"TRAIN ONE TO TRAIN OTHERS": PROJECT SCHOLARS TRAIN NIGERIAN FACULTY ON USING "R" FOR DATA ANALYSIS

An "R" Training took place at the Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi (FUAM) from the 5th through the 10th of August, 2019. The training was organized by the USAID funded Feed the Future Nigerian Agricultural Policy Project (NAPP). Three project scholars trained and mentored by faculty at Michigan State University conducted the local training. The training was led by Mrs. Blessing Agada, a soil physicist and a NAPP Scholar from FUAM assisted by Mr. Chukwudi Charles Olumba and Mrs. Hephzibah Onyeje Obekpa, NAPP Scholars from Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki and FUAM respectively.

Mrs. Agada Fielding Questions about R.

On the first day, the opening remarks were made by Professor Godwin Abu of the Department of Agriculture, FUAM and the advisor of one of the NAPP scholars. The 5 day training was attended by 23 members of staff, (17 males and 6 females) chosen from all the departments that make up the Bachelor of Agriculture Program of the university (Agricultural Economics, Agricultural Extension and Communication, Fisheries, Crop Production, Soil Science and Animal Production).

A typical training day included a lecture, followed by practice sessions where participants practiced different codes and syntaxes they had been taught. The trainers then provided on-the-spot support for participants with challenges. A special lab session for staff from Agricultural Economics and Extension followed.

Mr. Olumba Providing an Explanation in the R Training

Participants were excited that R is free and open source. They were able to produce many kinds of graphs and charts with different specifics and identified that quality as another advantage of R over some statistical packages. The Participants were finally divided into groups and asked to work on a mini-project of their choice. The training ended with participants presenting their mini-projects (developed using R).

A WhatsApp group was created for the sharing of questions and answers, as well as challenges and successes encountered while using R. Apart from thus ensuring continued interactions between trainers and trainees, participants promised to continue to be faithful users of R.

We as trainers felt greatly fulfilled as we used the event to pass knowledge of R that we have learned over the last one year to a set of colleague participants in one of our home universities. Indeed this is a testament to a core objective of the NAPP initiative of training one to train others!

R Training Participants

Mrs. Obekpa Listening to a Question

By Mr. Chukwudi Charles Olumba and Mrs. Hephzibah Onyeje Obekpa