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Nigeria Agricultural Policy Project Highlights

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PROJECT SCHOLARS TRAIN STAFF OF FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT, EBONYI STATE UNIVERSITY, ABAKALIKI ON "R" FOR STATISTICAL COMPUTING

With increasing demand from Nigerian researchers and students for skills to do robust data analysis, a hands-on training workshop on R statistical package for staff of the Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources Management, Ebonyi State University, was run. Staff from three institutions, the Ebonyi State University, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) and Faculty of Agriculture, Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu Alike Ikwo were trained in a workshop organized by the USAID-funded Feed the Future Nigeria Agricultural Policy Project (NAPP). Interest was keen for this training. The UNN participants were sponsored by their institution while the one participant from Alex Ekwueme Federal University sponsored himself. The workshop was facilitated by three project scholars (Dr. Charles, Mr. Philip Hegarty James and Mrs. Hephzibah Obekpa), who were trained and mentored on the use of the R statistical package during their tenure at Michigan State University (MSU)

The workshop took place from 27th to 31st January 2020 at the e-library of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. Opening remarks were made by the Dean, Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources Management, Prof. F. C. Ekwu who appreciated the project's efforts to facilitate the training of Nigerians by Nigerians. He urged the 25 participants (19 males and 6 females) to make most of this rare workshop opportunity. .

MR PHILIP LEADING A SESSION. PARTICIPANTS LISTEN WITH KEEN INTEREST

The 5-day training was divided into six (6) labs to cover several topics including statistical refresher, data management techniques in R, simple and advanced graphics in R, regression and correlation, analysis of variance (ANOVA) mean separation, replicating tables and graphs in R. A typical training day included a lecture, followed by practice sessions where participants worked on different codes and syntaxes introduced to them. The trainers provided on-the-spot support for participants with challenges during the practice sessions.

DR. CHARLES LEADING A SESSION. MRS. OBEKPA PROVIDES ON-THE-SPOT SUPPORT

Assessment of participants was done using quizzes to measure the understanding of the concepts and competence with the new skills acquired. A WhatsApp group was also created to provide a platform for the facilitating NAPP scholars to continue mentoring the participants as they apply their new skills in their respective research endeavors.

The training ended with certificate presentation by Prof. S. U. Nwibo (Head, Department of Agricultural Economics, Management and Extension) and a vote of thanks by one of the participants, Dr. (Mrs) Patricia Egwu, who expressed joy and gratitude for the training on the unique Free and Open Source Software, adding that the skills acquired will go a long way in improving their professional careers in the ever-changing technological world of today. She solicited a 2nd training session for their group of participants and that in the future the training should be for at least two weeks for maximal gain.

By Mr. Philip Hegarty James

TRAINING PARTICIPANTS WITH THE NAPP SCHOLARS

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