



Evaluation of Pilot Phase 2007-2009

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Teresa Hanley

Executive Summary

It [AuthorAID] has improved my writing skills drastically.

I am trying to assist busy medical doctors in learning to write, set goals, do statistics, etc. as part of a fellowship plan. It's good to know others are doing the same and that resources are available.

The workshop was indispensable for me. I was interested in article publication. Since attendance of workshop I have at least three publications. That is success.

Introduction

The three year pilot project, AuthorAID began in January 2007 and aimed to increase the success rate of researchers in publication and ultimately, to increase the visibility and influence of research undertaken by developing country researchers. It does this through a web-based community, an on-line mentoring system and outreach work through workshops. This evaluation carried out mainly in late 2009 is based on surveys, interviews and an analysis of available documentation including INASP narrative and financial reports and website data.

The knowledge community

The website had exceeded its target by 25% and by December 2010 already had 1250 registered members. There had been over 29,000 visits to the site from 186 countries. The most popular sections of the website were the resource library with high levels of interest also in finding other researchers, accessing sections on news, events and the blog. Over 80% of users reported that they found the site easy to use, downloadable at a satisfactory speed, with accessible language and is one they would recommend to other colleagues.

Mentoring

284 experienced researchers have so far signed up to be a mentor. 704 researchers have registered their interest in being mentored. Over half of the respondents to the website survey identified finding a mentor as one of their main goals in using the site again confirming the demand for this service. Some mentees have found identifying a suitable mentor through the website as difficult. Email has been the main mode for communication using personal email addresses rather than the workspace area on the AuthorAID site.

Relationships ranged from a mentor supporting a mentee's writing and publication experience over more than one year to shorter term advice and support on particular queries and manuscripts. Some mentees sought editing of their English language and improvement to the manuscript rather than a focus on their own writing skills.

The evaluation can confirm the potential benefits of online mentoring but it is difficult to establish the scale of impact of mentoring through AuthorAID both because it is still in early stages but also due to UK privacy laws which make tracking difficult. Mentees who had identified mentors were emphatic in their praise for the scheme. Mentors identified improvements in mentees in writing and communication of their research.

Workshops

AuthorAID has run seven workshops involving approximately 200 early career researchers in eight countries. Participants were overwhelmingly positive about the workshops and able to identify tangible benefits such as increased success in publication and improvements in their writing skills. They identified positive impacts on their attitude to publishing and confidence in dealing with the publication process.

Furthermore, 84% of respondents felt they had been able to share learning with their colleagues. All co-facilitators involved in workshops in 2009 have undertaken additional workshops.

Project management and development

Marketing AuthorAID has been a challenge with the need to balance an aim to build the number of users with a risk of attracting interest to the site too early before the tools were in place to support potential users. There are signs that the increased promotion of AuthorAID in 2009 is having an effect with a steady rise in users of the site to over 3000 a month and new members registering as mentors and mentees. New relationships with publishers and other networks are paying off.

In 2009 it was agreed that AuthorAID would identify focus countries and focus themes. It would be useful to articulate explicitly the parameters of the focus country approach.

The project team, made up from a diverse range of organisations around the world expressed strong satisfaction with the working style which has been participatory, creative and well led by INASP. The iterative process to develop the website typifies the overall learning approach focused on the end users of this pilot project and has contributed to its success.

AuthorAID has adapted successfully to developments in the external environment. It would be useful to build in a regular review of the external environment into the annual project meeting to identify new opportunities and challenges.

The project represents excellent value for money with the combined activities contributing to researchers' greater confidence and ability to communicate research findings through publication and other means. A total budget of just over £360,000 seems very reasonable for the three year pilot to develop this new approach.

Future options

The success to date of AuthorAID has opened up new options for its future. It seems AuthorAID is currently on the cusp of major expansion. It could act as a central "hub" sustaining its current activity and also catalyse complementary initiatives to be run by publishers, research institutions and others. This will require additional tools and resources e.g. "how-to" guides. Such a development is likely to require a longer term funding strategy than two years and means INASP would have a more long-term role than maybe was originally envisaged. But this is one supported by partners and seems an appropriate role for a northern-based organisation with the particular range of contacts and skills held in INASP.

Some particular areas for development, activities to ensure sustainability and options for the future are below.

- Further develop e.g. through targeting AuthorAID's potential benefits for women who may have less access to support in communicating research.
- Develop, update and share regularly with partners an action plan to implement the web strategy, including actions to increase AuthorAID's web presence. Clarify if the website will be a knowledge based community encouraging interaction between users in the future or is primarily a resource centre for both users and other similar initiatives it stimulates.

- Build on the success of the blog and develop additional means to drive people to different parts of the site and to engage with them.
- Monitor the future impact of mentoring and in particular the potential of the more active matching process being used now.
- Investigate using established workspaces e.g. on Google and other sites to replace or complement the AuthorAID workspaces.
- Develop further guidance to mentees and mentors on their roles, tips and approaches. Adapting the learning agreement to an online process for setting up a mentoring relationship would be useful.
- Develop online resources to increase the reach of the project e.g. teaching objects such as short features (3-8 minutes) that workshop facilitators can use, online learning materials and opportunities to provide access to a workshop for participants who are not in countries where they are held.
- Continue to develop approaches to support workshop facilitators in training and pilot an AuthorAID facilitators' network.
- Recruit more ICT4D capacity in-house in INASP to enable the team to consider the various technical options and drive the development of the AuthorAID web presence.
- Develop a marketing and network development strategy which includes the focus for 2010 to recruit more mentors and establish partnership with publishers and others but also pursue potential large scale partnerships with major research initiatives.

It is now feasible to build on the foundation AuthorAID has so far laid. It requires a bold, ambitious plan and thus funding but would be one that enables AuthorAID to grow and have an even more significant impact on developing country researchers' communication, profile and influence on both policy and practice.

1. Introduction

AuthorAID is a project to provide networking, mentoring, resources and training for researchers in developing countries. It seeks to help researchers to communicate their work more effectively. The goals are two-fold: to increase the success rate of researchers in obtaining publication and ultimately, to increase the visibility and influence of research undertaken by developing country researchers. AuthorAID aims to achieve its aims through three components which are:

- the development and support of a web-based community;
- an on-line mentoring system; and
- outreach work through workshops.

The three year pilot project began in January 2007. INASP is the project lead with participating partners including International Foundation for Science (IFS), World Health Organisation's Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR), National University of Rwanda (NUR) and International AIDS Society (IAS). The project team includes a knowledge community editor based at Texas A&M University, website teams ILRT and Pure Usability based in Bristol and a coordination team in INASP, Oxford. For the duration of the pilot project it was funded by Sida (£85,000 per annum) with some additional support from DFID and INASP flexible funding.

The purpose of this end of pilot evaluation is to:

- identify progress and effectiveness of AuthorAID;
- identify learning, issues and recommendations for the future development of AuthorAID; and
- produce a learning document useful to others interested to establish a similar initiative and so includes descriptive sections of what was done as well as their effectiveness.

2. Methodology

The evaluation was carried out in the last quarter of 2009 with some additional information gathered in January 2010. The evaluation framework was set up in line with the project proposal and with the input of AuthorAID partners. A mid-term review was carried out in 2008 to identify early lessons and also to test monitoring and evaluation tools. Monitoring and evaluation have been an integral part of the project process with the evaluation consultant included as part of the project team in annual meetings and with access to the regularly bi-monthly teleconferences. This has also enabled initial findings from the M&E to be fed into the project and in itself has been a novel and, it seems, successful approach.

The final evaluation included:

- a review of relevant INASP documents including website data from ILRT and Google Analytics;
- a survey carried out in November 2009 of web participants which was up for nearly one month and received 83 replies;
- analysis of participants and co-facilitator evaluations and feedback from seven workshops;
- a follow-up survey of workshop participants (24 respondents);
- a survey of people signed up to be mentors and mentees (69 respondents);
- interviews with five mentors and mentees;
- interviews with all main stakeholders in the project including those in INASP, IFS, TDR, Texas A&M University, Pure Usability and ILRT.

This report considers findings on each of the project components individually and goes on to discuss their collective results, implications, learning and recommendations for the future. Each section also has lessons learned and options and recommendations for the future.

3. Web-based knowledge community¹

3.1 The Aim

The web-based knowledge community aims to be a global community of people interested in communicating research including authors, academic mentors, editors, publishers, scholarly and professional societies, archivists and librarians. Aspects of the website related to mentoring are dealt with separately in section 4. This section considers the website's users, content, use and coordination, though clearly there are links between the two components which will be considered through the report.

A target for the pilot phase to gain at least 1000 registered members was set early in 2009. Other indicators of success identified earlier include:

- Nature of people involved in community
- What people gain from it
- Duration and intensity of involvement
- Reasons for staying/leaving the community
- Extent website is used for formal mentor relationship or do they use other means e.g. hotmail (this will be dealt with in section 4)
- Uptake of resources made available and feedback
- Extent of other participation and activity stimulated e.g. participation in discussion groups, weblogs, and other fora to share experience
- Number of informal mentor/mentee relationships.

The main sources of data used for this section of the evaluation are website data (Google Analytics)¹, website user responses to the survey and interviews. Survey respondents were from a total of 23 countries with India and Iran represented most highly with there also being a handful of respondents each from Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Egypt, Mexico and Pakistan.

3.2 Activities

The website design was based on learning from a "tester site" developed by Pure Usability in the first year of the pilot. This site provided the basis for site development, testing and research. The final AuthorAID site was launched in June 2008. This is hosted and was designed by ILRT, University of Bristol together with Pure Usability. The site has been designed to be low-bandwidth, taking into account the particular needs and challenges for researchers in settings where connectivity is poor and internet access may be limited or expensive. The site has continued to be developed in response to user feedback, observations of what is working and not as well as taking advantage of new technology opportunities. For instance, alterations have been made so the site is "mobile phone-friendly", a listserv has been added and discussion groups have been removed because they have not proved successful.

The first web strategy document for AuthorAID was written in February 2008 by Pure Usability. This strategy focused on:

- Community engagement and building a user community, particularly the need for AuthorAID to engage directly with users in order to build a thriving research community
- Design & development process. The adoption of a user-centred design approach, combined with elements of an agile methodology was recommended

¹All figures based on analysis of the site from 1.7.08 to 31.12.09. Google analytics accessed 14.1.10

- Human resources, with particular focus on the web development team
- Technology platform to be used for the AuthorAID website
- Marketing and promotion of the project and website.

A second web strategy was developed jointly by Pure Usability and ILRT in May 2009 building on the initial strategy. The key themes identified in the 2009 strategy as central to the success of the AuthorAID knowledge community were:

- enhancing communication;
- providing appropriate and engaging content; and
- monitoring and understanding user goals, attitudes and behaviours in detail.

Many of the recommendations in the strategy are in the process of being followed up though there is no shared documented action plan.

3.3 Content

The knowledge community editor has provided much of the site content including a regular blog. She has also created or sourced much of the material for the resource library such as documents on writing scientific publications, teaching and careers in scientific communication. Materials are available in six languages. The site also includes information on training and events being run by AuthorAID and others on the subject of scientific communication. It includes a method to find other researchers including potential mentors for early career researchers and a place to register to be a mentor or mentee.

The site is intended to have an open access repository for research published with support from AuthorAID e.g. through mentoring. INASP is developing a Learning Object Repository and intends that AuthorAID materials and research can be stored there in the future.

Additional content that respondents suggested would be useful includes information on the publication process particularly to address a common belief that publication is expensive for researchers. Other respondents suggested resources to help in editing, content to consider how to cope with language issues or common mistakes for those not speaking English as a first language, more details on how to write a paper, information on statistical applications and more scientific papers marked up with changes, edits and comments on common mistakes. In addition content ideas emerge from the other two components with options to develop online learning objects and interactive opportunities for website users. Some of these are discussed further in the mentoring and workshops sections, 4 and 5.

3.4 Users

Users of the site can be divided a number of ways. One is between those who register on the site and those who do not. By the end of the pilot phase in 2009 the website had well exceeded its target and already had 1250 registered members, 25% more than the target. Registered users have access to more of the site e.g. can contact mentors directly but many of the materials are open to all.

By mid-December there had been over 29,000 visits to the site with more than 23,400 unique visitors from 186 countries, so clearly a much greater number of people use the site than are registered users. The average time spent on the site is nearly four minutes which is good for sites of this type. Countries which feature most frequently in user numbers are the US, UK and then India, Mexico, Kenya, Canada, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, China and Iran. Some of these countries – Mexico, Kenya, Bangladesh and Ethiopia are places where AuthorAID workshops have taken place and so suggests that these drive up user numbers but others have not been a focus of AuthorAID activity. For instance, user numbers in China seem to have increased with the addition of Chinese language materials. Monthly visits have been steadily growing to reach nearly 3000 per month in October and November 2009.

The vast majority of users find AuthorAID via a Google search with most popular search terms being AuthorAID, Barbara Gastel (the knowledge community editor) or “poster presentation examples”.

3.5 Use and results

The most frequently visited part of the website by far is the resource library with nearly 10,000 visits. Following this, with just over 4600 visits, is the “search for researchers” section. This trend is backed by the survey results in which respondents reported that they found the resource library, news and updates and also the training and events sections most useful. The activity that most respondents had most recently done was to download a resource from the library. User loyalty is difficult to identify but statistics indicate that 5% of visits are from users who have accessed the site at least 200 times (though this does not mean that 5% of all users accessed the site 200 times).

The perception by all stakeholders was that the site is clear and easy to use. This is confirmed by the users’ survey in which over 80% of users reported that they found the site easy to use, downloadable at a satisfactory speed, with accessible language and one they would recommend to other colleagues.

A regular, weekly blog is written by the knowledge community editor with occasional “guest bloggers”. This seems to have helped to drive people to the site on a regular basis and to particular resources. It seems also to have helped develop a more personal connection to the site for a number of users with many survey respondents highlighting the importance of the blogs for them. Another indication were the comments of welcome from users to the new part-time graduate assistant who joined the knowledge community editor in 2009 and did a guest blog.

An overwhelming majority (93%) of respondents felt they had benefited from the site. In particular, two thirds say they feel more confident about communicating their research, understand the publication process better and feel better equipped to write journal articles. A smaller proportion of 39% reported that they feel they are better equipped to deal with publishers. A number of respondents highlighted improved presentation skills as a benefit of their engagement with the website and its materials.

Some examples of benefits respondents identified are below

- *I am a new user, but I found useful information including how to set Graphs and Tables in scientific papers for an instance.*
- *I learnt about the useful aspects that we often neglect in scientific writing.*
- *I am very much interested in scientific communications. So the website gives me an opportunity to understand and explore different perspectives of this field.*
- *It has improved my writing skills drastically.*
- *The information available is very useful. I use resources for providing information to colleagues.*
- *I am trying to assist busy medical doctors in learning to write, set goals, do statistics, etc. as part of a fellowship plan. It's good to know others are doing the same and that resources are available.*
- *Every time I read the blog I get some new things.*
- *It helped me in having tips for writing research papers particularly as I'm not an English native speaker.*
- *I started with AuthorAID at the time of putting the research problem into perspective last year up to now I visit it to find guidance on how to proceed on as I am now finalising writing my thesis. Interestingly my topic is not in the field of medicine, but I have benefited a lot from the general guidelines on reporting for the journals”*
- *I work as a professional trainer in scientific communication at various universities in developing countries, so looking periodically at the AuthorAID website helps me see the issues that developing-country researchers regard as important, as well as get useful tips that I can use in my training efforts.*

3.6 Management and coordination

People involved in developing the AuthorAID site include the INASP project manager, the knowledge community editor, Pure Usability responsible for design and advising on functionality of the site and ILRT responsible for hosting, development and also design. Coordination of these different players is carried out by INASP through phone, email and occasional dedicated meetings as well as being an agenda item at times at the regular project teleconference for all partners.

The group works well together, though all involved commented that it was a strange and at times felt to be a cumbersome structure. For instance, getting and acting on decisions can be quite slow because everyone is involved in a number of other projects beyond AuthorAID so time for the project has to be scheduled. The joint development of a website strategy in July 2009 helped develop a shared perspective of the future direction. However, there seemed to be some uncertainty as to the status of certain developments, what had happened and would definitely be taking place. Also, some stakeholders felt that as well or instead of contracting out and segmenting much of the technical aspects of AuthorAID, the nature of the project is such that greater technical capacity in-house at INASP such as an ICT4D (Information, Communication and Technology for Development) specialist would be beneficial to drive the project and website development to consider external and technical opportunities and their relevance for the project.

3.7 Learning and future options

The website and development process have a number of relevant lessons for similar initiatives and/or its future development. Firstly, the iterative process using a tester site has led to the development of a site that is meeting user demand and needs, one they find has relevant content and is easy to use. The process frustrated some stakeholders because it made initial project development slow but this time investment has paid off. It has also built ILRT and Pure Usability's knowledge of the users' environment which was not one that most of them were familiar with. Even with the tester site, resources (money and time) for further and ongoing development have proved essential. The need for resources will be ongoing both to take advantage of new opportunities that new technology enables, particularly as access to new technology such as social networking and mobile phones grows in many developing countries.

Secondly, with this type of project it is important to be clear about the aim of the website. There have been discussions along the way as to the extent the website IS the project or is a component or tool. The evaluation has found that the website can be a stand-alone component of benefit to its users, evidenced by the number of users who are not registered. But there is potential for greater impact when the three AuthorAID components of website, workshops and mentoring are integrated. There is still a need to communicate the aim and intended level of ambition for the site more clearly to all project partners. In particular, communication in the future needs to clarify whether the site will be a knowledge based community, encouraging interaction between users in the future, or is primarily a resource centre for both users and other similar initiatives it stimulates. Either option is feasible but would imply different strategies to achieve either or both. This report has tended to assume it will aim to be a community in line with the original plan and thus will need to drive greater numbers to join given a working figure that only 1-2% of users of any website tend to participate actively in a community². It will also need greater resources put in to drive such interaction. Discussion groups were recently removed from the site because of a lack of involvement but this stems partly from a lack of anyone driving them as well as maybe being too early in AuthorAID's development to be a successful feature.

Thirdly, greater ICT4D capacity in-house in INASP could enable the team to consider the various technical options for the future and drive the development of AuthorAID web presence.

² 1-2% based on estimates advised by Pure Usability

Fourthly, the development of a shared strategy has been helpful particularly given the points above. However, there was no formal process to approve the strategy nor shared action plan developed to implement it. This has led to some confusion about the status of various suggested actions. An action plan updated regularly with decisions and progress drawn from the strategy would be beneficial to keep all partners in touch with the plans and progress.

Fifthly, the blog has proved to be a particular success, driving people to the site on a regular basis. Depending on the outcome of discussions about site aims then additional means to drive people to different parts of the site and to engage with them would be useful.

Lastly, the team is confident the website is robust enough for much increased use. It may be useful to clarify if there are any limits to use in terms of use and capacity to host material.

4. Mentoring

4.1 Aim

One of the three components of AuthorAID is its facilitation of mentoring relationships. Mentors are experienced researchers, editors and other researchers. The website outlines that it is envisaged they can help less experienced researchers with advice and input on research communication issues and activities including:

- Research methods and analysis
- Appropriate journals for submitting manuscripts
- Manuscript preparation
- Writing style
- The peer review process and how to respond to referees' comments
- Presentations and posters
- Preparing grant proposals
- Scientific communication in general.

The original aim for the pilot phase was to establish 200 mentoring partnerships resulting in at least 80 articles published. By the time of the mid-term review it was clear that this target was over-ambitious: neither the anticipated number of "matched pairs" i.e. those matched with the input of the partners, had reached the expected numbers nor was the website service going to be up and running in time for such a number of partnerships to develop. Furthermore, the time from beginning a mentoring relationship to any actual publication would be much longer than the remaining time period of the pilot. Thus, in relation to mentoring this evaluation has focused on the successes, challenges and learning from experience to date for the future development of the project.

A survey sent to all mentors and mentees (surveyed separately) elicited 69 responses almost equally divided between researchers interested to be mentors and mentees though not all had experience of mentoring through AuthorAID. The separate website survey also included some relevant data. Of thirty-five respondents to the survey who were researchers and have registered their interest in mentoring responded to the survey, thirteen had been in a mentoring relationship via AuthorAID. These, together with a total of five interviews with mentors and mentees, documentation, feedback and stakeholder comments all allow us to draw some observations.

4.2 Activities

Two main approaches to enabling mentoring relationships have been trialled during the pilot phase. The first, while the website was still being developed was "by-hand" matching of mentors and mentees identified by partners IFS, TDR and NUR. In the case of IFS, they matched people themselves and other partners passed on details of individuals to INASP to contact directly. This process resulted in 38 mentor/mentee matches.

The second method, which was possible after the establishment of the permanent AuthorAID website, is that mentors and mentees find each other through the website. The website provides certain tools including workspaces which are confidential spaces for use by a mentor and mentee to share with each other their CVs and to use for journal articles they are working on. It is very difficult to identify how many mentoring relationships have been established through the website.

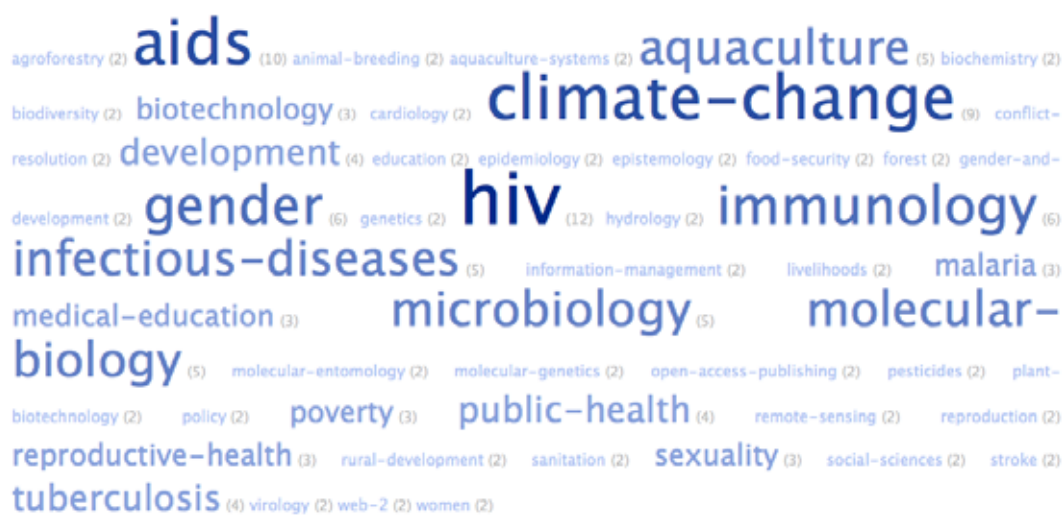
Mentoring couples are encouraged to fill in a learning agreement, a tool originally designed to facilitate evaluation of the project but one which the mid-term review indicated was helpful in clarifying expectations of both in the mentoring relationship.

4.3 Recruitment and demand

284 experienced researchers have so far signed up and indicated their interest to be a mentor. Potential mentors are both editors and experienced researchers, the latter being the main group. 704 researchers have registered their interest in being mentored. Over half of the respondents to the website survey identified finding a mentor as one of their main goals in using the site, again confirming the demand for this service. A further 270 people have registered with the site but not chosen to have a mentor or mentee profile though of course many more use the site but do not register to be a member at all³.

Journal referrals are proving successful in recruiting mentors and mentees. Emerald publishers' circulation of information of AuthorAID and call for mentors resulted in 250 new users to the site, though not all as potential mentors. An editor and AuthorAID mentor working with the journal *International Environmental Perspectives* reported that they advertise AuthorAID and refer manuscript authors to it if they need technical support.

The tag cloud below represents the range of subjects and numbers of researchers interested in these in line with the data of end September 2009. This shows the current dominance of health related subjects possibly reflecting some of the origins of the AuthorAID concept. The cloud itself is something that may be used on the site to inform people of the range of subject areas of interest to AuthorAID users. Some mentors and mentees commented on the extent of AuthorAID material being geared towards medicine and science and that they felt social science was not a priority, so had been hesitant to join the scheme. Publicity of these would need to be used carefully if part of a strategy to recruit new users.



4.4 Experiences of mentoring

The extent and experience of mentoring has proved to be the most difficult aspect of AuthorAID to evaluate. This is partly due to UK privacy laws which means that individual correspondence between researchers cannot be looked at and also because much of the contact between researchers seems to take place outside of the AuthorAID website and is via personal email accounts.

³ Numbers from 14.1.10

4.4.1 Finding each other

The original pairings of mentors and mentees were facilitated by INASP and partners. From July 2009 mentoring couples made contact via the website under their own initiative. It is difficult to know the extent to which researchers have tried and succeeded in finding other researchers for the reasons outlined earlier.

In terms of ease of use, 30% of survey respondents indicated that they found it easy to find researchers with similar research interests on the site but in the comments section and interviews, finding a match was highlighted as one of the difficulties mentees faced. This may be due to the early stage of the project in which mentees significantly outnumber mentors.

Mentors have expressed surprise that they have not been approached more often by mentees. No mentor reported approaching a mentee themselves but most seemed to assume that the mentee would approach them. Some potential mentors had found the process a bit confusing. One said “I have been approached once or twice by people who do not work in my field at all - so I have had no benefits and I do not really understand what is going on”.

From the survey it is apparent that there is demand for mentoring but uncertainty among some of the early career researchers about how to identify and approach mentors. Recently an AuthorAID team member has found that people’s profiles can better highlight detail that would be helpful for mentees to find mentors more easily. Some useful information has been “hidden” in addresses and other sections so not appearing when a mentee carries out researcher searches. In addition, by reviewing the profiles AuthorAID has identified a potential 88 mentoring partnerships. This more actively facilitated matching is worth monitoring to see if it is a useful function for the future though capacity and size might be an issue.

Geographical location of mentors does not appear to be an issue for mentees. None identified this as a factor in their process of approaching someone though one mentor in interview did highlight that both people who approached her for mentoring were from the same part of her country (India) that she is from so it might play a role for some.

4.4.2 Working together

Mentee requests had been predominantly for help with the writing process, particularly the English and editing for journal submission. But other requests have been for guidance on experiments as part of their PhD, guidance for a proposal, advice on oral presentations and on how to find publishers. Mentor involvement then has ranged from a one email response to a prolonged relationship over more than 12 months. Input on manuscripts, the focus of the majority of mentoring, has been to provide copy editing, English language correction and some advice on restructuring manuscripts. In some cases the mentoring is more about ongoing support, review and development of articles looking at the presentation of data and communicating to audiences unfamiliar with the context of the author. Evaluation data is insufficient to know how these break down but it is clear that as well as long term mentoring relationships, researchers want contact with other researchers for more immediate and short term advice on publishing and to discuss shared research interests.

Email has been the main mode for communication. Most mentors provide comments on manuscripts via track changes, sometimes with explanations of their suggested amendments. The extent of communication between mentor and mentee varied a lot with some communicating once or twice a week while others communicated only once when returning a manuscript with comments. There has been only limited use of AuthorAID workspaces though once some early glitches were worked out there have been examples of these working well. In fact, at the time of the evaluation only five mentors have established workspaces. Some mentors and other stakeholders suggested using workspaces on Google and other systems as easier to use than AuthorAID.

In some examples, the focus of both mentor and mentee seem to be to treat the mentoring process as a service to improve the manuscript so it and thereby more developing country research is published rather than a developmental process for the mentee. This maybe a small difference in focus but could influence the way the mentoring is carried out depending on whether the *mentee* or the *manuscript* is the main focus.

The experience of using the learning agreement to set up the relationship was mixed, ranging from some mentors finding it an essential tool to others not finding it very useful or some not knowing of its existence. This suggests the process to draw it up is a useful optional tool but needs to be made more user friendly maybe focused on the mentoring now rather than its original aim to gather data for monitoring.

4.5 The results

Some mentors and mentees cited tangible results. Mentors commented on changes in the mentees' writing over the course of their mentoring and also in their mentees' confidence to communicate their research. "She has been able to present her data much more clearly, particularly in figures and tables" said one mentor.

A mentee commented on the intellectual development mentoring enables, while others commented on the improvements to their manuscripts enabling them to submit to journals and they were confident of publication. A mentee who has recently taken up his first post-doctorate teaching position in Kenya highlighted the value of AuthorAID to early career researchers. Even though he had published before this had been jointly with other authors and with the support of an institution at which he was a student. Now returned to a home environment he described his position as quite isolated.

Another mentee reported:

This week I am going to submit my proposal to Baranasi Hindu University, Varanasi, India for my Ph.D enrolment. I am crossing my fingers to get enrol. There are only two Library Science Ph.D degree holders in our country For proposal writing I am using Author Aid (INASP). I get 140 corrections in my proposal from my mentor side. I am so glad I get correction and I learn many things from her.

This student went on to be successful in her PhD application.

Mentors reported that the areas they found challenging were communication because mentee internet facilities were sometimes unreliable, using the AuthorAID workspace and finding time to provide input to the mentee. A few mentors pointed to some frustration at not receiving feedback from mentees on whether their comments were useful or not. Mentors indicated that it would be useful to have some referral point for queries in case of any issues arising and some guidance on potential issues.

However, on the whole, when a mentoring relationship was established the mentors had found their experience extremely satisfying. Even those who had no or only frustrating contacts from (potential) mentees commented on how useful they thought AuthorAID could be. They identified learning about other parts of the world and the conditions colleagues in developing countries contend with as important learning for them, also the opportunity to contribute to development as well as what they gained for their CV, teaching, training and editorial experience and online profiles.

Mentees who had identified mentors were emphatic in their praise for the scheme. Expressing their frustration at the difficulties they face in sharing their research outside of their own country, getting published in international journals and general need for support, they viewed the AuthorAID project as potentially excellent. None were yet able to point to publications they had succeeded in publishing but some had reached the stage of having articles ready to submit or had submitted and were responding to first round comments and were confident of publication.

In relation to their professional levels, mentees seemed to vary from post-graduate students to mid-career professionals. They ranged in their expectations from wanting help with research and data analysis to only wanting support for their English and copy editing. In terms of the latter, some mentees had submitted a number of articles to mentors, some to more than one mentor and it may be worth considering if these should be limited as it seems to be turning into an editing service in style and presentation with a focus on the manuscripts rather than a mentoring relationship through which an individual mentee develops their own skills.

4.6 Learning and future options

4.6.1 Monitoring for future impact

It is difficult to give definitive conclusions about the AuthorAID mentoring process and results both because it is the youngest element of the project, particularly in its current format and because it is the most difficult to track. Some of the ways originally envisaged for tracking mentoring relationships have been limited because they hindered the establishment of mentoring relationships e.g. the more information requested at registration reduces the number of people registering, mandatory learning agreements, and other aspects are difficult due to privacy regulations.

Evidence to date indicates that mentoring certainly has potential to increase the amount of research published by developing country researchers. It highlights the range of types of mentoring relationship that can occur and this raises some options for AuthorAID future development. The future impact will need to be tracked to be able to articulate with confidence increases in publication rates. The more active matching process being used now may provide a way to track mentoring couples more easily and with more time an increase in the numbers should mean numbers reporting their success (or challenges) will increase.

4.6.2 Recruitment of mentors and mentees

The emphasis in AuthorAID for 2010 is to focus on recruiting additional mentors. Some existing mentors recommended the targeting of post-doctorates who are building their careers and interested in building their CVs (though some of these are mentees!). The referral from Emerald publishers seems to be a very useful one. Further links with publishers are planned for 2010 and the evidence indicates this is a good way forward to grow mentee numbers and possibly mentors too.

4.6.3 Matching

The more active matching that is currently underway is an interesting initiative and worth monitoring both for its success rate but also to consider how feasible it is to maintain this service if the number of users scales up considerably.

The implications of findings about “hidden” research information and interests will need to be fed into alterations in the registration process to increase the chances of researchers finding those which match their interests.

4.6.4 Communication and external links

A number of stakeholders suggested making links to Google and other workspaces rather than pursuing AuthorAID workspace site. Quite a few mentors and mentees commented on finding this difficult or had not used it at all preferring to exchange work by email. It would be worth investigating using established workspaces and for AuthorAID to link to these freeing up technical time for developing other aspects of AuthorAID e.g. its web presence.

4.6.5 Support tools

It may be useful to provide more guidance to potential mentors – short notes on tips, issues that could arise, points to remember e.g. to encourage acknowledgement of

AuthorAID in the manuscript and a way for people to pose queries either to other mentors or to AuthorAID.

Further guidance to mentees on finding a mentor and appropriate protocol for contacting people would be useful.

Adapting the learning agreement to an online process for setting up a mentoring relationship would be useful.

4.6.6 Focus and range of mentoring experiences

Some mentoring has been more focused on the manuscript rather than the author's development, though seems to have some benefit for the author too. These authors see the benefit in terms of being able to share their research with the global community rather than in terms of their own development. They seem to be later in their careers. Other researchers see the benefit in their own development in writing and research communication skills.

It would be useful to consider whether there should be any limit to numbers of mentors or manuscripts that any one mentee can submit. One mentee suggested requesting part payment from mentees for multiple manuscripts. This may be particularly relevant for mid and later career researchers focused on securing an edit for style and English only, rather than a more individual developmental experience. This service is valuable if the aim is to increase the profile of research from developing countries. It would be useful to clarify which or if both of these are aims of the project.

4.6.7 Catalysing, supporting and links with similar initiatives

NUR reported they would be setting up a mentoring programme of their own building on the experience of AuthorAID mentoring. Some publishers already run similar initiatives. AuthorAID could develop tools to support new sister initiatives and play a role in developing a network of mentoring schemes. In terms of the website, the AuthorAID team is already considering developing capacity for other organisations to link parts of it as plug-ins to their own site. Links on mentoring are potentially more complicated, given the possible competition for mentors but are feasible to develop.

5. Workshops

5.1 Aims and activities

AuthorAID workshops aim to help early career researchers increase their skills in writing and publishing scientific papers and in other aspects of research communication. Seven AuthorAID workshops directly run by INASP (and/or in collaboration with their partners) have been held during the pilot project:

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	March 2008
Nairobi, Kenya	April 2008
Managua, Nicaragua	November 2008
Butare, Rwanda	February 2009
Dhaka, Bangladesh	May 2009
Cochabamba, Bolivia	October 2009
Cali, Columbia	November 2009

There have been twenty to thirty participants in each workshop – some workshops have allowed greater numbers in parts of the workshop which were more lecture based but limited numbers to about twenty in the participatory, working sessions to enable more focused discussion of participants' own manuscripts. Overall, the workshops have reached at least 170 early career researchers in eight countries and involved approximately 200 researchers in total.

Two workshops were held jointly with AuthorAID partner IFS (Nairobi and Cali) and another with partner TDR (Addis Ababa). In 2009 the workshops were extended from a core three day workshop to 4 days. The workshops have ranged in length from about 2 days to about 5 days. In general, the more recent workshops have tended toward the latter end of this range. The workshops include lectures and practical sessions which focus on:

- Approaching writing
- Writing scientific papers
- Publishing papers
- Preparing poster and oral presentations
- Writing grant proposals.

Additional sessions have been trialled e.g. on publishing books (Rwanda), presenting research through the media (Rwanda) and a session with a journal editors panel (Bangladesh). In addition, the workshop in Colombia aimed to have a training of trainers focus.

The knowledge community editor, a specialist in science research communication, facilitated all but one of the workshops, usually with co-facilitators from the host organisation, many of whom have gone on to run further workshops.

It is intended that co-facilitators will run further workshops in line with the needs of their institutions, countries and regions. Materials have been placed in the resource library to support them to run these e.g. potential hand-outs and templates for workshops.

5.2 The results

Participants were overwhelmingly positive about the workshops. Virtually all workshop participants report that most or all of their objectives were met. They viewed events as well organised with appropriate content, hand-out materials and useful to their work.

Participants found all parts of the workshop useful though some focused particularly on sessions covering:

- structuring of an article
- manuscript planning and preparation
- manuscript writing
- writing research proposals.

For the future a number of participants requested more time for subject specific discussions and also a more participatory approach for more of the workshop.

As well as this immediate positive feedback at the end of the workshops, participants have been able to identify how they have used the workshop content later. Some examples are in the box below.

How participants used learning from the workshops

- *I now know how to present scientific logic and write articles in a better organized way. I am also aware of the publication process and am careful to avoid common mistakes in the process of submitting articles to journal like wrong formatting, erroneous submission process, etc. Most importantly, I have been more confident in my work as I now know what should be written in an article and how much work should be done to present it as a paper/presentation/poster.*
- *[I use the learning in] my presentation skills at workshops and in lecture seminars to my students. I'm also writing my PhD thesis and my writing skills have improved tremendously.*
- *I am pleased to inform you that Mr. Ashraph Suleiman one of the NUR mentees who also participated in the Scientific Writing Skills training in February 2009 his abstract was accepted for an oral presentation at a conference and his paper won the best prize for the conference. This achievement is attributed to the training by Barbara. Formerly he did not get his work accepted!*
- *I have got attitude of publishing paper and seeking publication and journal for publication.*
- *After attending that workshop, I have reshuffled one of my papers and submitted in the international journal which has been accepted.*
- *The presentation techniques learned from the workshop contributed me to win the Young Scientist Best Presentation Award 2009 by the Bangladesh Society for Veterinary Education and Research.*
- *I have arranged some mini workshop for my postgraduate students with the acknowledgement of AuthorAid*
- *The workshop was indispensable for me. I was interested in article publication. Since attendance of workshop I have at least three publications. That is success.*
- *At least six participants from the workshop held in NUR [in 2009] have since gone on to publish or present their research at a conference, nearly all for the first time.*
- *I attended an Author Aid workshop in Bangladesh and learned many. Really Prof. Gastel possesses very charming personality. Her nice presentation really inspired us. Now I would like to arrange a seminar in my department about the workshop on research writing skill development to trained up the M.Sc. student of my department.*

It is clear that participants are able to identify tangible benefits such as increased success in publication and improvements in their writing skills. They also identified positive impacts on their attitude to publishing and confidence in dealing with the publication process.

Furthermore, 84% of respondents felt they were able to share learning with their colleagues and/or students. Many copied materials and also forwarded the AuthorAID links to their colleagues and students. Others involved in teaching went further as the two examples below illustrate.

After successful participation in AuthorAID workshop, Brac Center Inn, Dhaka, I arranged a seminar in my department with the students of Masters Class. In this seminar I shared my findings with the students and they are pleased and highly interested to continue their research and to publish it.

Firstly, I arranged several mini workshops for my postgraduate students. Secondly, I e-mailed the web address of AuthorAID to my colleagues and students as well. Most of my colleagues appreciated me and they found the website very useful.

The second way for multiplying the impact of workshops is through the co-facilitators. All of those involved in workshop in 2009 have undertaken additional workshops. Here are two examples.

- From the Nicaragua workshop:
Freddy Alemán, the co-facilitator of the Nicaragua workshop reported “After the excellent experience obtained during the Workshops held in Nicaragua last November, and the learning received from Dra. Barbara Gastel, I have been facilitating practical courses in MSc courses at my University. Next August, we will be providing a course on scientific writing to representatives from the ten Universities of the University council of Nicaragua, with the assistance of an expert from Idaho State University.

We have also been informed that as a result of attending the workshop in Nicaragua, the Cuban participants have already run one writing workshop in Havana and will be holding another 2 workshops in June and July.

- From the NUR workshop:
In November to December each faculty at NUR will hold a research methodology training which will include sessions on Scientific skills writing. We recently conducted a survey with sample size 132 academic staff (30%), highest on what staff want is training on scientific skills writing and that this should be done by disciplines.

5.3 Learning and future developments

5.3.1 Workshop results

The workshops have proven to be an undoubted success both in terms of the participants' immediate feedback on learning, their application, tangible success in publication and other forms of research communication. They have also achieved multiplier effects: participants have shared their learning and the co-facilitators have taken up of ideas and application more broadly in their institutions.

5.3.2 Workshop content

The area that has proved difficult in workshops is in participants either being prepared or having enough time to get feedback on their manuscripts. In the future AuthorAID could consider extending the workshop in different ways e.g. linking a student during the workshop to an online mentor for ongoing work after the workshop.

5.3.3 Multiplier effects

The resources held in the AuthorAID resource library for workshop facilitators are useful. It would be possible to develop a number of additional online resources that could be useful for a range of organisations running workshops or for participants to follow individually. This could include teaching objects such as videos and short features (3-8 minutes) that workshop facilitators can use.

Online learning materials and opportunities could also be developed to provide access to a workshop for participants who are not in countries where they are held. These could

include “webinars” for participants to join and participate in workshops live and online learning tools for participants to go through independently. Bandwidth is an issue for some potential users but this is changing rapidly in many developing countries so worth considering.

The experience in running a training of trainers workshop has been limited and in the first and so far only training facilitators reported time and other logistical constraints. However, the intention is to provide a training of trainers that includes content on adult learning methods, facilitation techniques and aspects particular to AuthorAID workshop. This seems to be a valuable extension of the workshops and addition to the “multiplier tools”.

5.3.4 Supporting co-facilitators

As the number of co-facilitators grows it might be useful to link them in some type of network of AuthorAID accredited facilitators. This could either be some type of more formal accreditation process or at least be a dedicated place on the site where facilitators can communicate with each other about challenges and learning on running such workshops. It would be a place for them to suggest additional resources that could be useful for their training.

6. Management and organisation

6.1 Partnerships

INASP has developed a number of different types of partnerships as part of AuthorAID. In addition to the project's donors which include SIDA, DFID and NORAD there are the original core partners of IFS and TDR and this has grown to include the IAS and NUR as well as the organisations developing the website, ILRT and Pure Usability. Partners are all invited to a regular teleconference held approximately every two months and also to an annual project meeting.

There is an excellent working relationship with all the partners which have all played a role in informing the development of AuthorAID during this three year pilot phase. The regular communication, the range of experiences of each organisation and range of ways that AuthorAID links with its own strategic aims have provided useful links for and perspectives to inform AuthorAID's development. All partners are interested to continue the relationship with AuthorAID and expressed satisfaction at the cooperation, good spirit and creativity that has characterised the project. They appreciate the space in the partnership for their input and influence.

In the third year of the pilot AuthorAID started more proactive promotion of AuthorAID and links with a range of contacts once the website was up and running. These are not partners in the same way as the core group but are organisations that can both benefit from and be of benefit to AuthorAID. These included publishers e.g. AuthorAID was publicised at the newly established group of Publishers for Development and also included particular journals with for instance Emerald promoting AuthorAID to its authors.

It would be useful to draw up a network development strategy which can be shared with core partners. It would identify the main groups that AuthorAID will seek to develop a relationship with over the next three years and make explicit the types of benefits AuthorAID will offer each partner and what it would request of them e.g. journals may be able to refer authors who need support and mentoring to AuthorAID to improve manuscripts and AuthorAID would request their promotion of AuthorAID to their readers who are potential users of the site, mentors and mentees. The requests and benefits may differ depending on the nature of the organisation.

6.2 Marketing

The timing of AuthorAID promotion has been a challenge for the AuthorAID team. On the one hand there was pressure to build the number of users to be as large as possible to establish its success but on the other hand there was a risk of attracting interest to the site and wider project too early before the tools were in place to support potential users, mentors and mentees. Some of the challenges the mentoring project faced meant that some stakeholders have publicised this less actively than they would have if they were confident it was working and would continue.

Promotion of AuthorAID has taken off in year 3 of the project particularly in the second half. Information tools (flyers) were created to promote AuthorAID. Each partner has promoted AuthorAID to its own audiences. In addition there have been presentations and information on AuthorAID shared at events including:

- ALPSP conference in Oxford
- The Conference on Quality and Impact of Ibero-American Journals in Costa Rica in October

- The Publishers for Development Event at Wiley Blackwell
- Research Capacity Strengthening Group meeting in September
- Council of Science Editors (CSE) annual meeting
- American Medical Writers Association (AMWA) annual conference
- Communicating research workshops in Mexico (in Torreon in March, Monterrey in September, and Mexico City in November)
- An international course in research writing held at Texas A&M University

Also, promotional materials have been sent or taken to the PKP conference in Canada in July, the E-Learning Africa conference and World Conference of Science Journalists and to institutions visited by INASP staff throughout the year. Furthermore, there have been articles including information about AuthorAID published in *Serials: The Journal for the Serials Community*, *ISMTE* newsletter, *AMWA Journal and Science Editor* and more upcoming in the *Elsevier Editors' Update*. AuthorAID was also mentioned in the ALPSP e-alert.

Online links to AuthorAID have been set up on the website of a number of relevant networks and organisations e.g. British Council, Royal Society, Publishers for Development.

Most promotion has been by the project manager and knowledge community editor. A new AuthorAID team member is now researching relevant workshops and events at which to promote AuthorAID in 2010.

In 2010, promotion will concentrate on journals with the aim to increase the number of mentors attached to AuthorAID.

It would be useful to develop and write up a short marketing strategy for the next 1-3 years to identify where, to whom and the tools available for marketing to guide all partners.

6.3 Wider INASP programme - PERii

INASP runs a wider Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information (PERii). PERii's goal is that sustainable research communication networks improve the uptake, influence and use of the development of national and international poverty reduction strategies and policies. AuthorAID has been run relatively separately during this pilot phase but is now being integrated more closely to other INASP work, for instance it was presented at the annual PERii coordinators meeting in 2009.

It seems to have worked well for AuthorAID to have had the space to evolve and develop independently from the wider PERii programme but clearly there are many links that can be made now that will be of benefit to both AuthorAID and PERii. There has been some contact already with, for instance, AuthorAID information circulated to all the INASP country coordinators. The PERii programme brings a wide network of relevant contacts – librarians, editors and others that AuthorAID can engage with to promote AuthorAID and to recruit more users.

Stakeholders such as those at NUR reported that AuthorAID has served to increase interest in the wider PERii programme, activities and services. This experience could be worthwhile to discuss further to identify ways the integration can serve the wider PERii aims. Another example of synergy is the call for proposals through AuthorAID that was put out by a Sri Lankan journal supported by INASP. This resulted in a number of papers being submitted and some published, thus a benefit for both the journal that was struggling to find appropriate content and for researchers looking for outlets and experience in publishing.

6.4 Focus themes and countries

In 2009 it was agreed that AuthorAID would identify focus countries and focus themes. These include the focus areas of the partners and focus countries from among the countries in the INASP/PERii programme. There is still a range of opinions regarding AuthorAID's subject scope with some mentor and mentees interviewed convinced that AuthorAID is dedicated to science only and other stakeholders feeling strongly that at least social science but also other humanities are equally in need of support that AuthorAID brings. Social science is a focus area but feedback from website users and workshop participants suggests they do not feel some of their subject interests are reflected in content. There is certainly an appetite for this given that workshop feedback and the surveys also highlighted a desire for more subject specific guidance to be available including for non-science subject areas.

The decision to have focus countries and subject areas has guided project decision-making for 2010 e.g. in terms of where workshops will be held. It has remained a back-of-shop decision and one that AuthorAID users would be unaware of, in order to ensure that potential users are not discouraged from using the website. Indeed many of the stakeholders were unaware of it being a policy. It would be useful to articulate explicitly the parameters of the focus country e.g. will they be a way to prioritise mentees in these subject areas, guide mentoring recruitment drives or other activities? How long are the focus countries to be the focus? Will there be a new set or additions on a gradual basis? It will be worth reviewing in the future the benefits and any costs of focus themes and countries.

6.5 Future scale and focus

The success to date of AuthorAID has opened up new options for its future. The level of ambition for AuthorAID and intended future scale and focus of AuthorAID is unclear to a number of stakeholders. The original expectation for AuthorAID was that it would be trialled by INASP and if successful then it would be developed and then "handed over" to another organisation to host and run. INASP has a successful track record in such an approach e.g. AJOL is now run independently from South Africa. While this model is a possibility, other options for the future are emerging.

AuthorAID is catalysing similar initiatives among other organisations. For instance, NUR is basing its training and development programme in research communication on AuthorAID workshops and it is also setting up its own mentoring programme. Other journals already run mentoring programmes. AuthorAID is considering developing its website to allow other organisations to incorporate pages as plug-ins. INASP staff report an ambition that AuthorAID will grow to be a hub supporting and catalysing similar initiatives.

It maybe that what is needed is a longer term INASP commitment to AuthorAID to grow it to its full potential. It could develop the central "hub" function maintain the website and online community of researchers along with resources for workshops, training, and a facility to find researchers for mentoring and other advice and professional relationships. The "hub" would also develop to catalyse and feed a range of initiatives run by different stakeholders including publishers, research institutions and others. This will require additional tools and resources too e.g. "how-to" guides. Such a development is likely to require a longer term funding strategy than two years and could have a long-term role. Funding will be an issue too if AuthorAID is "handed over" to another organisation too. It may be easier for INASP to gain funding for a hub of a major network rather than for a new organisation without the same links and range of networks. Options need to be investigated over the next two years.

It seems AuthorAID is currently on the cusp of major expansion. Recent and upcoming opportunities for marketing of AuthorAID such as links with the Publishers for Development, journal contacts and interviews such as the Elsevier article reaching 39,000 academics will inform a large number of researchers and potential AuthorAID

users. The web teams are confident the website has capacity to cope with much increased numbers of users. Indeed such expansion is needed to establish a true community of practice given that it is estimated by Pure Usability that only 1-2% of all users tend to be active in an online community of this nature. There are some concerns about what resource demands an increase in registered users may place. It will be worth monitoring these to identify whether additional functions can be added to deal with queries automatically or if additional staff time is needed to service the site and users.

A further option for AuthorAID is to consider engaging more with broader research communication activities beyond publishing. INASP has a clear advantage and expertise in the areas of publishing. There are of course other activities such as communication of research through the media, online communication as e-conferences and other opportunities develop some of which the workshops have touched on. AuthorAID could explore developing, some of these areas and also developing more formalised partnership e.g. with Panos, IDS, Scidev and others working in these areas. Trials at a country level in focus countries would be a possible way to start this. This would be particularly relevant to the PERii aims to reach and influence policy-makers.

6.6 External environment – challenges and opportunities

AuthorAID has been evolving in the midst of a rapidly changing context. For instance developments in and increased access to communication technology has meant that making the AuthorAID mobile phone friendly has become more important and opened possibilities of using Twitter and social networking sites; access to the internet has improved drastically in parts of East Africa due to the opening of the new undersea, internet cable along the East Africa coast though it has also made access more expensive in some countries. Journals are changing with new online and interactive formats evolving. Research funding is demanding more details of anticipated impact of the research which relies on researchers communicating research effectively. Tertiary education has returned to the development agenda and seen some increased funding. The financial crisis and how this may impact on research and research communication activity and funding is still being played out. However, the donor focus on effective research management may provide opportunities for AuthorAID.

AuthorAID has kept abreast of and adapted successfully to these new developments, for instance registering for a Twitter account. These adaptations have tended to be managed in an opportunistic way. It would be useful to build in a regular review of the external environment into the annual project meeting for instance to identify new opportunities and challenges and discuss which it would be most useful to take up. Some of this is considered in the website strategy but needs to be done for AuthorAID as a whole, possibly in conjunction of a wider PERii consideration.

6.7 Gender

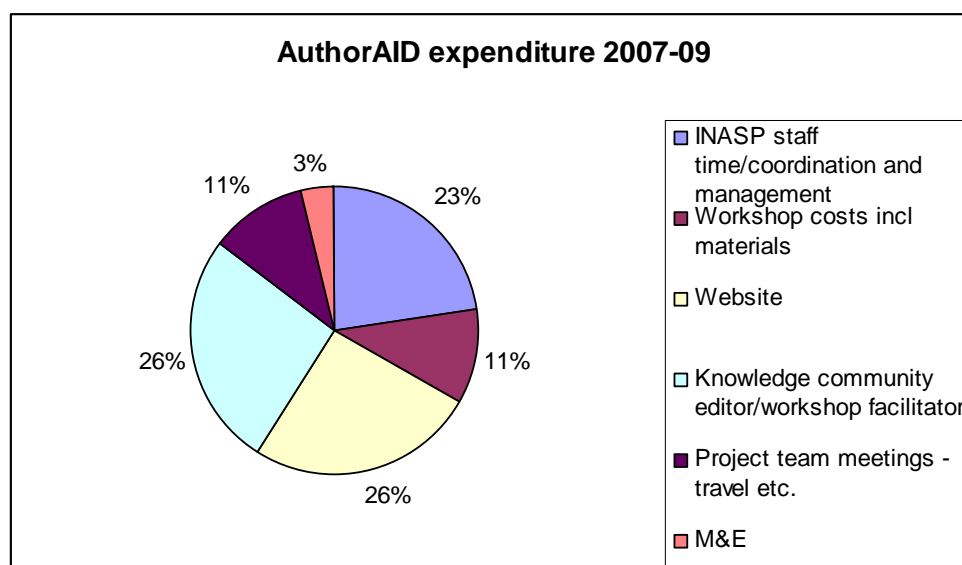
AuthorAID has not been closely monitored for gender issues but it seems there may be a slightly greater number of male beneficiaries of AuthorAID. This would not be surprising given the focus on science and under-representation of women in the sciences globally. However, AuthorAID has been identified by participants in the evaluation as having particular benefits for women. The free online nature of services provides opportunities for women that may otherwise be closed to them if they had to travel or incur financial fees. AuthorAID can play a valuable role in contribution to gender equity in research.

6.8 Cost- effectiveness

AuthorAID has been managed by INASP with two staff allocating an average of 50% of their time to it. In addition, the team has included a knowledge community editor also allocating approximately 50% of working time to AuthorAID and also there are contracted services from Pure Usability, ILRT and a monitoring and evaluation

specialist. Input from other partner organisations has been without costs. AuthorAID has also benefited from other no-cost inputs such as a part-time new graduate assistant who joined the knowledge community editor in late 2009 and it must be said all the project team probably put in more than their allocated hours as part of their commitment to establish and learn from the pilot project.

The total three year budget for AuthorAID is UK£ 360,277. This breaks down in line with the proportions outlined below with the most significant costs being staff time for management, coordination and knowledge management followed by the website costs, both initial tester site, development of the permanent site and its further development and maintenance.



It is difficult to establish a unit beneficiary cost for the project but we can estimate that the very reasonable workshops which cost approximately £5400 each with an average participants cost no more than £190 per participant. However costs per beneficiary are much lower given that we have found that most workshops include a greater number of participants for at least some of the sessions; also because the co-facilitators and participants tend to share their learning more widely and so the multiplier effects reduce the cost even further.

In terms of future costs, it is difficult to estimate precisely what these will be because much depends on choices around scale of ambition and location of work. Salary costs will vary depending on the cost of living in countries of residence of the staff but it is reasonable to expect that the three part-time posts is a minimum to ensure the maintenance and development of the project. Indeed a greater number of staff is likely to be of benefit including a permanent part time post managing aspects of the mentoring programmes and more ICT4D expertise to drive the overall programme. In addition there will be costs for website maintenance and ideally future development.

In addition, the evaluation has established a number of possible additional strands of work such as the development of educational objects which will have budget implications.

Overall the project is excellent value for money. The pilot project has a global reach and participation from more than 130 countries, has run seven workshops directly benefiting more than 200 beneficiaries in at least eight countries, catalysed the beginnings of a facilitators' network and mentoring relationships being established, all of which are clearly contributing to development country researchers' greater confidence and ability

to communicate research findings through publication and other means. It has been developed through an iterative process with the involvement of the intended users and continued to learn and adapt in line with their input. A total budget of just over £360,000 seems very reasonable for the three year pilot to develop this new approach.

7. Sustainability

7.1 Aspects of sustainability

There are a number of aspects relating to AuthorAID sustainability. It is possible to consider the sustainability of:

- the benefits that users achieve from AuthorAID i.e. having learned something from the website or on a workshop how can this be reinforced?
- the mechanisms employed by AuthorAID i.e. the website, workshops, mentoring;
- the overall project.

7.2 Sustainability of benefits for users

In terms of the sustainability of user benefits, the integration of the AuthorAID components is a valuable way to do this. Mentors' feedback indicated some of them had only limited knowledge of the AuthorAID website, so some guidance on where they can direct mentees for further advice during or after their mentoring may be useful. The workshops already introduce participants to the website. It was decided earlier in 2009 that workshops would aim to invite all registered users when a workshop is being held in their country. Further integration with PERii and its associated activities will provide further opportunities e.g. country coordinators and PERii coordination mechanisms could communicate with registered users via the AuthorAID website or country specific pages could be set up.

7.3 Sustainability of mechanisms

In terms of the sustainability of the mechanisms then each needs its own and then a linked strategy.

- Website – will need to be continually developed in line with new opportunities and ideas. New and existing users will need to be continually drawn to the site, informed of new content and opportunities to engage with it. The website will need a permanent resource to maintain it and also to drive its development. This can be within or outside of AuthorAID.
- Workshops – the resources being put in to support multiplier effects of workshops are good. It is clear that both participants of workshops and also co-facilitators are using the resources from the workshops to share learning more widely. It is possible to increase the reach of AuthorAID workshops by increasing online learning objects on the site. It is possible to build a network of AuthorAID facilitators. Consideration should be given to whether to accredit these. A space on the website could be allocated for co-facilitators to communicate and share materials.
- Mentoring – the supply of mentors and mentoring will be a constant need. Relationships being developed with publishers, research institutions and relevant networks such as the Association of Commonwealth Universities will be helpful to drive this. Mentors themselves have suggested being asked to recruit more members and some were happy to do this needing just some prompt and basic materials to share with their colleagues. If the more involved approach to matching mentoring couples proves to be successful it will be necessary to see if this resource can be sustained as part of the AuthorAID team responsibilities.

7.4 Sustainability of AuthorAID

The overall sustainability of AuthorAID will also need a strategy. Already the intention and feasibility of catalysing AuthorAID-type initiatives by other organisations is being encouraged e.g. NUR mentoring and workshop programme. It may be useful for

AuthorAID to develop easy-to-use guides for particular groups interested in establishing such initiatives, of points to consider, where to go for advice etc. These can be tailored to particular audiences e.g. publishers, research institutes.

The AuthorAID “hub” with the resource library, mentoring matching facility, research community will need resources to be maintained – technical, human, financial. There is the option to transfer the current resource to another organisation in the future but this will not remove the challenge of ensuring sustainability. Many of the stakeholders viewed INASP as ideal to continue to host and drive AuthorAID expanding its role to develop the wider network and so continue to “off-load” certain functions to some extent. Stakeholders suggested seeking large scale grants for long term sustainability of the hub from donors such as Gates and others.

As the section on cost-effectiveness indicated it is difficult to estimate the budget for ongoing costs for the continued maintenance and development of the site. If staff positions continue to be in richer, high cost countries it is likely to remain at at least £130,000 per year and possibly rising if additional functions to the website and capacities in the AuthorAID team are added.

7.5 Risks

A risk AuthorAID faces is that it is already doing a lot with a little – it is achieving a significant amount with a relatively small team of people. It is quite dependent on particular individuals. Some of this is being addressed in some of the sustainability actions already being considered and those suggested above. However, to take advantage of the opportunities now presented to AuthorAID, more significant resources are likely to be needed.

8. Conclusions and recommendations

AuthorAID is clearly successful in terms of supporting researchers in developing countries to develop skills and increase the profile of their research through publication and other research communication opportunities. There is evidence that each of the three components achieve some success independently but also that their integration enables greater impact and presents options and opportunities for the future. These are discussed below.

There is potential to grow AuthorAID significantly in terms of scope and scale. This will need investment in people and time. It needs the development of strategies and plans for a number of areas including AuthorAID partnerships and network development, marketing and project expansion. Some of this is already underway. The website itself has potential to be even more dynamic. The regular blog, high demand for resources in the online library and stated need for mentoring and other advisory and interactive opportunities between researchers are very positive. Further development of more online resources for early career researchers, workshop facilitators and others can increase the accessibility of AuthorAID learning experiences.

To enable significant growth suggests there will be a need for more time to be available for project management and implementation. The INASP/AuthorAID team may benefit from more in-house ICT4D expertise and greater resources dedicated to developing AuthorAID web presence, website content and driving people to, through and interaction on the site. There is a need and potential to grow numbers of users and the possibility to establish online groups of AuthorAID mentors, mentees, workshop facilitators and other groups.

To grow AuthorAID to take on a hub-facility may require a longer time frame than the current three year funding time-span. If such a time frame is not feasible a more conservative strategy needs will need to be developed and communicated to stakeholders.

At the same time as potential growth there is also the need to build activities that ensure the continued quality of users' engagement with AuthorAID. Quality can be aided by tools such as guides and other resources to support mentors and facilitators and ongoing monitoring through contact between AuthorAID and its users and networks including mentoring pairs, workshop co-facilitators and partner institutions. Feedback from these groups on their activities, needs and perspectives on AuthorAID developments would be valuable to collect each year for the further development of AuthorAID.

AuthorAID has developed a successful model to develop skills in research communication already leading to more publication of research from developing country researchers. There is the potential to grow this further. This requires a bold, ambitious plan and thus funding but would be one that can grow to have even more significant impact in developing country research communication and influence on policy and practice.

Annex 1

Financial expenditure on AuthorAID 2007-09

AuthorAID Expenditure UK£				
Item	2007	2008	2009	Total
INASP staff time/coordination and management	28,793.49	28,082.50	25,399.00	82,274.99
Workshop costs incl. materials		6,985.88	31,175.00	38,160.88
Website	15,348.18	63,070.75	13,589.00	92,007.93
Knowledge community editor/ workshop facilitator	12,176.17	33,544.20	44,596.00	94,423.01
Project team meetings—travel etc.	13,176.17	14,843.48	11,790.00	39,809.65
M&E		5,378.60	7,150.00	12,528.60
Misc.	1,072.50	0	0	1,072.50
Total	74,673.15	151,905.41	133,699.00	360,277.60

About INASP

Enabling worldwide access to information and knowledge

The mission of INASP is to enable worldwide access to information and knowledge with particular emphasis on the needs of developing and transitional countries. Established in 1992, we work with partners around the world to encourage the creation and production of information, to promote sustainable and equitable access to information, to foster collaboration and networking and to strengthen local capacities to manage and use information and knowledge.

We act as an enabler, connecting worldwide information and expertise. Working through networks of partners, we aim to strengthen the ability of people in developing and transitional countries to access and contribute information, ideas and knowledge. In particular we seek to:

- improve access to scientific and scholarly information
- catalyse and support local publication and information exchange
- strengthen local capacities to manage and use information and knowledge
- foster in-country, regional and international cooperation and networking
- advise local organisations and agencies on ways to utilise information and publishing to achieve development goals.

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