

# Communicating Mobility and Access Research for Policy and Public Impact in Sub-Saharan Africa

SKILLS & TOOLS ACADEMIC SHORT COURSE 2024

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## COURSE SUMMARY:

This course equips early career researchers and scholars in their Masters and PhD studies with appropriate skills to translate research findings into clear, impactful messages. The course will enable the participants to craft compelling presentations utilizing visuals and other tools for maximum impact. In addition, they will adapt communication styles for diverse audiences, including policymakers, to drive positive change especially in transport and mobility in sub-Saharan-Africa.

## INTRODUCTION

The "Aha!" moment of any study is when the results come alive. This means that research thrives on breakthroughs, but true impact lies in effectively sharing your discoveries beyond the academic community. This short course will equip the participants to bridge that gap and get their research noticed by the audiences who matter most; from policymakers to the public. Clear communication is critical in order to avoid failing to communicate the correct message to the correct audience (Muchunku & Ageyo 2020 & 2022). They opine that the intended audience misses information due to language barriers and complex jargon.

The proposed short course addresses these challenges by harnessing the power of language; by learning how to avoid jargon and choose impactful words that resonate with your audience. Further to that, participants will learn how to leverage multimedia tools to create captivating presentations using visuals and other elements to grab and hold attention (Wagumba, 2023). There are various techniques for researchers, communication specialists and journalists to package research findings into information that is both appealing and understandable to policymakers and the public (Wendo, 2022; Wendo, 2021; Wendo, 2018; Eysenbach, 2011). If done successfully, this can improve the social impact and relevance of scientific research.

This short course presents an opportunity for young scholars to amplify the impact of their research and advance their careers in Science Communication. The course is tailored specifically for researchers and advanced graduate students in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) to tool them for the trade. This course also presents an opportunity for mentoring young scholars who largely lack mentorship for various reasons. The short-course facilitators intend to maintain this group as a cohort to further benefit from ScieDev.Net's wide range of learning resources. Hopefully, they can become trainers of trainers in advancing science communication in mobility and access studies in SSA. Multimedia University of Kenya (HOST) is well known for its expertise in communication courses. Besides, among the trainers is Dr. Charles Wendo, an accomplished expert in building the capacity of researchers to communicate their research to policymakers and the public. Dr. Nyachieo, a renowned transport sociologist, is among the trainers to ensure accurate contextualizing of mobility and transport research. The course ultimately meets the MAC goal of increasing the knowledge and capacity base on issues related to equitable access and sustainable

mobility at universities in SSA and strengthening academic capacity and skills among university researchers and students within the area of urban transport and mobility at universities in SSA.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

To train social scientists in the mobility and access industry how to effectively communicate their research results to various target audiences. **The specific objectives** of the short course will be as follows:

1. To equip learners with skills in developing clear, focused and well-structured messages that can attract the attention of policymakers.
2. To equip learners with skills to strategically integrate multimedia elements (e.g., images, videos, infographics) into their communication to improve audience comprehension of research findings.
3. To equip participants to develop the skills to tailor presentations to diverse audiences based on stakeholder needs and adapt communication style and language accordingly.
4. To disseminate knowledge and stimulate dialogues among researchers, policymakers and other stakeholders in urban mobility.

## **EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

1. A strong team of young scholars well-equipped with skills in effective communication and dissemination of scientific knowledge and research results to various target groups in society.
2. A team of next-generation scholars with developed careers contributing to international knowledge building, stimulate dialogues among researchers and other stakeholders in urban mobility.
3. Improved knowledge and capacity on issues related to equitable access and sustainable mobility at universities in SSA.
4. Increased awareness of transport and mobility study findings and innovations by policymakers and the public.

## **COURSE STRUCTURE, DATES, AND REGISTRATION DEADLINE**

The course will be delivered in 8 weeks, with two 2-hour sessions each week as indicated in Table 1.1. The dates for the course will run from the 4<sup>th</sup> February/2025 to 28<sup>th</sup> March /2025. Kindly confirm your attendance by registering your details on the link provided. <https://forms.gle/5UghUWic6LPYcVzeA> The registration deadline is on 25<sup>th</sup> January /2025.

## **TABLE 1.1: COURSE PLAN**

<b>Session</b>		<b>Learning objectives</b> By the end of this session, participants will be able to:	<b>Lead Facilitator</b>	<b>Time(EAT) &amp; Date</b>
Orientation session		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of the Trainers and Participants to each other</li> <li>• Overview of the Course Purpose and Objectives</li> <li>• Guidance on mode of training and expectations from both Trainers and Participants</li> <li>• Information on Course Registration, Attendance, Evaluation &amp; Certification</li> </ul>	<b>All Facilitators</b>	<b>11am – 11.30am Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> Feb, 2025</b>
S/N 1	The power and purpose of effective communication in research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define science communication.</li> <li>• Explain how communicating research to policymakers, the media and public can amplify research impact.</li> <li>• Articulate how clear communication bridges the gap between research and its societal application.</li> <li>• Identify the personal benefits researchers stand to gain from communicating research to wider audiences.</li> <li>• Articulate the key models of science communication and their application.</li> </ul>	<b>Dr Charles Wendo</b>	<b>11.30am-1pm Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> Feb,2025</b>
2	MAC research database: A comprehensive Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the MAC research database and its accessibility to researchers &amp; intended audiences</li> </ul>	<b>Dr Gladys Nyachio</b>	<b>11am-1pm Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> Feb,2025</b>
3	Crafting clear and impactful messages from your research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss why it is essential for researchers to share their findings with wider audiences.</li> <li>• Distill complex research findings into concise, impactful takeaways for non-specialists.</li> <li>• Avoid jargon and instead use straightforward language to share research findings with non-specialists.</li> </ul>	<b>Dr Charles Wendo</b>  <b>Prof Idah Muchunku</b>	<b>11am-1pm Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> Feb,2025</b>  <b>11am-1pm Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> Feb,2025</b>
4	Crafting research messages that resonate with policymakers and the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show the relevance of research to people's lives by relating the findings to real-world challenges and solutions.</li> <li>• Understand the interests and information needs of policymakers, the media and the public in order to</li> </ul>	<b>Prof Idah Muchunku</b>	<b>11am-1pm Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> Feb,2025</b>

		<p>craft messages that resonate with them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present research findings in ways that inspire action at personal or policy levels.</li> <li>• Summarise a research paper into a 2-minute pitch that catches the attention of policymakers and the media.</li> </ul>	<b>Dr Charles Wendo</b>	<b>11am-1pm Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> Feb,2025</b>
5	Targeting the right audience and tailoring research messages for them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and prioritize key audiences for research.</li> <li>• Assess the key concerns, preferences and information needs of different audience segments.</li> <li>• Identify the most effective channels and platforms for reaching specific audience segments.</li> <li>• Tailor messages for different audiences based on interests, information needs and preferences.</li> </ul>	<b>Dr Gladys Nyachio</b>  <b>Dr Collins Wagumba</b>	<b>11am-1pm Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> Feb,2025</b>  <b>11am-1pm Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> Feb,2025</b>
6	Mastering effective presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure a logical flow of ideas to enhance audience understanding.</li> <li>• Utilize effective delivery techniques to engage and retain audience attention.</li> <li>• Incorporate visuals to enhance message clarity.</li> <li>• Distil research into a concise and impactful takeaway for audiences.</li> </ul>	<b>Prof Idah Muchunku</b>  <b>Dr Collins Wagumba</b>	<b>11am-1pm Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> March ,2025</b>  <b>11am-1pm 5<sup>th</sup> Wednesday March,2025</b>
7	Utilizing the mainstream media to disseminate your findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze different mainstream media outlets and select the right channels.</li> <li>• Identify newsworthy research findings.</li> <li>• Turn a research paper into a press release, op-ed article or blog.</li> <li>• Develop effective strategies for engaging with journalists and media outlets.</li> </ul>	<b>Dr Collins Wagumba</b>  <b>Dr Charles Wendo</b>	<b>11am-1pm Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> March ,2025</b>  <b>11am1pm Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> March,2025</b>
8	Utilizing social media for disseminating research results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the benefits and challenges of using social media to communicate research.</li> <li>• Evaluate and choose the most appropriate social media platforms for sharing research.</li> <li>• Turn research findings into engaging content for social media sharing.</li> <li>• Utilize social media platforms to build connections with fellow</li> </ul>	<b>Dr Collins Wagumba</b>  <b>Dr Charles Wendo</b>	<b>11am-1pm Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> March ,2025</b>  <b>11am1pm Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> March,2025</b>

		researchers, policymakers and the media.		
9	Storytelling for research dissemination and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the power of storytelling in research communication.</li> <li>• Identify the essential components of a good story and how to apply them to research findings.</li> <li>• Turn complex research data and findings into relatable and compelling stories.</li> </ul>	<b>Prof Idah Muchunku</b>	<b>11am-1pm Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> March ,2025</b>
10	Engaging your audience with visuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the power of visuals in research communication.</li> <li>• Select the right visual format based on the type of data and the message being communicated.</li> <li>• Design simple, clear and meaningful visuals to communicate research findings.</li> <li>• Recognize and avoid common visual design mistakes.</li> </ul>	<b>Dr Collins Wagumba</b>	<b>11am-1pm Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March ,2025</b>
11	Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working on and submitting project assignments</li> <li>• Pitching contest (this is just a suggestion, it needs further discussion)</li> <li>• Implementation plan</li> </ul>	<b>All Facilitators</b>	<b>11am-1pm Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> March ,2025</b>
12	Graduation, Issuing of Certificates & Closing Ceremony	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Trainers and All Participants</li> </ul>	<b>All Facilitators</b>	<b>11am-1pm 28<sup>th</sup> March ,2025</b>

## TARGET GROUPS

The course aims to train 30 participants, particularly the next generation of scholars in transport-related fields, focusing on urban mobility and access. It also targets communicators and journalists who write and report on transport issues. Further, the course is designed for graduate students, doctoral candidates, early-career researchers, institutional, government, and non-government researchers, senior officers overseeing research activities, scholars, innovators, inventors, university research focal persons, and directors, managers, or registrars of research directorates. Additionally, it is suitable for private researchers who want to effectively communicate their research findings to a broader audience.

## TRAINING METHODOLOGY

The course will be taught online using both synchronous and asynchronous learning. Essential learning materials and other references will be provided for the enrolled participants. Actual previous VREF research studies will be used as examples for learning purposes.

### **INTERACTIVITY/FEEDBACK**

The course will be taught through a combination of live online sessions and asynchronous activities. Live sessions will facilitate real-time interaction, allowing for Q&A sessions and discussions. Asynchronous activities will include discussion forums where participants will engage in peer-to-peer learning and critical thinking. Engaging case studies, invited guest speakers and videos will be incorporated to stimulate discussion and enhance understanding. The platform's chat feature will be encouraged for quick questions and comments.

### **ASSESSMENT METHOD & COURSE EVALUATION**

Assessment will be through hands-on individual activities and quizzes during the online sessions; group activities and online polls; as well as case studies and role-playing. Also, one short project and an elevator pitch challenge will be undertaken in groups and presented online for evaluation. In addition, a mid-course and a post-course survey will be done for feedback on course content and delivery. To meet the course requirements, one will have to attend least 85% of the course.

### **COURSE CERTIFICATION**

Upon successful completion of the course, students who meet the specified prerequisites shall be awarded a certificate from Multimedia University of Kenya.

### **COURSE EVALUATION**

To improve the course delivery, an asynchronous evaluation shall be conducted at the end of each session. Additionally, a comprehensive evaluation will be conducted at the conclusion of the 8-week programme.

## **Course Lead**

**Name:** Dr. Collins Wangumba

**Function:** Lead Trainer (LT)

**Affiliation:** Senior Lecturer, Multimedia University of Kenya

**Email:** [cwagumba@gmail.com](mailto:cwagumba@gmail.com) **Tel** +254-722845814

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## **1: BIOGRAPHY; DR. COLLINS AUTA WAGUMBA**

Dr. Collins Auta Wagumba, is a seasoned communication expert, bridges the gap between academia and practical application. As a Senior Lecturer at Multimedia University of Kenya, he chairs the Journalism & Communication department, fostering effective communication. His passion lies in audience engagement, especially in the digital age. With a focus on visuals and clear messaging, he has published in top journals, presented at international conferences, and trained educators on using visuals to enhance online learning. His leadership role at Open University UK, where he spearheaded online education efforts, culminated in an award-winning audio-visual production “*People’s Choice Award*”. Dr. Wagumba's diverse experience, from international fellowships to consulting in radio, film, and television, allows him to translate communication theories into actionable training programs. He is a dedicated researcher and author, sharing his knowledge through publications and conference presentations and also as a member of East Africa Communication Association (EACA), International Communication Association (ICA) among others. His commitment to excellence and bridging the gap between theory and practice makes him a leader in the field of communication.

## **Training Team-Uganda**

**Name:** Dr Charles Wendo

**Affiliation:** SciDev.Net

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## **2: BIOGRAPHY; DR. CHARLES WENDO**

Dr Charles Wendo is a science journalist, media trainer and veterinary doctor. He has worked as training coordinator for SciDev.Net since 2017. Dr Wendo trains researchers in both the natural and social sciences on how to communicate their research to the media, policymakers and public. He also trains journalists on how to report scientific research in the media. Dr Wendo has provided technical support to enable four universities in four African countries to embed science journalism and communication into their curricula. He has also published the book *Science Communication Skills for Journalists: A Resource Book for Universities in Africa*, which lecturers and students use as a reference book. Prior to joining SciDev.Net, Dr Wendo worked with the New Vision newspaper in Uganda for over 16 years as a science writer, science editor, Saturday Vision editor and Sunday Vision editor. He also worked with the Infectious Diseases Institute of Makerere University in Uganda as a communication specialist for two years.

**Name:** Prof Idah Muchunku

**Affiliation:** Associate Professor, Multimedia University of Kenya

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### **3: BIOGRAPHY; PROF. IDAH GATWIRI MUCHUNKU, PhD**

Prof. Idah Gatwiri Muchunku (PhD), an experienced Communications Consultant in Science and Development Information, works as an Associate Professor of Mass Communication in the Faculty of Media and Communication at Multimedia University of Kenya (MMUK). Currently, she is the Acting Director, Board of Postgraduate Studies, MMUK. Additionally, Prof. Muchunku, is also the Director, Training & Research & Acting CEO, Wanon Media Limited, where she leads a team of passionate media and science professionals to achieve the vision of humanizing science by making authentic scientific information accessible and usable by everyone. She has over 14 years' of experience in leadership, research and training at university level. Prior to joining MMUK, Prof. Muchunku was the Dean School of Social Sciences at Mount Kenya University in addition to stints at Kenya Methodist University and Zetech University. In 2015, Prof. Muchunku attained a PhD in Mass Communication from Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (2015) with a thesis in Climate Change Communication, an area she has continued to author scholarly articles in as well as train scientists, policy makers and journalists on best communication skills for simplifying the heavy jargon surrounding this scientific but humanitarian issue. In 2020, she was among the Chief Trainers when Wanon Media in collaboration with Stockholm Environmental Institute (SEI) – Africa, trained journalists in East Africa on Science and Environmental Journalism. She is a member of KENSJA (Kenya Environment & Science Journalists Association) among other professional associations.

**Name:** Dr Gladys Nyachieo

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### **4: BIOGRAPHY; DR. GLADYS NYACHIEO**

Gladys Nyachieo (PhD) is a Sociologist and Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Technology at Multimedia University of Kenya. Currently, Head of Department-Sociology. Dr Nyachieo has more than 10 years' experience in transport research and her research interests are mainly in transport and mobility and include; *boda boda* motorcycle dynamics, road safety, public transport, gender issues in transport, walking as a mode of transport and mobility/transport governance. She has successfully led several funded projects as Principal Investigator. Dr Nyachieo has authored journal articles and book chapters as well as presented papers in both local and international conferences. Dr Nyachieo is currently enrolled with SciDev.Net in an online training sponsored by the Science Granting Councils Initiative (SGCI). The training is *on How Researchers Can Boost their Career Through Science Communication* SciDev.Net, is a global leader in science communication training. Skills acquired effectively communicate research and innovation to policymakers and the public. Dr Nyachieo is a beneficiary of the Senghor University (Egypt) & VREF short that took place in 2023. In this course, she acquired skills in Writing,



Leading and Managing Research Proposals & Projects in Transport Studies the course had a big element in disseminating scientific research. Dr Nyachio is also trained by Open University in the UK (in collaboration with Kenya Ministry of Education) in Skills for Prosperity in Digital Education. Dr Nyachio is therefore knowledgeable, skilled and conversant with transport issues and VREF requirements in successfully implementing this online short course.