

Nigeria Agricultural Policy Project Highlights

September 2019

Scholar Program 59

ENHANCING THE 'TRAIN ONE TO TRAIN OTHERS' TRADITION: "R" FOR STATISTICAL COMPUTING IN BENUE STATE

In further pursuance of its tradition of "train one to train others", A hands-on training workshop on "R" was organized by the USAID funded Feed the Future Nigerian Agricultural Policy Project (NAPP). It held from Monday, 19th to Friday, 23rd August 2019 at the Benue State Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Makurdi, Benue State. The 5-day event had a total of 32 participants (10 females and 22 males) from the Ministry (departments of planning, research and statistics, crop production, and fisheries) as well as staff from the Benue State Agriculture and rural Development Authority (BNARDA).

Two NAPP Scholars earlier trained and mentored at Michigan State University conducted the workshop. The training workshop was led by Mrs Blessing Iveren Agada, a NAPP Scholar and faculty member of the Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi. She was assisted by Mr Philip Hegarty James another NAPP Scholar and faculty member of the Federal University Gashua, Yobe State. Opening remarks were made by the Director Planning Research and Statistics of the Ministry, Mr. Izobo Lucky.



MRS. AGADA IN THE CLASSROOM

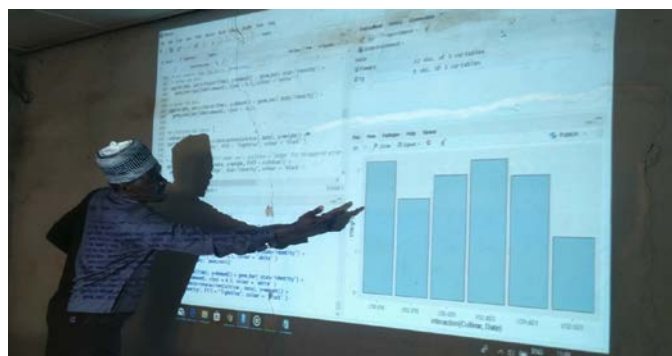
The training was delivered in six (6) labs covering several topics including introduction to R, statistical refresher, basic R structure, reading and writing data in R, data management techniques in R, simple and advanced graphics in R using the ggplot2 and gganimate packages, regression and correlation, analysis of variance (ANOVA) mean separation, replicating tables and graphs in R as well as saving the graphs and tables in different formats (.jpeg, .png,

.docx, .pdf). Additional emphasis was placed on the use of the Agricolae package in R, designed especially for agricultural research.



MRS. AGADA ANSWERING A QUESTION

A typical training day included a lecture, followed by practice sessions. Participants practiced different syntaxes taught with on-the-spot support of the trainers for those with challenges. Assessment through quizzes measured the participants' understanding of the knowledge and skills transferred. A WhatsApp group was created to provide a platform for the continued training and mentoring of the participants by the NAPP scholars.



MR. JAMES DEMONSTRATING GRAPHING CAPABILITIES

A vote of thanks was given by one of the participants who expressed their collective joy and gratitude for the training opportunity. Their worries about unaffordable licensing fees (as in the case of STATA) were now over. They opined that their continuous use of R will go a long way in improving delivery of their departmental outputs and their professional careers. This example of training (delivered not by external experts but by two NAPP scholars who are staff from two Nigerian universities) is a realization of the NAPP's goal of sustainable capacity strengthening for agriculture in Nigeria through its 'train one to train others' tradition. The workshop ended with the presentation of certificates by Mr. Thomas Unongu, the Director of Agricultural Services of the Benue State Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources.



TRAINING PARTICIPANTS

By Mrs. Blessing Agada and Mr. Philip Hegarty James

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