members. Mentor Julie Clayton, also a member of ABSW, provided USJA with two contacts from where we could obtain funding for the conference. We applied to one (CCAA) and our application was successful. We also received a video message from David Dickson of Scidev.Net (representing ABSW) for the conference. A delayed start to the conference did not allow us play it to the whole plenary but the video was played at the USJA's exhibition stall several times."

On 24th March 2009, the USJA executive decided to bid to organize the World Conference of Science Journalists for the year 2011. This is a good indication of the level of self-confidence USJA achieved following the extremely successful November 2008 Conference and their partnership with the UK association, which is host to the 2009 World Conference of Science Journalists.

USJA was exploring developing a joint bid with Kenya's association of science journalists MESHSA.



South African Science Journalists' Association (SASJA)

Preliminary steps

It is in Montréal, during the 2004 meeting of the World Conference of Science Journalists that Diran Onifade of Nigeria asked South African broadcaster Christina Scott to set up an organization of science journalists in her home country. Discussions with Diran Onifade and between the South African mentor and mentees about setting up an association in South Africa received a new impetus with the beginning of SjCOOP. South Africa was seen as an African leader in science and in science journalism. There were also several opportunities during which SjCOOP members or representatives of the World Federation met with South African officials and journalists discussed the usefulness of an association. See <http://www.wfsj.org/news/news.php?id=132>

George Classen, of South Africa, was invited to join the SjCOOP meeting held in Doha (Qatar), in February 2008. He had the opportunity to meet with many representatives of associations already established, in Africa and elsewhere.

Establishment

Finally, in December 2008, Cristina Scott (a SjCOOP mentor) and George Classen were party in the establishment of the South African Science Journalists' Association (SASJA). Classen, former science editor of daily newspaper Die Burger (which means "The Citizen" in Afrikaans), was elected President.

Activities

SASJA – like many African associations – has a very difficult task ahead in a country where a science journalist can be subjected to extreme pressure for exposing pseudoscience. Many editors lack the scientific background to support their reporters. SASJA aims to provide accurate information on science news and in this way help reporters when they are bullied by pressure groups.

Between 22nd and 27th February 2009, SASJA hosted 23 science journalists from 13 African countries for a weeklong conference and workshop in Stellenbosch, near Cape Town. Co-hosts were Stellenbosch University's Department of Journalism and the Danish ministry of Climate and Energy. See: <http://www.wfsj.org/news/news.php?id=148>



Associations in Francophone Countries of Africa

Still to do

“Building science journalists association was, without any contest, the hardest task the project had to deal with. This is understandable. It was noticed at the beginning that, problems science journalists have to face are, among others, their number and their isolation. The objective was then, to have science journalists in quantity and to create a critical mass.

“In the francophone group 3 associations were initiated. But they’re still struggling to really be born. They are still trying to find out their identity between journalism and communication; trying to address their members scattered about the country, about professions (some have scientists as members); trying to build a cohesive discourse to bring their colleagues, if any, inside the circle; and, surely trying to find means to sustain the association, to organise activities and to have some credibility.

“Rwanda and Cameroon are leading in this field for the francophone group. It’s true that their associations still need to lift off, but they are doing visible progresses and, hopefully, in the coming months, they could have established their organisations.

“In my point of view, the question of associations is still to tackle. And it will be properly tackled when the project will have a minimum number of science journalists in each country.”

Gervais MBARGA, Regional Coordinator for Francophone Africa.

Only Cameroon and Rwanda ended up establishing associations of science journalists in the context of SjCOOP.

At least, the **Cameroon Association** is very active. It has survived the transition from the founding president to a second elected president. It is also holding regular activities.

The **Rwanda Association** had barely been established that it organized its first training workshop. There were many difficulties, but science journalism has a future in the country due to the strong government commitment. Seeds have been established for the blossoming of Rwanda science journalism with relationships developed between the media, the scientists and local training programs in science journalism.

A total of 88 journalists are members of the Francophone associations: Cameroon (20), Rwanda (43), Senegal (15) and Benin (10).



Cameroon's Association of Science Journalists and

Communicators

(SciLife or Cameroon Science for Life)

www.scilife.org

Preliminary steps

SciLife was the very first association of science journalists that emanated from SjCOOP activities. Its driving force was Gervais Mbarga, SjCOOP coordinator for francophone Africa.

Twinned with:

**French association of
science journalists
(AJSPI)**



Establishment

SciLife was established on 6th April 2006 with an initial group of 20 members. A constitution and board were approved with Gervais Mbarga as its first president. SciLife joined the World Federation of Science Journalists in May 2006.

Note: In 2008, WFSJ received the membership application of another Cameroon Association of Science Journalists. The WFSJ rejected the application since the second association was made mainly of scientists and students. WFSJ suggested that they merge with the already established association.

Activities

In January 2009, SciLife elected mentee Christophe Mvondo as its new President and mentee Dora Shey as Treasurer, while mentor Isaac Njifakué was asked to be one of its two advisers.

Since 2007, SciLife has organized several science cafés which have been the opportunity to bring members together, as well as interact with scientists and researchers. In 2009, the first science café was held on 6 February with a specialist on Buruli Ulcer and leprosy as speaker, Dr. Nsom Mba. There was a good exchange between journalists and scientist and Dr. Mba was pleased to discover a group of Cameroonian journalists specializing in reporting science. A second café science was held on 6th March 2009 with the Director of the Radioprotection Agency of Cameroon. This was a more difficult topic for the journalists who did not ask many questions. On 8th May 2009, another science café hosted a successful Cameroonian computer scientists working at Microsoft, involved in a telemedicine project in the country. All science cafés organized by SciLife lead to the production of articles in newspapers and coverage on radio and television.

In March 2009, SciLife was working very actively to revamp its much neglected web site.

Twining

In March 2007, some 15 SjCOOP mentees attended a two-day forum in Paris to brush up on their knowledge of AIDS. The event was organized by the ANRS (French Agency for Research on AIDS and Hepatitis) at the initiative of mentor Sophie Coisne, then president of the French science journalist association (AJSPI). In all, 25 science journalists, with a majority from French-speaking Africa, attended the meeting which offered concrete knowledge about issues surrounding AIDS.

SciLife is a great example of an African association that succeeded the dangerous step from founding president to a second elected president. It has had its difficulties but remains active and plays a leading role in networking scientists with the media in this important African country.



Rwanda Association of Science Journalists (RASJ)

<http://www.espoir.org.rw/>

Association Rwandaise des Journalistes Scientifiques

(Rwanda association of Science Journalists - RASJ)

Preliminary steps

In early 2007, a SjCOOP mentee submitted to the World Federation of Science Journalists and extremely ambitious 2-year plan to establish an association of science journalists in Rwanda. The first annual meeting of the informal group was held in August 2007.

Establishment

On 12 February 2009, RASJ was obtained a temporary legal recognition as a non-profit organization, a kind of organizations not easily granted official status by the Rwanda government. In the meantime, the association functions with mentee Aimable TWAHIRWA as its first President.

The Association has a constitution. It was accepted as a member of WFSJ in May 2008.

Activities

In Kigali, Rwanda, from 15th to 18th December 2008, the Rwanda Association of Science Journalists organized the first ever workshop on science journalism, gathering some 30 professional journalists reporting in print, TV, radio and online.

Kathryn O'Hara, who participated and attended the Conference reported:

“The journalists at the sessions did ask good questions of the speakers. When told by a local science communication academic to frame stories to appeal to human interest, to convey emotions, the more seasoned journalists pointed out that playing on emotions is not permitted in post-genocide Rwanda by government order, so how do you work with that restriction? ...

“In that respect, (Côte d'Ivoire) SjCOOP mentee Theodore Kouadio's presence was valuable and practical. He showed them his award-winning work on-line and talked about how he got his editor to agree to the story and his 'modus operandi' in gaining the trust of the people he wrote about.”



Following its December 2008 conference, RASJ increased its membership which reached 43 journalists members.

At the beginning of 2009, RASJ was implementing an email list and discussion group for its members: sciencejournalistsrwanda@yahoogroups.com and a web site with support

from WFSJ. Two meetings of the RASJ Board have been held, 14 February and 13 March 2009 during which a general assembly was planned for July 2009.

It seems that since the December conference, more articles on science have been published and more radio reporting has been done. One key development is the initiation of collaboration between the small science journalists group and the journalism training centres established in Rwanda, like the Kigali Great Lakes Media Institute (GLMI). These training centres are now looking at including training in science reporting in their training activities.

Aimable Twahirwa reports that the Rwanda National University's School of Journalism (EJC) is also exploring introducing training in science reporting for its second year students.

About these developments, Kathy O'Hara, Chair in Broadcasting Science Journalism, Carleton University (Ottawa) said: "I'm very happy that RASJ is talking to GMLI. I spoke with Bosco – GMLI's Coordinator – before I left Rwanda and he has a copy of the online course for his use. "

Associations in Arab-speaking countries

It was in the end so difficult to officially establish national associations of science journalists in Arab countries that journalists opted for a regional association: the **Arab Science Journalists' Association**.

Only Sudan was able to establish its own national association of science journalists.

With a strong regional association, the Arab countries might in the end have stumbled on the right approach.

The relevance of associations of science journalists at the nation's scale, in Africa and in the Arab World, where journalists making a career of covering science are rather small in numbers, is certainly a matter worth discussing. On one hand, the costs of maintaining a regional association can be mitigated by the internet but associations' members need to interact regularly face-to-face to remain active. On the other hand, the small number of journalists in a national association of science journalists might make the association powerless and irrelevant.

It is with the Arab Group that the pros and cons of national associations came to the fore.

It is probably too early to conclude, but the ideal and realistic situation for Africa and the Arab World is probably a mix of national associations in the largest countries under the umbrella of a regional association that can support journalists in the smaller countries that cannot have their own association.

In the end, the Arab Science Journalists' Association is without any doubt one of the most impressive success stories of the SjCOOP project. It has put in place a very strong collaboration with the United States National Association of Science Writers (NASW), it started 2009 with 175 members ... and it is bidding to host the 7th World Conference of Science Journalists in Egypt in 2011.

Some 215 journalists are presented by the associations of science journalists in the Arab-speaking countries: Arab Science Journalists' Association (175), Sudan (35) and we have put a very low estimate of 5 members for the struggling Jordan association.

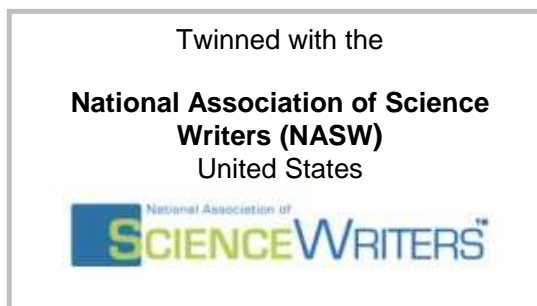


Arab Science Journalists' Association (ASJA)

www.arabsciencejournalists.net

Preliminary steps

The idea for an Arab Science Journalists Association was announced in April 2004, during a three-day workshop for Arab science journalists, in Cairo, supported by IDRC and CIDA. Attendees were invited to join an online e-group that had been set up to network Arab science journalists together in November 2003.



As its indomitable instigator Nadia El-Awady says: “The process has been long and difficult.” “In most Arab countries, says Nadia, as it was discovered, it is virtually impossible to set up a non-governmental organization that allows for a regional board of directors.”

Ms. El-Awady, through her activities with the World Federation of Science Journalists (WFSJ), lobbied around the world for recognition and support for Arab science journalists. A key meeting happened in Italy. In May 2006, Nature magazine organized a session in Bellagio, Italy on Islam and science as a preparatory step in collecting material for its special issue on Islam and Science which was published in November 2006. During this session, El-Awady spoke about the status of Arab science journalism. The presentation resonated with many of the goals of the Arab Science & Technology Foundation (ASTF) as they pertain to the media. A representative of the Foundation, Dr. Samir Hamrouni, approached El-Awady about the necessity of collaboration between ASTF and the emerging ASJA. This eventually culminated in the idea of registering ASJA as one of ASTF's networks.

As it became clear that ASJA would become an official entity under ASTF's umbrella, elections were held once again in ASJA's online e-group to elect a board of directors that would guide ASJA through the process.

The elected board of directors (three Egyptians, one Syrian, and one Yemeni) conducted online meetings for about three months to finalize many issues related to the upcoming integration of ASJA under ASTF. Finally, ASTF requested that ASJA organize a special session on Arab science journalism in its upcoming conference titled “The 4th Conference on Scientific Research Outlook & Technology Development in the Arab World (SRO4)” that would be conducted in Damascus, Syria from Dec 11 – 14, 2006. ASTF promised to support the attendance of three people to this conference from ASJA.



In the end, the five board members of ASJA were able to meet in reality for the first time ever, in December 2006, in Damascus. A long series of board meetings were conducted during the stay in Damascus to finalize issues such as ASJA's constitution, details of registering with ASTF, and ideas on how to move forward in the coming months.

Establishment

It is during the ASTF December 2006 conference in Damascus – see above, that ASJA was officially registered and launched during a press conference organized during the conference.

ASJA was accepted as a member of the World Federation of Science Journalists during its informal existence, as soon as May 2005 to help its local and regional recognition.

Twinning

When it was suggested of twinning the Arab Science Journalists' Association with the US National Association of Science Writers (NASW), "it took some convincing", says Ms. El-Awady. Some board members were worried that when Arabs would hear about an Arab association being coupled with an American one that this would have a negative impact on the Association's credibility and perhaps in its acceptance by the general public.

But because Nadia El-Awady and her American NASW counterpart Deborah Blum – both were members of the WFSJ Board -- knew each other, Ms. El-Awady was able to explain that NASW is completely independent from the American government – a concept totally alien in many Arab countries --, and that the American people are not their government's foreign policies, which they all understood.

The US NASW immediately and enthusiastically endorsed the twinning with the Arab Science Journalists Association.

For its 2007 Annual Meeting, held in Spokane (Washington), NASW invited all five board members of the Arab Science Journalists Association (ASJA). The visit was supported by a generous US\$ 10,000 grant provided equally by NASW and the US Council for the Advancement of Science Writing. "Our visit to NASW has opened a channel through which we can do a lot to improve the skills of Arab science journalists in the Arab world, said Fida Al-Jundi, ASJA's vice president. He added: We now have access to very good resources such as universities, media organizations and NASW itself, and we hope we can utilize this access for the good of our journalists. Hopefully we will also provide access for US science journalists to cover science and science journalism in the Arab world."



Afterwards, NASW sent – at its own expenses – its Executive Director Ms. Tinsley Davis to make a presentation on 'How to run a successful association', on 5 February 2008, in Doha (Qatar), during the second SjCOOP face-to-face meeting.

Thanks to demands from NASW, four Arab science journalists were supported to attend the American Association for Advancement of Science (AAAS) annual meeting, held in Boston, 14 to 18 February, 2008.

Activities

ASJA is one of the most outstanding SjCOOP successes. Under the initial leadership of Nadia El-Awady, ASJA has been very active and has broken new ground regarding science journalism in the Arab world.

As early as in Damascus, as it was being officially born, ASJA organized a session on “Revolutionizing Science in Arab Media”. The session had five speakers ... and there were 15 people in the audience due to seven competing parallel sessions and the late hour.

First Conference of Arab Science, Fez, Morocco, 25 October 2008

In October 2008, thanks in part to a SjCOOP grant; ASJA organized the first Conference of Arab Science Journalists, as part of a larger conference organized by the Arab Science and Technology Foundation.

More than 30 writers and editors from 16 Arab countries participated for the first-ever conference of the Arab Science Journalists Association. NASW supported the participation of 4 of its own members.

The Conference was the opportunity to launch www.arabsn.net which “aims to be the biggest and most comprehensive reference to science news and research taking place in the Arab world. Its manager, Fedaa El-Gendy, said he was “in talks with several universities and research centers in many Arab states to form agreements to report on their work.”

At the end of 2008, ASJA successfully elected a new president: SjCOOP Mentor Dr. Magdy Said. It has published a manual on science journalism in Arabic and is implementing its own mentoring scheme, inspired by SjCOOP and using and adapting the material from the WFSJ online course.

ASJA started the year 2009 with 175 members.



Sudan Association of Science Journalists

Preliminary Steps/Establishment

Immediately following the Nairobi SjCOOP face-to-face meeting, the SjCOOP Management team was informed of the establishment of the Sudan Association of Science Journalists, on 15th December 2006.

The Association claimed 35 science journalists as members. Then mentee Ms. Lubna Ahmed Hussein, was elected as president, with mentee Mr. Musa Elkheir Fadl Alla, as secretary.

The Sudan Association of Science Journalists was accepted as a member of WFSJ in July 2007.

Activities

In March 2009, the Sudan Association of Science Journalists was registered with National Commission for UNESCO in Sudan. It was conducting regular meetings three times a month to discuss managerial issues, evaluate performance and proposing new activities to conduct, according to its President former mentee Lubna Hussein. The association included 25 members.

From 12 to 16 January 2009, in collaboration with Kenanna Sugar Company - the biggest sugar company in Africa – the Association organized a training workshop for 10 journalists on climate change reporting. It was planning for a conference on science journalism in July 2009 and just about to launch a booklet of Climate Change cartoons.



11. Online Course in Science Journalism

This section of the Final Report captures information related to the world's first online course in science journalism developed by the World Federation of Science Journalists in collaboration with SciDev.Net, in the course of implementing the SjCOOP Project.



Who is the Online Course for?

The Online Course targets journalists who are generalists, tutors and teachers in journalism, and journalism students anywhere in the world wishing to improve or develop new skills in science journalism.

Why did WFSJ create the Course?

The World Federation of Science Journalists (WFSJ) is committed to improving the quality and impact of science journalism worldwide. In mid 2006 and during the SjCOOP project mentors' training in Munich (Germany), the idea to initiate the Course was raised. SjCOOP mentors and coordinators insisted that such a course would first help the mentoring program itself, and then a worldwide audience as well.

WFSJ was also aware, through its member associations, that there is enormous interest in, and demand for, high quality science journalism. But in many countries, as UNESCO studies have well documented, there are insufficient resources to enable individuals to develop the necessary expertise.

This Online Course was created first in response to the needs of the SjCOOP mentees and mentors in Africa and the Middle East wishing to specialise in science journalism.

The experience proved that the lessons can be applied and adapted in any country, in any world region. This is why the Course is still being translated and adapted to new languages. After the initial Arabic, English and French versions planned in the context of SjCOOP, Spanish and Portuguese versions were produced while a Chinese adaptation will be available for the summer of 2009.

When was the online course developed and who was involved?

By the end of 2006, the first two courses were ready and available to the public.

The Year 2007 saw major progress in the production of the Online Course. Six lessons were written of which the first five were available in Arabic, English and French.

Early in 2008, all eight lessons became available in the three languages, English, Arabic and French. The Course was launched during the official opening ceremony of the second SjCOOP face-to-face meeting in Doha (Qatar), on the 4th February 2008.

The lessons were polished and improved during the following months. Four revisers – Ms. Emily Chung from Canada, Ms. Mélanie Robitaille from Canada, Mr. Waleed Al-Shobakky from Qatar, and Mr. Ahmad Mograby from Lebanon – were asked to review and edit the three versions to eliminate duplications, adapt to each culture, and make sure they were uniform in style.

The original authors of the lessons are experienced journalists and trainers from all continents. The course was developed, taught and revised with participants of the SjCOOP project. The lessons were designed to be self-contained, and used according to suit different interests and needs:

- Lesson 1 - Planning and structuring your work (by Jan Lublinski)
- Lesson 2 - Finding and judging science stories (by Julie Clayton)
- Lesson 3 - The interview (by Christina Scott)
- Lesson 4 - Writing skills (by Nadia El-Awady)
- Lesson 5 - What is Science? (by Gervais Mbarga and Jean-Marc Fleury)
- Lesson 6 - Reporting scientific controversy (by Killugudi Jayaraman)
- Lesson 7 - Reporting on Science policy (by Hepeng Jia and Richard Stone)
- Lesson 8 - How to shoot science (by Šárka Speváková and Carolyn Robinson)

The full lessons in the 5 languages with instructions and bios of the authors and numerous contributors are available, free, on line at: <http://www.wfsj.org/course>

1. Course strategy

The Course involved many people from the SjCOOP team and outside. The idea behind its creation was, first, to help the mentees, and then any interested journalist who wanted basic knowledge of science writing and science journalism.

SjCOOP Management also wanted to use the online course to promote a sense of ownership of the project and to complement what was offered during the mentoring process.

After the first lessons, it became clear that the initiative was well received worldwide and we continued refining the lessons.

Here are the criteria which could describe the online course strategy:

- Complementarities with mentoring process;



- Project ownership: mentors and mentees implicated in creation of the lessons, mentors and mentees using the material, mentors and mentees giving advices to improve the course, coordinators implicated, etc., and
- A worldwide reference: lessons used all over the world, trainers and teachers using the course.

2. Complementarities with SjCOOP and Project ownership

Since the idea to create the online course was proposed at the mentors' training workshop, the editors and drivers of the online course were Dr. Jan Lublinski (Germany) who was also the internal evaluator, and Dr. Julie Clayton, the mentor in the English speaking group, two individuals already playing key roles in the SjCOOP project. Ms. Clayton was also the contact with SciDev.net who often contracted her as a trainer.

Lessons 1 and 2

Julie and Jan also wrote the two first lessons and started to think about how to involve as many people as possible in the project.

The two editors were able to create a strong community spirit when they engaged many participants amongst the program: authors, translators, tutors, test class members and even WFSJ Board members.

"The idea was to involve as many people from as many different regions and countries as possible into this project to create a true sense of ownership. And it worked. All the authors, tutors, test-class-members and advisors can proudly say that this has become their course", says Dr. Lublinski.

The course was a great opportunity and a continuous learning process for all the participants.

"I have found it extremely valuable as a learning process myself, to be commissioning and editing lessons for the Online Course - to be able to take time to reflect upon other journalists' experiences and their personal tips for improving journalism practice - these are lessons for us all!", says Dr. Clayton.

Lesson 3 and Tutoring for the Online Course

Ms. Christina Scott, mentor in the English speaking group is the author of the third lesson. She also started the tutoring process and was in charge of the test class members who were the firsts to go through lessons and discuss them with their colleagues. They were able to hold weekly Skype conferences, discuss the lesson content and chat with scientists.

"Tutoring is interesting, because it exposes wide gaps in perspectives about what makes for exciting science journalism, and it has opened up horizons for all of us in technology, international contacts, and that indefinable but important ingredient, a heightened awareness of what we do and how we do it," says Christina.

Mr. Armand Faye, mentor in the French-speaking group, tutored this dedicated team during a second phase of tutoring and pushed hard to keep and motivate mentees to participate in the e-learning process. He succeeded to make these mentees feel that they were doing great. Mr. Faye and the tutoring contributed a lot to improve the lessons, though feedback from the mentees was not as much as expected.

“I was honoured by being a part of this interesting course, lessons are well structured and target a bunch of users, students, journalists and all those interested to learn more about science journalism..I can assure you that I learned a lot from the content and was able to widen my field of interest”, says Mr. Faye.

Ms. Scott and Mr. Faye alternated the tutoring and invested a lot of time and effort to keep this group close and continue benefit from their comments.

In Doha, during the opening ceremony of the second face-to-face meeting the members of the test class received a certificate for their help in making the course a success.

The Arabic Version

Dr. Magdy Said, a mentor from the Arab speaking group, started the translation of the online course to Arabic. He did it first to help his mentees go through the lessons easily and understand better the basics in their mother language. He then offered to translate all the lessons to make more journalists benefit from the Course. His initiative was well received and encouraged by Ms. Nadia El-Awady, Coordinator for the Middle East group, who offered her help to edit the lessons.

Lesson 4

The editors continued to build the team and they recruited Ms. El-Awady to write the fourth online course: Writing Skills.

Lesson 5

Dr. Gervais Mbarga, the French-speaking group coordinator, was asked also then to write the fifth lesson in collaboration with Mr. Jean-Marc Fleury, the executive director of WFSJ and the project leader.

(Lesson 6 was contracted outside the SjCOOP team)

Lesson 7

The WFSJ's Board members helped as well the course improvement and Mr. Jia Hepeng was asked to write the seventh course and he brought onboard Mr. Richard Stone another science writer from China.

Lesson 8

Ms. Carolyn Robinson, a former SjCOOP TV mentor, offered the first version of the eighth online course. Even after being let go from the program because of the termination of the TV group, she continued to keep in touch and wanted to contribute to the first online science journalism course.

The final much more expanded eighth lesson was done in collaboration with Ms. Šárka Speváková, a science writer from Czechoslovakia.

3. The Online Course in the Real World

And here are some testimonies from the online course team:

"I believe the lessons are good and they can help journalists in their work. Thanks for the work."

Esther Nakkazi, Uganda

"The lesson has helped me to re-look at issues that I thought I knew. Sitting on the computer after a research I am forced to rewrite the intro four to five times. I guess this is because I don't have a research sentence. This has helped me know where to start."

"It has also helped me to know that asking is not bad. Sometimes I fear people will laugh when I ask a "stupid" question. Now I know where to start. I think this lesson is also important to other journalists, not necessarily science journalists, as it builds both basics skills but goes further and helps you specialize."

Kimani Chege, Kenya

"The lesson helped me sharpen my skills now as a science writer. I never knew of such a database as Plumb. It is also interesting to walk around universities and put names down of researchers, which you will contact a year down. What interested me is the issue of fraud. It makes me more careful with scientists seeking to use me to get publicity."

Abiose Adelaja, Nigeria

"Of course I can recommend this course to someone who wants to specialise on science reporting, it gives you some basics and background on how to get started."

Mabutho Ngcobo, South Africa

"I recommended the course to many colleagues in West Africa; they are using it to improve their skills and particularly to choose their story ideas."

Godefroy Chabi, Benin

4. A Worldwide reference

The first two lessons were first introduced to the SjCOOP mentors and mentees during the first face-to-face meeting in Nairobi (November 2006). It was an opportunity to evaluate the course and see how the participants were willing to use them.

The first time the online course was introduced to a large international audience was in Melbourne 2007, during the 5th World Conference of Science Journalists. The course was very well received and the audience was extremely interested.

The course attracted many users and we received messages asking us how to use the course and if there are tutors who could help. We were contacted from many countries, Zambia, Nigeria, Tunisia, China, Argentina, Canada and France.

The international users kept growing and many of the SjCOOP contacts started using the course in their regions. The Rwandan journalists had one half-day of training on the WFSJ's Online Course during their workshop organized in Kigali, 18-20 December 2009. They also keep in touch with the Great Lakes Media Institute (GMLI) which plans to use the lessons in the future.

Also, two of the SjCOOP mentees who were in charge of training in their region used the lessons and found them very helpful.

Here are some of their remarks and other comments we received from worldwide users:

"The Course is very interesting; I have used it with the fourth grade students in the Faculty of Letters and Sciences at the University of Antananarivo, Madagascar."

Razafison Rivonala Albin, Science Journalist and trainer, Madagascar

"I was asked by USAID to train 15 Jordanian journalists on reporting health issues and thanks to the WFSJ's online course content which helped me to do this successfully"

Hanan Al Kiswany, Science journalist, the Daily Newspaper Al-Ghad, Jordan

"For the last couple of years, I've been teaching a course for graduate students in the sciences about how to communicate. As part of that course, I have some handouts with resources. I recently found the WFSJ online science journalism course, and it's wonderful! It's now a key part of how I help the students learn the basics of writing about science. Thank you for developing it and making it so widely available."

Bruce V. Lewenstein, Professor of Science Communication, Director of Graduate Studies for Communication, Cornell University, USA

"Regarding the online course, there has been very encouraging response from South Asia. Three countries -- Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal -- which do not have any kind of science reporting/journalism/communication course in the journalism syllabi of their universities, became introduced to the concept thanks to a SciDev.Net workshop in Hyderabad in march 2007. ... In February 2009, I was in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The journalism department at the University of Dhaka plans to introduce an optional paper/course on science journalism, inspired by the WFSJ's online course."

T V Padma, South Asia Coordinator, SciDev.Net

"The University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, has agreed in principle to initiate an optional course on science journalism inspired from the WFSJ's online course and the university procedures are being worked out right now. Ditto for the Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu in Nepal, which is on the verge of starting a course on science journalism"

TV Padma, South Asia Coordinator, SciDev.Net

"In India, the Indira Gandhi Open University, the country's largest national Open University, is planning to start a two-year course on science communication and one section will deal with science journalism. They are in touch with me about the online course and in fact we will use the current online course."

TV Padma, South Asia Coordinator, SciDev.Net

"I think the strength of the online course is its ability to give people who don't have the means or opportunity to get training in science journalism a good basis and tips and tricks from the best in the trade. Especially for people in developing regions I think it's an invaluable source. A university course, for me at least, should go both broader and deeper. So, in my view, it is for a different target audience and I don't think it is necessary to make it suitable for both target groups. Optimize for one, the people who are ready to get their hands dirty in the field of science reporting."

Frank Nuijens, Science information officer at Delft University of Technology

"I found the course very useful for my second year journalism students, but should point out that they had no prior exposure to science writing and that I only had six lectures to engage them."

**Marina Joubert, SOUTHERN SCIENCE, South Africa, Science Communication Editor:
SciDev.Net**

“I was asked to give a workshop on science journalism at the Istmo University! You know, I am so happy, because it is the first time on the Guatemalan journalism history that will be taught a course on science journalism. Also I want to let you know that I am going to promote the Online Course in Science Journalism that the WFSJ launched in close cooperation with SciDev.Net.”

Lucy Calderon, Reporter newspaper Prensa Libre Guatemala

Below is an excerpt from a news article on Horacio Salazar, who translated the Online course into Spanish. He was interviewed by freelance journalist Roger Bird for the WFSJ web site: <http://www.wfsj.org/news/news.php?id=150>

Salazar has probably spent more time up close to the WFSJ course than anybody on the planet. His opinion: “Many useful tips there, and I’m sure younger journalists will find it a very good source of ideas.”

“Improvements? I’d like to have more examples in a structured way – explaining how to do a feature step by step: the initial contact with the story, the work to gather information, the structuring of a piece, the drafts, corrections, editing and the end result.”

“In the long run, “I figure the course would need localized versions for different countries, if only to make the vocabulary adequate to local uses ... a way to tackle this might be to open a version in a Wiki format so that other people can edit and augment the content.”

Horacio Salazar, reporter and editor Milenio Diario newspaper, Monterrey (Mexico).

Mr. Salazar translated the Online Course in Spanish for free.

“There is a growing interest on science journalism in Brazil, ...In such context, it is very important to have high quality material, free of cost, easily available through Internet and in local language. This made me to look for funds for paying someone to translate the whole material. The Ministry of Science and Technology, which have been carried out a series of initiatives for supporting science journalism, and my own organization, Museum of Life, were thus excellent partners!

“Reviewing the whole material was very exciting: an excellent opportunity for reading every word of the lessons – and to think about the lessons, their potential and how to use them in the Latin American context. I have scheduled five trainings to deliver this year, and I am indeed going to use the lessons.

“I hope also that the Portuguese version of the on line course also be used by African Portuguese-speaking countries.”

Luisa Massarani is coordinator of SciDev.Net/Latin America; she is also coordinator of the science communication studies of Museum of Life, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.



12. SjCOOP Lessons learned

The implementation of the Outcome Mapping evaluation and monitoring methodology, contracted to Dr. Jan Lublinski, has made possible early identification of major difficulties, problems and deviations. Corrective measures and adjustments were made throughout the three year duration of the project.

Overall the SjCOOP project is seen as having achieved all its objectives and surpassed several.



Lessons that were hoped for and expected

First lesson: SjCOOP has demonstrated that peer-to-peer mentoring relationships at a distance can be used for training journalists in Africa, North Africa and the Middle East.

Second lesson: there is good synergy between the mentoring of individuals and the creation and mentoring of associations; trained mentees and mentors could use their associations to help each other and also organize training for other journalists.

Third lesson: the multiple layers of activities of this complex project (creation of the first online course in science journalism, individual mentoring, face-to-face meetings, support to associations, twinning of the new associations with established associations in the South) led to numerous unexpected results: Uganda President Museveni speaking on science communication; the first-ever conferences of science journalists in the Arab World, in Uganda and in Rwanda; strong bonding between the Arab Science Journalists' Association with the United States' National Association of Science Writers; the translation of the 8 lessons of the online course in three additional languages (Spanish, Portuguese and Chinese) at no expense to the project; and other regions of the world looking forward to implement similar schemes (on going program for Portuguese-speaking countries of Africa, preliminary work for a SjCOOP project led by Australia in South East Asia, and plans for a SjCOOP project in Latin America).

Fourth lesson: a big regional project like SjCOOP has regional impact and even a worldwide impact.

Lessons that were not expected

Fifth lesson: mentoring of journalists at a distance in Africa and the Middle East needs to be supported by a detailed structured plan of activities.

Mentoring is traditionally a rather unstructured activity. It is mostly a private affair between the mentor and the mentee. There is no questionnaire to fill, no reports to file, and no exam to pass. The initiators of SjCOOP thought it would be so, at the outset of the project. But the extremely strong multicultural nature of the mentoring (mentors and mentees from some 40 different countries) and the wide range of competency in journalism of the mentees,

conjugated with the communication challenges between mentors and mentees, all conspired to slow and stop the mentoring. In the end:

- **multicultural barriers had to be broken through face-to-face meetings** that included lots of exchanges (and even games of floor-hockey!),
- **mentoring had to be complemented by teaching**, made possible thanks to the creation of the 8 lessons of the online course in science journalism, and
- communications had to be facilitated with the **introduction of cheap Skype communications** to all participants, gifts of headsets and training on how to use them.

Journalists live in the present, from one deadline to the next. We learned that while the two years of the mentoring is not long enough to achieve the progress in writing skills that we hoped for -- in case of the less advanced journalists --, it rapidly becomes too long if the participating journalists do not have fresh challenges and new activities to undertake. Interest in the mentoring was maintained at a high level with mentees from different countries working as teams on stories. Each team was led by a mentee who was the contact with an editor-in-chief. The resulting **transborders stories** led to renewed interest and the emergence of several leaders.

The following boxes show how the SjCOOP mentoring evolved:

SjCOOP First Year	SjCOOP Second Year	SjCOOP Third Year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring with shared goals • Discuss career goals • One article per week • Selected mentees test online course lessons • Face-to-face Meeting (Nairobi) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customized Mentoring • One article per month • One chapter of the online course every two months • Discussions (one/2 months): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a Skype Conference ○ WE discussion forum • Field Trips & Reporting (Doha) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring complemented by teaching using the online course and new challenges • Teams of journalists from different countries produce transborders stories • Mentors and mentees adopt cheap Skype communications • Associations hold activities • Leaders emerge

Sixth Lesson: science journalists can work as teams on stories across borders, they like to be challenged. They will also elect someone in the team to establish contacts with editors to plan the publication of the stories. Editors in Africa are open to publishing stories written by teams of journalists from several countries.

Seventh Lesson: it is possible to train radio, internet and print journalists in reporting science at a distance, but it is not possible to do so for TV journalists. The main constraint on TV journalists is that their employers will not let them share rough and preliminary versions of scripts and programs. There is also a bandwidth hurdle to the exchange of videos in Africa.

Eighth Lesson: initial selection of participating mentees needs to be more rigorous. In the end, SjCOOP graduated only 32 mentees. The expectation was that some 40 journalists out of the initial 60 would succeed. When SjCOOP started, the initial 60 were selected out of 160 candidates. Of the 60 initial mentees, 21 were dismissed and replaced which means that in the end some 81 journalists were presented with the opportunity of benefiting from the training and mentoring, and only 32 maintained their commitment.

The good news is that this first phase has received much publicity and the between 400 and 500 journalists who have joined associations of science journalists in Africa and in the Arab World represent a very good basin of recruitment for more journalists committed to report science and technology.

Ninth Lesson: technology is as much a curse as a benefit; the dedicated project website was a failure but journalists embraced the use of Skype chats and Skype casts.



13. SjCOOP: Next Steps

SjCOOP was an experience. Nothing like SjCOOP had ever been accomplished before, not only in science journalism but in media training in general.

The World Federation of Science Journalists has told its donors that it plans to submit a follow-up project. Such a second phase would need to implement the following:

- a mixture of training in the basic skills of science journalism AND mentoring in how to freelance, pitch stories, manage editors, and grow ones career;
- a detailed month by month plan of structured activities over the two years of the mentoring with an increasing level of difficulties and challenges;
- stronger selection process at the very beginning and strong monitoring for early elimination on uncommitted participants;
- build-up towards team work on transborder stories written collaboratively by journalists from several countries;
- concerted and planned effort to produce stories aimed at modifying governmental policy and decision-making; and finally,
- evaluation of the impact of the reporting on policy making and decision-making.

On 13 – 15 February 2009, in Chicago, during the Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the Program Committee and the Board of the World Federation of Science Journalists met to discuss and approve the main features of a SjCOOP phase II proposal.

Annexes

Financial Report

Project Name: Peer-to-Peer Development and Support of Science Journalism in the Developing World (SjCOOP) (Actual expenditures)									
Budget Items and Notes	Year 1 (1 April 06 to 31 March 07)			Year 2 (1 April 07 to 31 March 08)	Year 3 (1 April 08 to 31 March 09)	TOTAL	IDRC	DFID	SIDA
	Portion Administered by IDRC (CAP)	Start-Up Grant (1 April 06 to 31 July 06)	1 August 06 to 31 December 06						
	IDRC	IDRC	Year1 (1 January 07 to 31 December 07)	Year2 (1 January 08 to 31 December 08)	Year3 (1 January 09 to 31 March 09)				
A. CONSULTANT									
1. Regional Coordinators (3 @ \$20K)	\$60,000.00			\$35,000.01	\$60,739.57	\$155,739.58	\$60,000.00	\$95,739.58	
				\$15,000.00		\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00		
a. CAP IDRC	\$37,720.00					\$37,720.00	\$37,720.00		
2. Mentors (15 mentors @ \$10K/mentor)			\$162,287.42	\$74,999.99	\$70,000.00	\$307,287.41	\$162,287.42	\$74,999.99	\$70,000.00
3. Project consultant		\$255.00	\$15,341.30	\$9,952.08	\$4,649.93	\$30,198.31	\$15,596.30	\$14,602.01	
B. SALARIES									
1. FT Program Director		\$12,758.72	\$55,312.64	\$86,909.81	\$81,629.52	\$236,610.69	\$12,758.72	\$223,851.97	
2. FT Program Manager		\$7,023.66	\$19,140.24	\$50,113.81	\$51,225.53	\$127,503.24	\$76,277.71	\$51,225.53	
3. PT Assistant (\$27K + \$2500 for benefits; 2% increment each year on base salary)			\$14,196.81			\$14,196.81	\$14,196.81		
			\$10,865.38	\$35,265.67	\$11,158.34	\$57,289.39			\$57,289.39
4. Salary IT support			\$29,162.93	\$11,337.07	\$27,922.56	\$68,422.56	\$27,922.56		\$40,500.00
C. EQUIPMENT 1. Laptop		\$5,314.00				\$5,314.00	\$5,314.00		
D. Staff Travel									
a. Prog. Director									
USA (Start-up Grant)		\$900.28				\$900.28	\$900.28		
Per diems (USA)		\$1,403.95				\$1,403.95	\$1,403.95		
- Airfare(Munich 2 times)		\$3,068.44				\$3,068.44	\$3,068.44		
Per Diems (5 days @ \$216/day)		\$5,632.65				\$5,632.65	\$5,632.65		
Airfare (USA - \$1500; Cameroon - \$2500; Egypt - \$2500; Nigeria - \$2500) + (Australia - \$2500 in Year 2)			\$16,415.29	\$9,643.30	\$8,927.03	\$34,985.62	\$16,415.29	\$18,570.33	
Per diems (\$225 x 35 days)			\$5,302.73	\$8,811.25	\$4,918.04	\$19,032.02	\$4,918.04	\$14,113.98	
Trip to Washington, Qatar, Kuwait and Germany				\$8,097.46		\$8,097.46	\$8,097.46		
b. Prog. Manager									
Airfares: Nairobi \$2,250; Melbourne \$3,400; 2nd FtoFace \$2,750			\$2,166.00	\$2,525.84	\$1,150.67	\$5,842.51	\$1,150.67	\$4,691.84	
Per diem: Nairobi 10 x \$200; Melbourne 10 x \$225; 2nd FtoFace 10 x \$225)			\$1,172.28	\$2,544.31	\$3,029.79	\$6,746.38	\$3,029.79	\$3,716.59	

c. Regional Coordinators(3)									
3 x (Airmfares (\$2600 x 3) + Per diem (\$200 x 12 days)			\$15,693.61	\$18,278.92		\$33,972.53	\$18,278.92	\$15,693.61	
E. RESEARCH EXPENSES									
1. Munich Conference		\$52,542.91				\$52,542.91	\$52,542.91		
2. Office Rental + Supplies (based on "Start-up Grant")		\$16,783.70				\$16,783.70	\$16,783.70		
2. Regional Face-to-Face Meetings									
a. Airfares									
- Mentors and mentees			\$108,775.03			\$108,775.03	\$108,775.03		
b. Per Diems (75 x \$200 x 5 days) - per diem rate based on assumption of group rate hotel			\$6,476.18	\$113,373.73		\$119,849.91			\$119,849.91
c. Facilities			\$75,994.15	\$15,599.37		\$91,593.52	\$75,994.15		\$15,599.37
Management team meeting-Budapest				\$14,753.60		\$14,753.60		\$14,753.60	
a. Airfares and perdiems									
3. a. Associations Start-ups			\$24,831.17	\$55,569.20	\$14,430.80	\$94,831.17		\$94,831.17	
b. Internships (3 @ \$7000/intern = \$1500 airfare + \$5500 stipend)				\$45,945.62		\$45,945.62			\$45,945.62
4. Online Course - Science Journalism									
a. Curriculum Development (2 Consultants @ \$7500/consultant)			\$17,809.20	\$14,480.00		\$32,289.20		\$32,289.20	
			\$7,589.20	\$33,519.96	\$5,920.04	\$47,029.20			\$47,029.20
5. Evaluation (External Consultant Fee)			\$10,071.65			\$10,071.65		\$10,071.65	
			\$16,874.31	\$4,410.00		\$21,284.31			\$21,284.31
7. PtoP Project Governance (1st Meeting: Australia, April 2007; 2nd Meeting: TBD)				\$5,153.38				\$5,153.38	
a. Airfare (5 x \$2500)			\$13,006.54	\$3,467.70	\$11,000.00	\$27,474.24	\$3,467.70	\$13,006.54	\$11,000.00
					\$8,871.35		\$8,871.35		
b. Per Diems (5 x \$243 x 7 days) - per diem rate based on assumption of group rate hotel			\$8,034.72		\$8,505.00	\$16,539.72	\$8,505.00	\$8,034.72	
			\$4,721.95		\$3,783.05	\$8,505.00			\$8,505.00
IDRC per period	97,720.00 \$	105,683.31 \$	423,496.99 \$	94,957.89 \$	54,397.41 \$	776,255.60 \$			
Indirect costs IDRC	0.00 \$	0.00 \$	25,007.42 \$	5,723.71 \$	6,734.14 \$	37,465.27 \$			
TOTAL IDRC	97,720.00 \$	105,683.31 \$	448,504.41 \$	100,681.60 \$	61,131.55 \$	813,720.87 \$			
DFID per period			\$153,400.54	\$320,342.77	\$221,602.38	\$695,345.69			
DFID per period			\$11,577.22	\$24,473.66	\$16,322.77	\$52,373.65			
DFID per period			\$164,977.76	\$344,816.43	\$237,925.15	\$747,719.34			
SIDA per period			\$75,689.95	\$275,076.43	\$108,861.43	\$459,627.81			
SIDA indirect costs			\$5,932.25	\$8,060.35	\$11,715.95	\$25,708.55			
Total SIDA			\$81,622.20	\$283,136.78	\$120,577.38	\$485,336.36			
Sub-Total							\$776,255.60	\$695,345.69	\$459,627.81
Total Indirect Costs	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$42,516.89	\$38,257.72	\$34,772.86	\$115,547.47	\$37,465.27	\$52,373.65	\$25,708.55
TOTAL	\$97,720.00	\$105,683.31	\$695,104.37	\$728,634.81	\$419,634.08	\$2,046,776.57	\$813,720.87	\$747,719.34	\$485,336.36
							\$2,046,776.57		

DFID added \$96,312.00 CAD to the initial budget to fund the attendance of 25 journalists to the 6th World Conference of Science Journalists, London (UK), 29th June - 2nd July 2009

Publications

Publication available

Setting up your own Science Journalists' Association

Barbara Drillsma

[http://www.wfsj.org/files/File/resources/documents/How to set up.pdf](http://www.wfsj.org/files/File/resources/documents/How%20to%20set%20up.pdf)

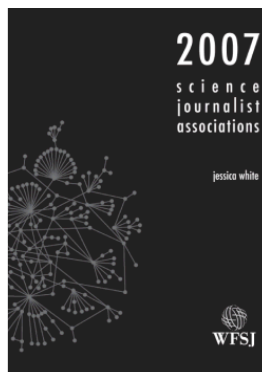


2007

Science Journalist Association Guide

Jessica White

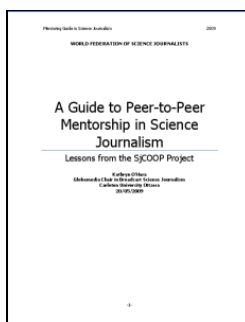
[http://www.wfsj.org/files/File/resources/documents/Associations Guide.pdf](http://www.wfsj.org/files/File/resources/documents/Associations_Guide.pdf)



2009

A Guide to Peer to Peer Mentorship in Science Journalism

Kathryn O'Hara



World Federation of Science Journalists (WFSJ)

The World Federation of Science Journalists (WFSJ) is a non-profit organization representing 40 associations of science and technology journalists from Africa, the Americas, the Asia-Pacific, Europe and the Middle East. It is, in short, an association of associations. The WFSJ seeks to further science journalism as a bridge between science, scientists and the public. It promotes the role of science journalists as key players in civil society and democracy. The Federation's goals are to improve the quality of science reporting, promote standards and support science and technology journalists worldwide.



Objectives

The Federation seeks to organize regular exchanges between its member associations and their individual members. It encourages the foundation of associations where there are none and networking opportunities for science journalists across the globe. The WFSJ maintains a website to share information about advances and trends in science journalism. Training and networking for science journalists, especially in the developing world, are key priorities. A major activity of the Federation is the periodic convening of the World Conference of Science Journalists (WCSJ). The fifth Conference brought more than 600 participants in April 2007 in Melbourne (Australia). Previous conferences were Montréal 2004, Brazil 2002, Budapest 1999, and Tokyo 1992. The next conference will be held 29th June to 3rd July 2009, in the London, United Kingdom.



History

The Federation was founded in November 2002 at the 3rd WCSJ in São José dos Campos, Brazil, where Canadian science writer and broadcaster Véronique Morin was elected its first president. At the end of the 4th WCSJ in Montréal, in October 2004, more than 600 participants from 58 nations attended, as well as representatives from 30 science journalism associations worldwide, and Australian science journalist and magazine editor Wilson da Silva was elected the Federation's second president.

On 18 April 2007, in Melbourne (Australia), Pallab Ghosh, science journalist with BBC, was elected its third president. The Federation is governed by a seven-member board with representation from Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.

Membership

There are 40 national, regional or international associations of science journalists members of the World Federation of Science Journalists:

African Federation of Science Journalist (AFSJ)

Arab Science Journalists Association(ASJA)

Argentina: Argentinean Association of Science Journalism(AAPC)

Australia: Australian Science Communicators(ASC)
Bangladesh: Bangladesh Science Writers & Journalists Forum (BSWJF)
Brazil: Brazilian Association of Science Journalism (ABJC)
Cameroon: SciLife (Cameroon's Association of Science Journalists and Communicators)
Canada: Canadian Science Writers' Association (CSWA)
Catalonia: Catalan Association for Scientific Communication(ACCC)
Chile: Chilean Association of Science Journalists (ACHIPEC)
China: Chinese Society for Science and Technology Journalism (CSSTJ)
Colombia: Colombian Association of Science Journalism (ACPC)
Denmark: Danish Science Journalists' Association
Europe: European Union of Science Journalists' Associations (EUSJA)
Finland: Finnish Association of Science Editors and Journalists(FASEJ)
France: French association of science journalists (AJSPI)
Germany: German Science Journalists' Association (WPK)
Germany: German Association of Science Writers(TELI)
Ghana: The Ghana Association of Science Journalists and Communicators
Iberoamerica: Iberoamerican Association of Science Journalism
 International Science Writers Association (ISWA)
Ireland: Irish Science & Technology Journalists' Association (ISTJA)
Italy: Italian Association of Science Journalists (UGIS)
Japan: Japanese Association of Science and Technology Journalists (JASTJ)
Japan: Medical Journalists Association of Japan(MEJA)
Kenya: Media for Environment, Science, Health and Agriculture (MESHA)
Korea: Korea Science Reporters Association (KOSRA)
Netherlands (The): Dutch Association of Science Journalists(VWN)
Tanzania: Network of African Journalists Journalists on earth science (NAJES)
Nigeria: Nigeria Association of Science Journalists(NAJS)
Pakistan: Pakistan Medical Writers' Association (PMWA)
Philippine: Philippine Science Journalists Association (PSciJourn)
Québec: Association of Science Communicators (ACS)
Russia: Association of Science Writers and Journalists 'INTELLECT'
Rwanda: Rwanda Association of Science Journalists (RASJ)
Spain: Spanish Association of Science Communication (AECC)
Sudan: Sudan Association of Science Journalists
Uganda: Uganda Science Journalists'Association(USJA)
United States: National Association of Science Writers (NASW)
United Kingdom: Association of British Science Writers (ABSW)

Board and Governance

The World Federation of Science Journalists answers to the General Assembly of its member associations, with each association carrying one vote. The General Assembly is convened at the WCSJ once every two years.

President: Pallab Ghosh (BBC, United Kingdom);
Past President: Wilson da Silva (Cosmos, Australia);
Vice-President: Diran Onifade (Nigeria TV, Nigeria);
Treasurer: Nadia El-Awady (Islam Online, Egypt);
Secretary: Jia Hepeng (SciDev.net, China);
Members-at-large: Valeria Román (Clarín, Argentina)
 Deborah Blum (Journalist & author, United States).



Members of the Finance Committee and the Program Committee are chosen by the Board.

The Federation has a small secretariat with two full time staff members located in Gatineau, Québec, just outside of Ottawa, Canada.

SjCOOP Support Team

Jean-Marc Fleury is the Executive Director of the World Federation of Science Journalists, based in Gatineau (Québec), Canada. He also holds the Bell Globemedia Chair in Science Journalism at Laval University, Québec City. He was previously Director of Communications at the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Ottawa (Canada). He worked as a science journalist at Le Soleil newspaper in Québec City and the monthly magazine Québec Science. He has won several prizes for his articles. His degree is in Physics Engineering.



Olfa Labassi is the Project Manager for the World Federation of Science journalists since December 2006. She worked before during three years as finance manager in a private company in Tunisia. With the WFSJ, she administered budgetary policy, operational procedures and logistic support requirements for the SjCOOP project. She also managed relationships with suppliers, consultants and evaluators. Olfa was also in charge of the administrative matters related to the online courses as well as the coordination and approval of the courses adaptation from English to French and Arabic. She holds a bachelor degree in computer science and management and a master's degree in Project Management



Jan Lublinski is a science journalist, trainer and consultant based in Bonn, Germany. He is one of the two co-editors of the Online Course in Science Journalism, and he is in charge of the internal evaluation of the mentoring programme run by the World Federation of Science Journalists (SjCOOP). As a journalist he reports for German Public Radio and GEO magazine. He also trains journalists from all over the world at "Deutsche Welle".



Pauline Degen has written for a variety of magazines, mainly on design. She has organized educational visits in Europe for groups of designers. More recently she worked in finance, specializing on income tax. She worked part time for SjCOOP where her responsibility was to make sure that dozens of science journalists from all over the world would arrive on time in Africa, Asia, the Americas or the Middle East. Her degree is in Gerontology from Québec University, Outaouais campus.



Augustin Denis is a graduate in computer sciences. He is interested in web development and especially in what the internet can do for communication. Passionate about travel and Asian cultures, he lived abroad for a few years before working for the World Federation of Science Journalists. He is now in charge of technology and anything related to the web at the WFSJ.

