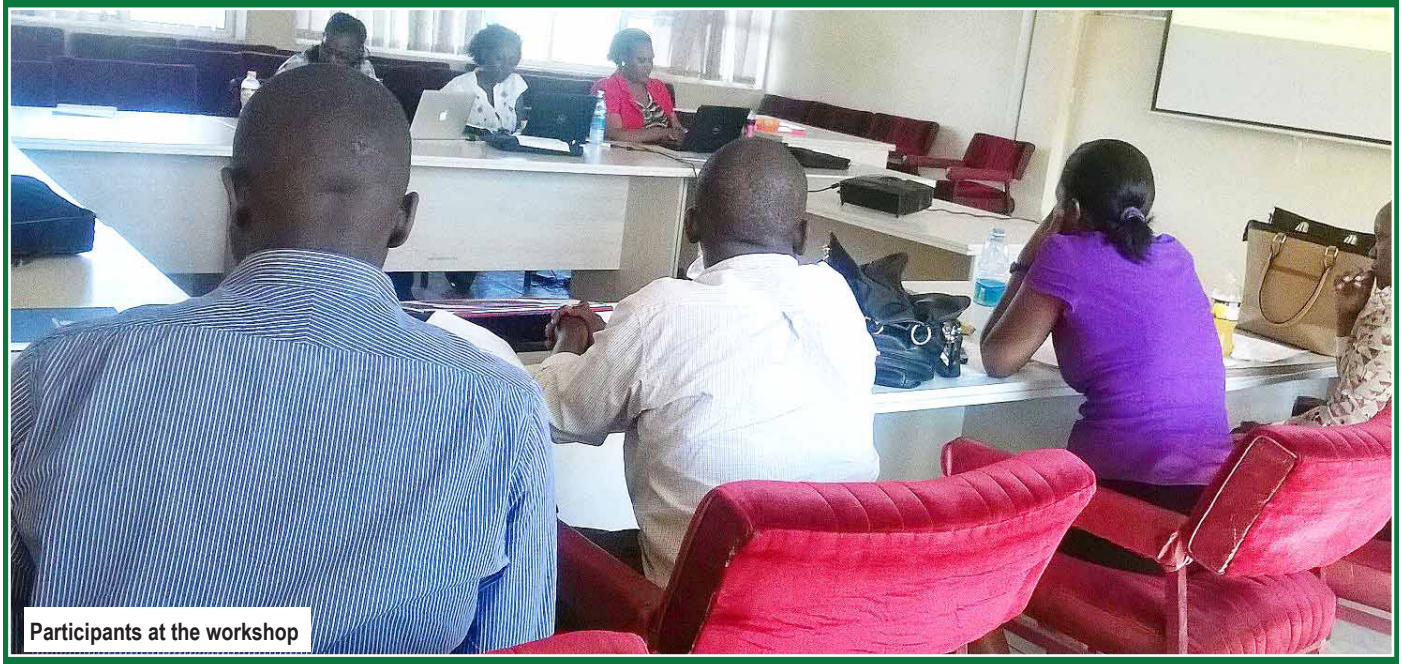
WIMEA

WIMEA-ICT

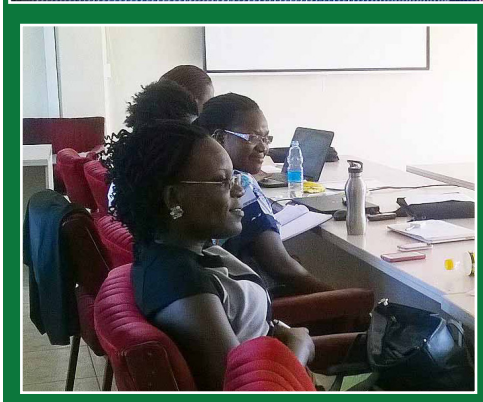
Improving Weather Information Management in East Africa for effective service provision through the application of Suitable ICTs - Newsletter

ISSUE 004- JULY, 2015

COURTING THE MEDIA



Participants at the workshop



Makerere University researchers meet journalists

The WIMEA-ICT Project under the College of Computing and Information System at Makerere University carried out a national survey on the status of weather information dissemination in Uganda in 2014. To validate the survey findings, a stakeholders' seminar was held on December 11, 2014. Following this, a media workshop took place on April 2, 2015 in recognition of the media's critical role in disseminating weather information to the public. Media houses like Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC), Radio Uganda and Newspapers like *New Vision* and *Daily Monitor* were represented. During the meeting, several questions were discussed.

Why is *UBC* the only TV station that disseminates

(Continued on page 2)

The public needs to be sensitized about weather information

(From page 1)

weather information in Uganda?

UBC has a memorandum of understanding with UNMA the Authority responsible for weather in Uganda. Additionally, through *UBC* this weather information is disseminated in 22 different local languages that cut across Uganda.

Is Makerere University through this project making impact on Uganda?

Yes, Makerere university is not only considering academic research but also the real weather information needs of the people through the WIMEA-ICT project. During the survey, it was noted that 86% of the respondents are affected by weather in their day-to-day activities and yet majority of these do not have timely access to weather information. There is, therefore, a need to find out the best channels to disseminate such vital information in a timely manner.

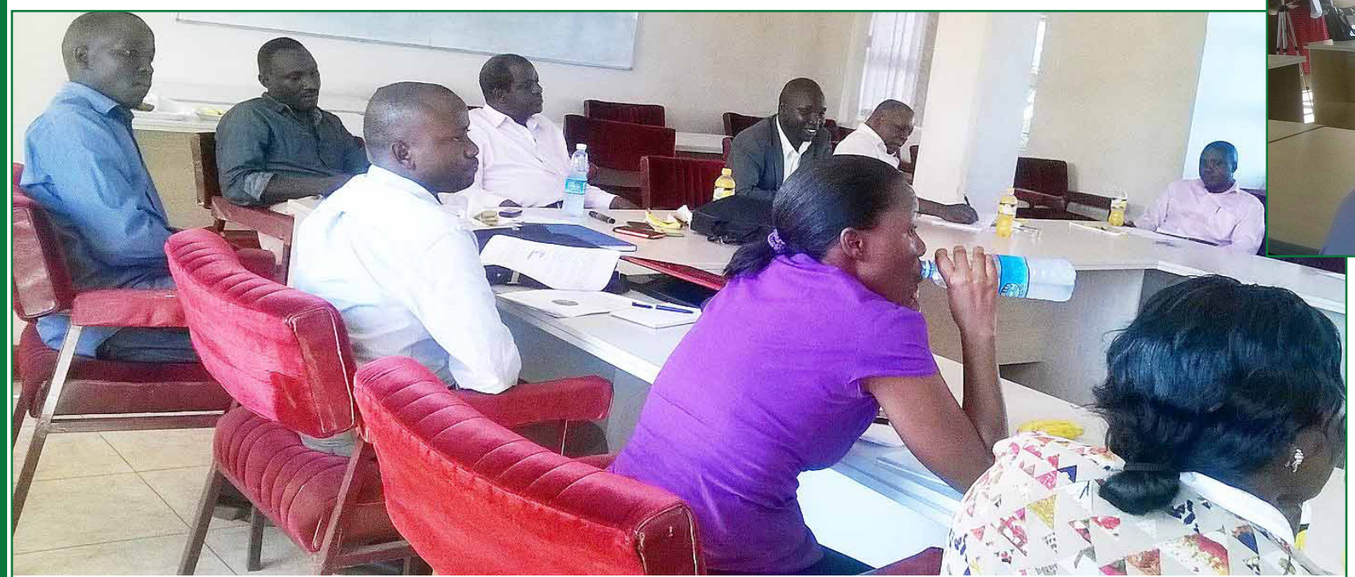
How best should such information be disseminated?

TV and Radio Broadcasting of this weather information can be enhanced beyond being read during the news bulletins but also during the commercial breaks of the programmes or have a strip at the bottom of the TV screen that shows the weather updates while a (popular) TV programme runs. SMS alerts via mobile phones can also be further extended beyond those targeting fishermen currently undertaken by UNMA. UNMA needs to sensitize the public on the availability and meaning of the weather information. Using the available radio stations to run the weather updates since they reach everywhere and present localized information in 22 local languages on UBC radio. Having snapshots and detailed forecasts available for especially the regions that are prone to disasters.

Why is there increased access of this information but the interpretation is not clearly shown as per the survey findings?

The people can access this information but there is inadequate training in the community on how to understand the forecasts, additionally forecast presentations such as normal/below normal and other terms that are used in the dissemination are not simple for the public to easily understand.

However through this meeting, the media will embark on using languages that can best suit the public and also sensitise the people, in collaboration with UNMA to improve the comprehension of disseminated weather information.



A cross-section of some of the journalists at the workshop

What are some of the challenges faced in disseminating such information?

The greatest challenge is faced during the editorial stage. Once information has to be verified by editors before it is published to the public, chances of it not being published are high. However, some information is omitted because it has not been considered as important and yet such information may be very useful for public consumption. To improve this situation, the WIMEA-ICT project team is going to interact with editors of selected media houses in Uganda about the importance of weather information as well as brainstorm with them how to intuitively present certain weather facts to the general public.

EDITORIAL: We have to work with the media

In the WIMEA-ICT project we recognise that the media plays a very important role in informing the general public. We are also cognisant of the fact that if all the useful information we unearth during our research investigations remains inaccessible by the stakeholders, there will hardly be any impact on society. We are therefore taking steps in harnessing the media such that our results get communicated widely. In the last couple of months, a few activities have been undertaken including:

1. The Geophysical Institute of the University of Bergen organised a writing workshop for researchers to improve their writing skills.
2. Makerere University organised a media-training workshop for researchers to build their capacity in packaging their research findings so that it is attractive for a variety of media houses (print, radios, and televisions).
3. Makerere University organised a workshop for journalists who report on weather information in Uganda.
4. DIT hosted the Technology Transfer Alliance workshop, at which social entrepreneurship projects such as WIMEA-ICT were discussed.
5. DIT Signed a MoU with the Tanzania Meteorology Agency.

We are grateful to all stakeholders for making these achievement possible. I, therefore, urge the WIMEA-ICT students to desist from "hiding" their research results in their academic cubicles. Let us instead increase awareness of our surroundings and use our research skills to design solutions that impact our communities. I particularly encourage all of us to take interest in working with media houses e.g. by reading about issues and responding scientifically with authority.

Let us keep keeping on!

Dr. Julianne Sansa-Otim (PhD)
Project Principal Investigator

Dr. Mathew Stiller Reeve and Valerie Kumer with the participants at Makerere University

PASSIVE OR ACTIVE VOICE?

Climatesnack/WIMEA-ICT writing workshop

A WIMEA-ICT writing workshop took place at Makerere University from April 20-22 2015. It was facilitated by Dr. Mathew Stiller Reeve and Valerie Kumer from the Geophysical Institute University of Bergen, Norway. The workshop was a mix of lectures and practical assignments. The participants learnt about basic writing skills, including how to consider an audience, using the active voice, cutting clutter in writing and considering flow and structure. There were 20 participants; majority of whom were from Makerere University. Two were from the Dar-es- Salaam Institute of Technology (DIT) and one from the University of Juba. Below are some observations from a few participants.

Good writing is concise

EMMANUEL KONDELA (DIT)

"The best scientific writing should be straight forward, concrete, exact, clear headed and concise. We designed sentences where old information came at the beginning and was followed by new information. We constructed sentences by considering an issue, having a development, a conclusion and a point. Thus, by the end of the workshop, most of us shortened our essays almost by half. We gave ideas and constructive feedback to the organizer for a wonderful workshop."

TRIPHONIA NGALIO (DIT)

"Although we were lectured by the organisers, there were group discussions where everyone got the chance to discuss their essays. We learnt to use the cut and clutter skill, to transform our essays and obtain a good flow of our work. It was useful. I got the chance to discuss my essay titled; *Statistical Mmodelling of Extreme Rainfall Variability in Tanzania.* I realised I had used unnecessary jargon, long phrases and dead words. I had to improve my piece. On the last day of the workshop, we had one-on-one discussions about our essays with the facilitators. We got feedback about our strenghts and weaknesses, thus improving our writing skills."

MS. MARY NSABAGWA (MAKERERE UNIVERSITY)

"Science affects people of various fields and categories. It is important that scientific outcomes are communicated in the simplest language possible. Unfortunately, scientific writing has been characterized by technical terms only understood by domain specific people. Writing is one of the best and cheapest ways of sharing scientific information.

In order to effectively communicate scientific outcomes, we need to follow best writing practices. The learning curve is gradual and may involve many people giving feedback for improving the writing."

(To page 6)

"For a highly interdisciplinary project like this to succeed, the researchers not only have to publish in respected journals, they also have to communicate well across disciplines", (Mathew Stiller-Reeve)

Learning by doing

By Mathew Stiller-Reeve

In April, Valerie Kumer (University of Bergen) and I had the pleasure to organize a writing workshop at Makerere University in beautiful Uganda. The participants were all part of the WIMEA-ICT project. WIMEA-ICT stands for Improving Weather Information Management in East Africa for effective service provision through the applications of suitable Information and Communication Technologies. For a highly interdisciplinary project like this to succeed, the researchers not only have to publish in respected journals, they also have to communicate well across disciplines. Successful communication relies on good writing skills. The aim of the course was to improve the participant's knowledge of writing and to encourage them to work together to improve. The focus was certainly on learning-by-doing.

Grace Kobusingye realising that editing is not easy. Photo: Mathew Stiller-Reeve

(Reeve is a scientist at Uni Research and the Bjerknes Centre for Climate Research)

(From page 5)

MR. ISAAC MUGUME (MAKERERE UNIVERSITY)
"I felt tuned when the facilitators taught me to read my work several times: they actually suggested that I learn how to read my work aloud to myself until it makes sense to me. I was also happy when they encouraged me to connect with my peers and ask my peers to review my work and take criticisms positively. In light of these suggestions, I am sure this workshop was apt for a Ph.D student like me. I am thankful and will always be happy to attend or even refer peers to also participate."

MS. DOREEN TUHEIRWE MUKASA (MAKERERE UNIVERSITY) "I was encouraged that I can become proficient in my writing, taking one lesson at a time and applying it. The essay I wrote was greatly improved and received feedback from the Climate Snack Group. With a little more editing, it will be ready to be published on the Climate Snack website! Thank you WIMEA-ICT for contributing to my process of becoming an excellent writer. It may be a process, but will be worth the effort."

TTA GOES TO DAR-ES-SALAAM

***QUESTION*: What is TTA?**
ANSWER: TTA stands for Technology Transfer Alliance (TTA). It is a cooperation between Research and Higher Education Institutions implementing Social Entrepreneurship and Innovations Capacity-Building.

***Q:* When did it take place?**

A: It took place from April 13 -15 2015 in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania.

***Q:* What was this workshop about?**

A: One of its aims was to present project examples of society-driven innovation projects based on social needs. Since WIMEA-ICT is one of the projects driven by society needs and KTH a partner to this project guided our project team on how to improve a business model in order to align expectations of all the project partners regarding the outcomes of the Automatic Weather Stations.

***Q:* Ms. Mary Nsabagwa, briefly tell us about your experience at this workshop**

A: Maximus Byamukama and I designed and presented a business a model to a panel of experts from the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH).

The panel of experts provided feedback that we could to improve on the model. We discussed with the supervisors about my PhD study plans from which recommendations were made.

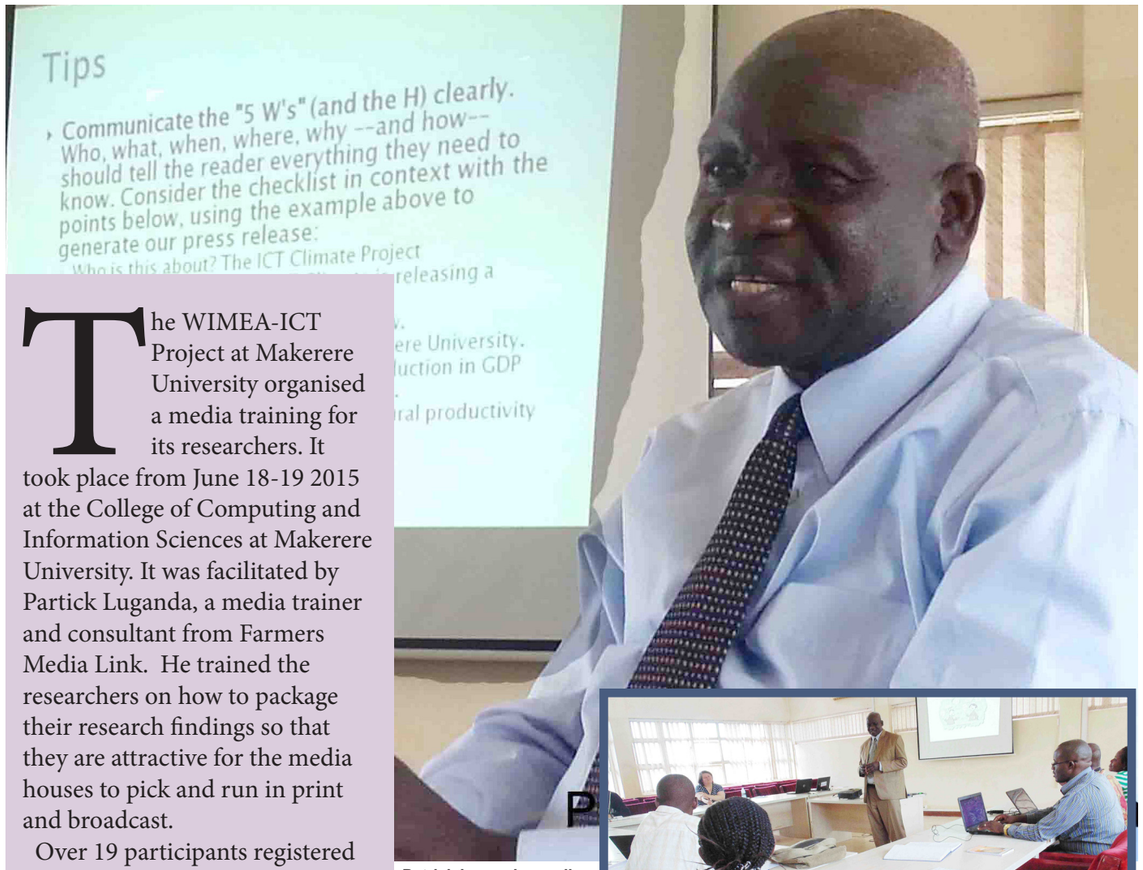
I was guided through experiments to acquaint myself with similar installation in the University of Bergen.

In addition the participants from also discussed the planning for taking Research Component 3 research.

Prof Bjorn (2nd Right) and Dr. Okou (3rd Right) with three PhD students discuss the commissioned weather stations

HELP THE MEDIA TO HELP YOU

PICTURES BY MAXWELL M. OMWENGA



Patrick Luganda, media expert and trainer

The WIMEA-ICT Project at Makerere University organised a media training for its researchers. It took place from June 18-19 2015 at the College of Computing and Information Sciences at Makerere University. It was facilitated by Partick Luganda, a media trainer and consultant from Farmers Media Link. He trained the researchers on how to package their research findings so that they are attractive for the media houses to pick and run in print and broadcast.

Over 19 participants registered for this training. Those who attended say they benefited a lot. They were introduced to the media/journalism, and told about the headline relevance of the media to science-media relationship, meeting reporters, nurturing science-media relationship, tools (Help the media to help you) and the inside story of the Organisation.

MOU BETWEEN DIT AND TMA SIGNED

The Dar es Salaam Institute of Technology (DIT) and Tanzania Meteorological Agency (TMA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to improve East Africa's Weather Information Management by Application of Suitable Information Communication Technology (WIMEA-ICTs). WIMEA-ICT is a combined research and capacity building project funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), under the Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development scheme (NORHED). Speaking during the signing of the MoU, WIMEA-ICT programme coordinator Dr. Amos Nungu said the project is a cooperation between Makerere University, DIT, and the University of Juba in South Sudan and Geophysical Institute of the University of Bergen. Dr. Nungu said the meteorological agencies in the three countries are the beneficiaries of the project outcomes. "Accessibility to reliable weather information is vital for decision making in various sectors such as agriculture, disaster management, aviation, fishing, mining, construction, defense, water resources and health," he said.

The Dar-es-Salaam Institute of Technology (DIT) Principal Prof. John Kondoro (Right) hands a heavy duty scanner to Tanzania Meteorology Agency (TMA) Director General, Dr. Agnes Kijazi in Dar-es-Salaam

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DIT, TMA to use ICT in weather management.

BY FRANK AMAN

18th April 2015

The Dar es Salaam Institute of Technology (DIT) and Tanzania Meteorological Agency (TMA) signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to improve East Africa's Weather Information Management by Application of Suitable Information Communication Technology (WiMEA-ICTs).

WiMEA-ICT is a combined research and capacity building project funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), under the Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development scheme (NORHED).

Speaking during the signing of the MoU on Thursday, WiMEA-ICT programme coordinator Dr Amos Nungu said the project is cooperation between Makerere University, DIT, and the University of Juba in South Sudan and Geophysical Institute of the University of Bergen.

Dr. Amos Nungu.

Dr Nungu said the meteorological agencies in the three countries are the beneficiaries of project outcomes.

"Accessibility to reliable weather information is vital for decision making in various sectors such as agriculture, disaster management, aviation, fishing, mining, construction, defense, water resources and health," he said.

He added the methods of weather prediction and meteorological observation currently being used in th East Africa region is outdated, noting that timely dissemination of weather information is more or less

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LOCAL NEWS

DIT, TMA sign deal to improve records collection, preservation

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Details Published on Saturday, 18 April 2015 00:22 Written by DAILY NEWS Reporter

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THE Tanzania Meteorological Agency (TMA) is set to improve its performance even further, thanks to an agreement signed by the Dar es Salaam Institute of Technology (DIT) on Thursday.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) inked in the city, would among other things, see TMA adopting digital technology to preserve data and make full use of numerical weather prediction.

This agreement has come at an opportune time, taking into consideration the various technological challenges we currently have to overcome," noted TMA Director General Dr Agnes Kijazi.

Kijazi received a heavy duty scanner offered by

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Salaam Institute of Technology (DIT) Principal Prof.

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

Norad

WIMEA-ICT:
Improving Weather Information Management in East Africa for effective service provision through the application of suitable ICTs

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