INFECTIOUS DISEASES INSTITUTE

IDI SCALE – IT PELS TRAINING UGANDA COHORT

APRIL – MAY 2024 INTERVENTION REPORT

Submitted by:

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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1 BACKGROUND TO THE ASSIGNMENT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Infectious Diseases Institute (IDI) is a Ugandan not-for-profit organization whose mission is to strengthen health systems in Africa, with strong emphasis on infectious diseases, through research and capacity development. IDI has six operational areas through which it works to achieve its mission: Prevention, Care and Treatment; Training, Research, Laboratory services (including the CAP-certified IDI Core Lab & Translational Lab), Global Health Security and Health System Strengthening.

IDI in partnership with Epicenter, France and Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) obtained funds from the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) to develop the capacity of the Research Ethics Committees (RECs), researchers, clinical trial monitors, administrators from RECs, and National Regulatory Authorities (NRAs) in emerging and complex study designs, clinical trial monitoring and, Personal Effectiveness and Leadership Skills across the six East African Countries;- Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, and South Sudan. To successfully implement this, the Scaling Up Capacity to Support Conduct of Clinical Trials in EAC (SCALE-IT) Project was designed.

The SCALE-IT project aims to enhance the EAC's capacity for high-quality research review, conducting research, and overseeing it at international standards. This project provides training in scientific and ethical principles and in research with emerging and complex study designs. The specific objectives are:

1. To train National Research and Regulatory Authority (NRRA) personnel, Research Ethics Committee (REC) members, researchers and clinicians on scientific and ethics review and conduct of research with emerging and complex study designs including adaptive platform trials.

2. To train NRRA personnel and REC members on oversight, monitoring, and pharmacovigilance of clinical trials, and

3. To train NRRA personnel, REC and research administrators on personal effectiveness and leadership skills (PELS) to manage the increasingly complex research processes.

Therefore, Imprint (U) Ltd was invited to facilitate a Personal Effectiveness Leadership Skills Programme for the REC Administrators which is under objective three (3) to build and enhance the required knowledge, skills, and behaviour for effective and efficient operations of the Research Ethics Committees.

The 2-day face-to-face training was held on 11th – 12th April, 2024 at IDI-McKinnell Knowledge Centre, Makerere, Training Room 3 and 4, and the virtual session was held on the 9th May, 2024.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE TRAINING INTERVENTION

The overall objective of this course was to equip the participants with Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes, to enable them to effectively manage stakeholder relationships and efficiently run the Research Ethics Committee (REC) operations, thus improving the turn-around time for Research Ethics approvals in Uganda.

Specifically, by the end of the first training, the participants were expected to be able to:

✓ Describe an overview of the REC ecosystem, including the research industry, global trends and regulatory changes and answer the question: "What is going on in our industry?

✓ Clearly elaborate on the role and mandate of the REC, and the Key Performance Indicators for the REC

✓ Discuss the REC operations flow, the bottlenecks and factors that influence them.

✓ Clearly and accurately explain issues, policies, procedures, relevant updates and other pertinent information to stakeholders including difficult cases where the policy or procedure is unclear.

✓ Express disagreement in a constructive, courteous and assertive way at all times

✓ Show empathy and ease in resolving difficult or confrontational situations.

✓ Conduct a stakeholder analysis, including identifying and categorizing the internal and external stakeholders of the REC.

✓ Diagnose the respective needs of the different REC stakeholders and the role of the REC administrator in meeting stakeholder needs.

✓ Persuade and influence people across all levels (both internal and external) through networking, communicating effectively.

✓ Give effective feedback to others that leads to change in behaviour.

✓ Achieve high volume of quality work within acceptable timeframe through prioritization, focusing and multitasking whenever necessary hence enhanced.

✓ Delegate and manage a team to produce excellent work in an acceptable timeframe.

✓ Have a strong sense of urgency about solving problems and getting work done.

✓ Always express disagreement in a constructive, courteous, and assertive way.

✓ Appreciate the need for empathy, application of due diligence and sound judgment whenever dealing with stakeholder interactions.

1.3 DELIVERABLES OF THE INTERVENTION

Upon successful completion of the two (2) day face-to-face, and half (1/2) day PELS training, the facilitators were expected to deliver a report that clearly articulates:

✓ Pre and Post Knowledge assessments

✓ Training Reports for each EAC Country Cohort

✓ Proof of completion of the 2-day workshop with attendance lists

✓ Proof of completion of half-day virtual training session

✓ Training Evaluation Results

✓ Submission of electronic copies of the training report to IDI SCALE-IT

✓ Provide Certificates of completion to participants

1.4 THE COURSE STRUCTURE AND WORKSHOP PROGRAM

To achieve the objectives and deliverables of this intervention, the facilitators used a highly effective experiential learning approach, including interactive lecture sessions, and a carefully selected collection of activities/assignments interspersed with participation, reflection, and discussion. These were facilitated according to the program structure below.

Session 0: Welcome and Introduction

Session 1: Overview of REC ecosystem and processes

Session 2: Stakeholder Analysis

Session 3: My Role as a REC Administrator

Session 4: Personal Productivity

Session 5: Customer Service 1

Session 6: My Role as a Leader

Session 7: Influence Without Authority

Session 8: Effective Working Relationships

Session 9: Effective Communication

Session 11: Effective Constructive Feedback

Session 12: Conflict Management

Session 13:Customer Service 2

Key

Colour	Section
	Orientation, Introduction to Individual Learning Plan and Introduction to Action Learning Projects
	The REC and Your Role
	Growing Your Personal Effectiveness
	Growing Your Personal Leadership Skills
	Growing People Around You
	Difficult Conversations

The PELS Program was facilitated over two months, blended, comprising of a two-day highly interactive face-to-face training sessions, and a half-day virtual classroom session separated by a four-week intersession period, and interaction with online materials on the IDI E-Learning Platform. The workshop program below shows how the sessions above were facilitated for both face-to-face and virtual training.

PELS TRAINING PROGRAM 2024

| TIME | PHYSICAL / FACE TO FACE | | | VIRTUAL |
	Day 1	Day 2		Virtual Training Session
7:30 – 8:00	• Arrival and Registration	• Arrival and Registration		
8:00 – 8:30	• Welcoming Remarks	• Recap of Day 1		
8:30 – 9:00	• S0: Introduction to PELS Course, Pre-test	• S8: Effective Communication		
9:00 – 9:30				
9:30 – 10:00	• S1: Overview of the REC Ecosystem and Processes	• S9: Effective Working relationships		• S7: Influence Without Authority
10:00 – 10:30	• S3: My Role as a REC Admin			• S8: Continuation of Effective Communication
10:30 – 11:00	TEA BREAK	TEA BREAK	Intersession 1	
11:00 – 11:30	• S4: Personal Productivity	• S11: Effective Feedback		• Course Post-test (online)
11:30 – 12:00				
12:00 – 12:30	• S2: Stakeholder Analysis	• S12: Conflict Management		
12:30 – 13:00				
13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH BREAK	LUNCH BREAK		
14:00 – 14:30	• S5: Wow Customer Service 1	• S13: Wow Customer Service 2 – Difficult Stakeholders		
14:30 – 15:00				
15:00 – 15:30		• Course Evaluation		
15:30 – 16:00	• S6: My Role as a Leader	• Course Wrap-up		
16:00 – 16:30	EVENING TEA	EVENING TEA		
16:30 – 17:00	• Departure	• Departure		

1.5 PARTICIPANT'S WORKSHOP EXPECTATIONS

To ensure that the participants received valuable experience from the training, we asked them to share expectations for the PELS training to enable the facilitators to customize the training to meet these specific needs. Each participant was given a sticky note to write their expectations and then pin it up on the flipchart in front of the class. The facilitator then grouped the expectations in themes for better management as shown in the table below.

It was exciting to learn that the participants were eager and open to learning. They were enthusiastic about enhancing their leadership and effectiveness skills and were expectant that the training would offer exactly that. The stated expectations were combined with the overall workshop objectives to deliver an outstanding intervention for the participants and prepare them for the effective delivery of consultancies.

Leadership management, Roles of REC Admin	Difficult Stakeholders	Communication	Technical	Personal Growth
• Getting skills to improve my performance as a REC Admin • Learn how to manage my roles effectively and efficiently as REC Admin	• To learn how to deal with difficult REC members.	• To learn the components / domains of	• To acquire knowledge and skills in managing	• To learn how I can improve on my productivity as an individual.

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• Learn how to multitask as a REC Admin and other responsibilities. • Acquire leadership and management skills that will impact society. • To exhaust my roles and responsibilities as a REC Admin and how to fulfil them. • To learn how to effectively work with members, clients, and other people during my daily operations. • To be a better manager of REC • To learn leadership skills and effective service delivery • To know advanced techniques in leadership and effectiveness • To receive skills and knowledge on how to function effectively as a REC Admin • To obtain and upgrade my leadership and management skills in a way that will benefit REC office. • To improve on my skills as an administrator for better service delivery. • Guidance on how to address major challenges by REC Admin • Understand my power and authority as a REC Admin	• How to resolve conflicts at workplace • How handle difficult customers and clients • How to work with a chairperson who is so busy • Conflict resolution strategies with REC members and clients • Dealing with slow responsive stakeholders who are better positioned amidst fast paced tasks. • Building confidence in clients • To learn how to deal with difficult stakeholders	effective communication • To earn more aspects of effective communication and resolving of issues when they arise	research process in my IRB • To learn how to manage science protocols	• To learn how to bring the best out of me. • To learn how to showcase my capabilities. • To increase personal productivity at work • To learn how to multitask • To be equipped with transformational performance skills for life • To change in the mindset regarding the personality, community, and work environment. • To know skills and mentorship for career growth and exploring of other opportunities. • To know my prospects as an Admin • To become a better version of me after this training.

1.6 Delivery Mode and Methodology.

The facilitators adopted a blended learning approach to ensure the intervention's objectives are achieved. The methodology consisted of a 2-day face to face training, online self-paced learning using the IDI Learning Management System which was crowned off with a half-day virtual session.

a) *Face-to-face Training.*

The delivery approach used under face to face involved a highly interactive and engaging process, lecture sessions, video clips, illustrations, open discussions, group exercises, discussions, and presentations, relevant to adult learning interventions.

To ensure that the training intervention was successful, it was run along the experiential learning ethos of 10% classroom, 20% near the job, and 70% on the job that reinforces application in the workplace. The 70:20:10 principle was achieved by participants practicing what they were taught (70% on the job). The 10% classroom program structure was a mix of theory and practice, which will increase the application of the learning back in their work environment. Various forms of simulations

were used to facilitate the practical element of the workshop where participants got to apply knowledge gained through the lecture sessions.

b) *Online Self-paced Learning*

Online learning was enabled by the IDI E-Learning Management System. The PELS training materials were uploaded on to Moodle by the IDI online training team and the participants were enrolled accordingly. The online learning was self-paced and commenced after the face-to-face session up to when the virtual session was held. Each session comprised of quiz questions at the end to support participants check their understanding of the respective concept. The participants completed their pre-and-post-tests on the Moodle platform. Online learning was also supported by a WhatsApp group used by the trainers to remind participants to do their assignments and keep them engaged until the virtual session. Participants also shared experiences of how they were applying the learnings and challenges faced to enable trainers support them accordingly.

c) *Virtual Training Session*

A half-day virtual session was held to follow up on the participants' progress on the learning implementation and complete the last two sessions. The session included an interactive presentation, case scenarios and role plays, video, group discussions and a plenary presentation. The participants were divided into two (2) groups to discuss and work on the case scenario, and afterwards present the results.
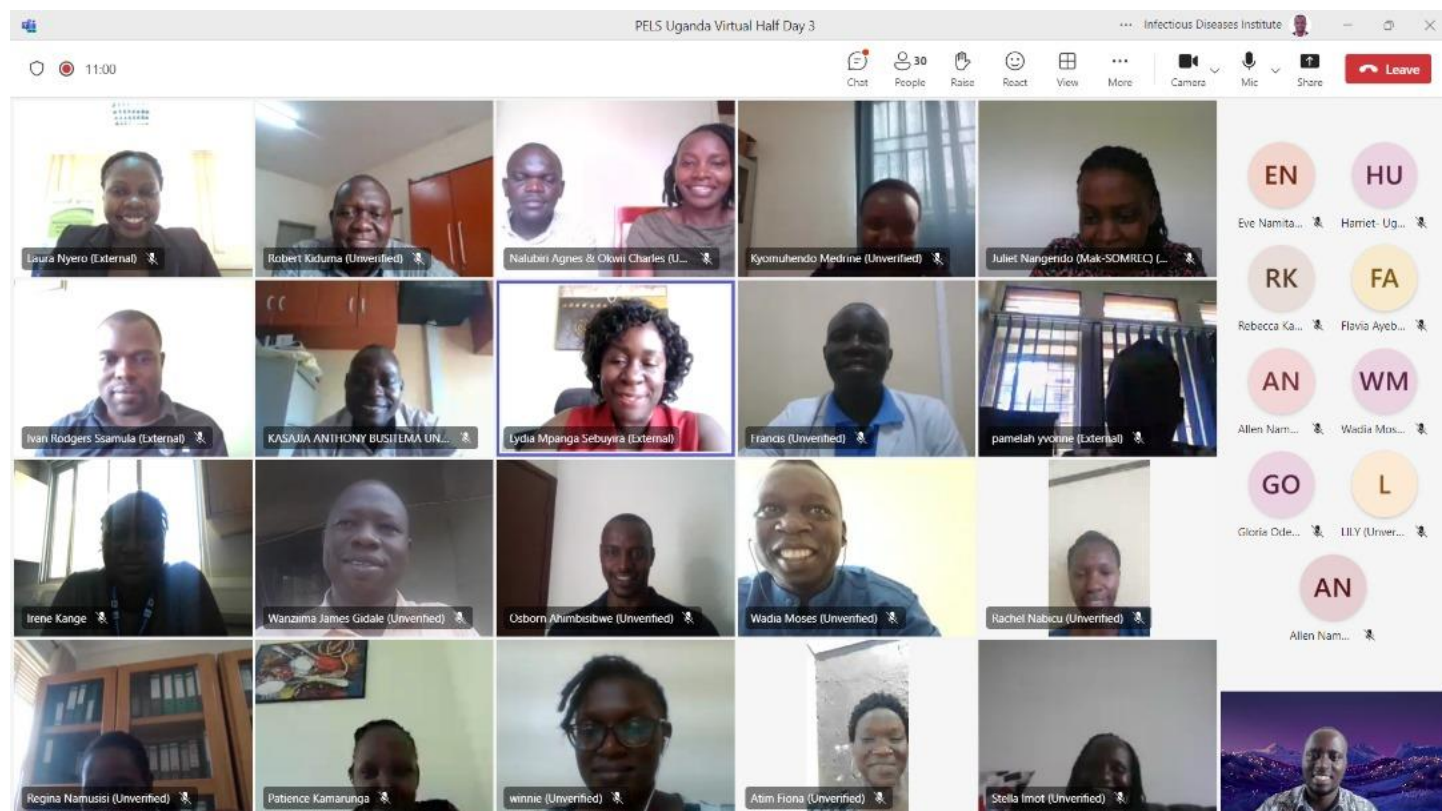
2 DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKSHOP AND KEY LEARNING

The intervention was facilitated by trainers from Imprint who ran a 2-day face-to-face training and a half-day virtual session. To enable a thorough process that allows discussion and peer-to-peer learning, the participants were divided into four (4) learning groups at random. This created a rich environment which allowed participants to freely interact with one another across their different divides and experiences. The workshop was graced by the Deputy Director-Research Department and the SCALE-IT Project Officer who will be a key resource in following up the participants and helping gather feedback on the progress of the applications of the learning in the workplace. The IDI team was very supportive in hosting the training and ensuring effective learning for participants.

Using exercises, games, discussions, videos, case scenarios, role-play, group activities, and reflections, the participants had an opportunity to learn, practice and explore what it takes to lead and be effective as a REC Administrator. The Imprint experiential learning model supported the participants to appreciate the fundamentals of personal effectiveness and leadership at a much faster rate and allowed them to be fully engaged. The participants appreciated the rationale for the training and the need to polish their leadership skills. The practical approach was successful as it helped the participants relate with the theory concerning leadership, management, and personal effectiveness and how those benefit the participant and organizational goals.

The participants were divided into groups at random. The formation of the groups was to ensure that there is room for peer learning with a sense of inter-group competition which motivated the participants to remain fully engaged throughout the training. In their groups, they worked on different activities such as documentation of the REC process and identification of bottlenecks, group discussions, and role plays, identified REC stakeholders and their needs, and presented different discussion points.

2.1 KEY LEARNINGS FROM THE SESSIONS

A description of the different sessions and activities with their respective purpose and key learning, observations, and recommendations, as they happened during the two-days face-to-face, and half-day virtual session is explained below:

1. **SESSION 1: OVERVIEW OF THE REC ECOSYSTEM**

This session aimed at supporting participants in understanding the REC's 'ecosystem', including the research industry, global trends, and regulatory changes. The participants understood that the REC Ecosystem comprises key stakeholder groups such as Researchers, Committee members and Research Administrators, and this enabled them to explain how the REC functions as part of a larger research ecosystem within the institution, national and global research environment, provided a clear understanding of the flow of research operations, the different processes and knowledge of the REC stakeholder network and other key players in the research space.

In their groups, the participants were tasked to document and flowchart the Protocol Approval Process, and map out the bottlenecks. After, the groups presented to the whole group and received feedback from the rest of the participants. Below are the bottlenecks that were identified:

- National Research Information Management Systems (NRIMS) – Userbility, hacking and loss of data
- Failure to get quorum to hold review meetings
- Delays in giving feedback to the researchers
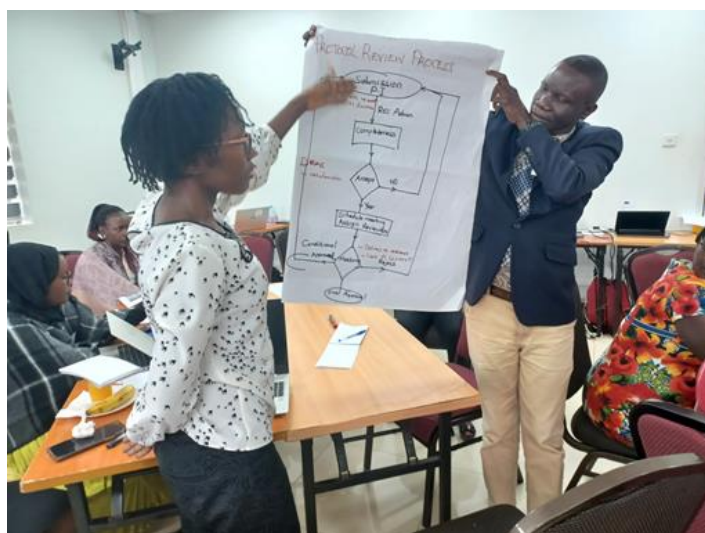
- Inadequate funding to carry out site monitoring especially in hard–to-reach areas
- Delays from the principal investigators in responding to feedback and resubmitting their protocols
- Delays in payments by the Principal investigators

The participants also brainstormed on the possible solutions to overcome the above bottlenecks. The facilitator stressed that although such constraints exist, these should not hinder effective decision making. She emphasized that a successful administrator should learn to be proactive and navigate these bottlenecks for successful operations.

2. **SESSION 3: MY ROLE AS A REC ADMINISTRATOR**

This section focused on the role of the REC Administrators to equip them with personal effectiveness and leadership knowledge, skills and attitudes that would enable them to work more efficiently and to overcome challenges in stakeholder relationships. This was about helping speed up the processing of research ethics review applications. It included the different aspects comprising their roles, especially the core competencies required. They also learned how the different competencies impact the critical steps in the REC core processes and the REC stakeholder interaction. The case used is that when one joins REC as an administrator, they are given job descriptions that outline the key roles and responsibilities, however, in the daily work administrators find out that there are several other things that they end up doing which are not related to their role.

With guidance from the facilitator in an open discussion, the participants listed and discussed the key competencies that the REC Administrators needed to make each process efficient, and how they would clear the identified bottlenecks. These competencies included but were not limited to; Interpersonal, Communication, Adaptability, Customer service delivery, Personal mastery, Strategic thinking, Teaching and Learning support. Using a flip marker pen and a flip chart, the participants highlighted the following as the key roles of REC Admins:

- Documentation and Reporting (Filings, Site monitoring, Financial Management/Accountability, Taking Minutes, and Others)
- Co-ordination of REC Activities including Scheduling Meetings
- Effective Communication especially guiding Principal Investigators (PIs)
- Protocol Management
- Training and Awareness/Sensitizing Stakeholders (PIs, Students, REC Members)
- Ensuring Compliance with set Regulations by the PIs
- Stakeholder Engagement and Management
- Custodian for all Assets and Property of the REC

The facilitator tasked the participants to reflect on the bottlenecks discussed in the earlier session and think about how the core competencies can help relieve them. The points below were discussed:

- Effective Communication
- Adaptability
- Ability to understand what is required.
- Self-Awareness

3. **SESSION 2: STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS**

During this session, the facilitators took participants through the process of stakeholder analysis and management. The emphasis was put on the identification of stakeholders, analysis of their expectations and influences, and development of appropriate strategies to work with the stakeholders using the Mendelow's stakeholder analysis model. The trainer emphasized the importance of stakeholder management if the Administrators were to become effective and efficient in their roles.

The participants were introduced to the concept of stakeholder analysis with keen focus on Mendelow's stakeholder analysis and through open discussion, the participants identified the REC key stakeholders, analyzed their influence/power against interest. Afterwards, the stakeholders grouped in were mapped on the Mendelow's grid (Latents, Promoters, Apathetics and Defenders) as shown on the side. The strategies for managing each stakeholder category were discussed as outlined below;

- Promoter – Manage Closely
- Apathetic – Monitor
- Latent – Keep satisfied.
- Defender – Keep informed.

A stakeholder mapping template was provided to each participant to support them map and engage when they go back to their workplaces. The template is a live document and if participants use it well, they will be able to manage the stakeholder expectations.
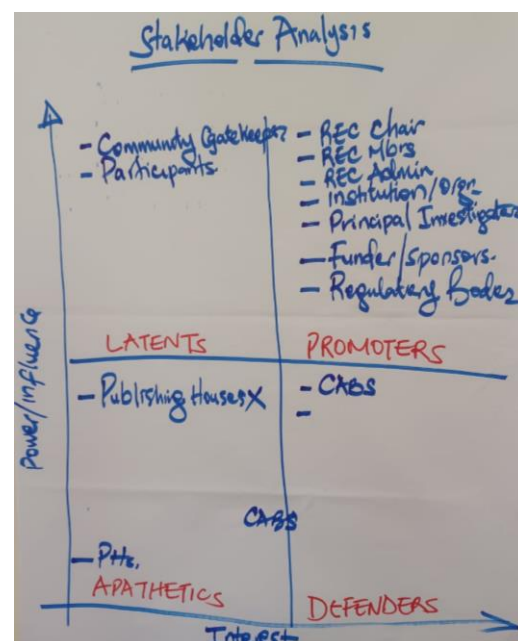
4. **SESSION 5: WOW CUSTOMER SERVICE 1 - Timely Problem Solving and Response to Enquiries**

Administrators play a pivotal role at the REC and as such they must go above and beyond to keep the customers / stakeholders happy. Through their daily interactions with the different customers, it's important that customers experience "Wow!" service. As administrators, a major part of their role is to detect and solve stakeholder problems timeously. In this session, the facilitator stressed that in providing customer service, the priorities of the organization have to match the priorities of their stakeholders and at the minimum, the administrators had to ensure that they are meeting stakeholders' basic needs such as friendliness, being understanding and showing empathy, fairness and control in order for the stakeholders to feel that they have impact on how things turn around, availability of options and alternatives in getting what they wanted to be accomplished and information being readily available. They were made aware that a basic need might be something simple like keeping their stakeholders updated with the latest status of their research application, or a suggestion to speed up the process.

The facilitator used the *On-Time Clip* to assist participants define what on-time is for the REC Stakeholders and ways of ensuring timely problem solving and how to respond to stakeholder enquiries. The key lesson from the clip was "customer service is not just giving the customer what they asked for, but what is required is going the extra mile in providing stakeholders with a "Wow!" service experience, as it is the extras that make the difference, most of the time".

5. SESSION 5: PERSONAL PRODUCTIVITY

During this session, the participants learnt about the Eisenhower Urgent and Important matrix where they identified the urgent and important activities involved in their role, setting time-bound (SMART) goals with clear understanding of the urgency and importance of required tasks, prioritization of tasks to guarantee smooth and efficient operations, agility, multitasking and focus on tasks that achieved excellent execution. The session concluded with helpful productivity tips and tools that would put the Administrators on a path to excel in their role at their current workplace/institution and interact with different stakeholders, at home and in the community.

Using a video clip by Steve Covey on weekly planning, the facilitator supported the participants to reflect on how to plan their activities for their month, week, and day, have realistic estimates of the size of tasks, prioritize the important, rather than the urgent, manage their energy i.e., do their heaviest tasks when they have most energy, and ensure regular rest, exercise and relaxation, manage their environment – their office and records, and manage their time. The participants reflected on guidelines of weekly planning by Covey:

- Plan your week, each week before the week begins.
- Review your mission and roles; organizing your life around your roles helps you to maintain balance and focus.
- Identify the Big Rocks first; Ask yourself the Big Rock question – What is the most important thing I could do this week that will make the most positive difference?
- Schedule the week.

The participants further appreciated the role of being pro-active in personal productivity and practices, procedures, how they could influence productivity, monitor task progress, and keep stakeholders informed.

6. SESSION 6: MY ROLE AS A LEADER

This session was aimed at helping the REC Administrators appreciate their role as leaders. The facilitators took them through the tasks of leadership and management and what it takes to build their confidence as leaders. She further emphasized that leadership exists within each one of them, but it is never easy for one to take the lead, the administrators need to make decisions and face challenges, but it could become natural and rewarding as they practiced leadership.

The trainer, using practical examples expounded on the leadership and management skills need by the participants i.e., they learnt that leadership is about providing direction, alignment, focusing and inspiring commitment whereas management involves planning, implementing, and Monitoring and Evaluation. They further listed the key management functions as learning to delegate, planning and organizing, communicating clearly, controlling situations, motivating employees, adapting to change, constantly innovating, and thinking of new ideas, building effective teams, and delivering results which were not just figure-bound but results that also focus on overall growth and development.

In their groups, the participants discussed the aspects of their roles as REC Administrators required the use of leadership and management skills. And later, the participants reflected on the article "What Leaders Really Do" by John P. Kotter, as a precursor for the debate. The hot debate's motion was "***The Research and Ethics Committees of today need more Leadership than Management.***" This activity was aimed at helping participants understand the need to balance both leadership and management skills in their work for them to be effective.

Emotional Intelligence was yet another aspect that was covered in this session to enable the participants to understand themselves and others, lead others and manage their stakeholders. The facilitator stated that Emotionally Intelligent people:

- Recognize, understand, and react appropriately to their own feelings.
- Effectively manage their emotions within themselves.
- Manage their emotions well in interpersonal interactions in their relationships.
- Can perceive, understand and react appropriately to others' feelings.
- Motivate others.

The facilitator pointed out to the participants that Emotional Intelligence can be developed. The participants then discussed the four interconnected categories of Emotional Intelligence competencies as classified by Daniel Goleman and Hay McBer, i.e., two related to self - Intrapersonal skills: Self-awareness and Self-Management, and two related to others - Interpersonal Skills: Social Awareness and Relationship Management (Social Skills). The facilitator emphasized that understanding and managing one's emotions enables them to understand and interact better with others on an emotional and social level, thus are closely linked to effective business performance.

7. SESSION 9: EFFECTIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Effective working relationships are crucial for administrators if they are to achieve their goals. This session focused on how to build warm working relationships within their organization and with their different customers and stakeholders. Participants reflected more about themselves, their personality, and how their behavior affected those around them. The session made them become more aware of the needs and preferences of the people around them by practicing their listening and observation skills.

Out of this session, the administrators learnt the following aspects as build-on from the previous session:

- The importance of self-awareness and social awareness in building strong relationships
- How to grow their self-awareness through the use of self-assessment tools, reflection and asking for feedback
- How to grow their social awareness by honing their listening skills and appreciation of diversity
- How to apply the Oasis School of Human Relation's Seven Stages Model of Working Relationships
- The importance of networking is to build liaisons that could enable them to grow as a person and to achieve their business and professional goals.

8. SESSION 8: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

In this session, the participants learnt how to communicate effectively with others in a way that showed respect, consideration and understanding of their needs. They learnt how to communicate both verbally and in writing in a way that was confident, professional, and easily understood. The facilitator stressed that the participants need to grow and perfect their listening and presentation skills and gave them useful tips on email etiquette and management. This was to enable the participants explain issues, policies, procedures and other pertinent information to stakeholders, clearly and accurately. The participants were introduced to effective communication with the Five Questions for Effective Communication model (Mpanga Sebuyira, 2017). In their groups, the

participants worked on three (3) scenarios to practice the Five Questions for Effective Communication model (Who, Why, When, What, How).

9. **SESSION 11: EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK - DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS**

Feedback provides a sense of engagement and interactivity, and it shows individuals their current level of performance, and lets them know what they need to do to reach a higher level. In this session, the participants learnt how to handle difficult conversations within their organization and with their different stakeholders, as well as at home and in the community. The participants learned more about effective constructive feedback, and reflected on how one's behaviour affects those around them. This session introduced the participants to useful feedback skills, and a simple tool for giving feedback – the Center for Creative Leadership's SBI Model (Situation Behavior, Impact). This tool enables one not to focus on the individual/person but rather on the behavior or action of the person. The participants appreciated the importance of giving and receiving candid feedback to enable personal growth, how to use a simple feedback model to give structure to your feedback conversation and deal with the behaviour without attacking the person.

In groups of three, the participants practiced the SBI model. They simulated a scenario/situation, where one member was required to give feedback, the second one – receiver and the third was the observer. To grasp the gist of the exercise, these roles were switched to allow all to practice using the SBI model. On observation, the participants demonstrated understanding of the SBI model by giving each other feedback.

10. **SESSION 13 WOW! CUSTOMER SERVICE 2: HANDLING DIFFICULT STAKEHOLDERS**

Given the nature of their daily work, administrators need excellent customer service skills because they play a pivotal role in their organizations. In this session, they learnt how to handle difficult stakeholders. A major part of their role as administrators is to identify and manage the stakeholders, that is, the institutions, organisations, communities and individuals that either receive the organizations' services, contribute to or are affected by the organization's services, in order to establish and maintain robust networks and partnerships that would enable the organization to satisfy its customers. In this session, the facilitator concentrated on handling difficult stakeholders, the types of difficult stakeholders, how to respond to stakeholder complaints, on-line and in-person interactions with stakeholders, and winning back their stakeholder's trust.

The participants shared different experiences in handling difficult stakeholders. Customers come from different backgrounds and lifestyles, hence making it difficult to please each one of them. When clients are not pleased, they may tend to be difficult to handle. Therefore, it is paramount to manage their expectations.

In groups, the participants came up with scenarios and role played how they would handle angry, displeased, dissatisfied and difficult stakeholders without offending them but making them understand the situation, and come up with action points.

11. **SESSION 7: INFLUENCE WITHOUT AUTHORITY (VIRTUAL SESSION)**

In this session the administrators learnt how to grow their personal influence in their organization and with the REC clients, stakeholders as well as in the community, as this is very essential to their role. The facilitator took them through the principle of "Emotional Bank Account/ Currencies", and how they make deposits and withdrawals in order to build relationships of trust. They

appreciated that everyone had their own currency or what they held to be of value. In order for them to influence others without using authority, the administrators need to understand the others' currency and their own and use the principle of reciprocity (give and take) in relationships built on trust. The Administrators were tasked to always think about what they would offer and what they expected in return. The use of these alliances, reciprocity and exchange is very important in accomplishing tasks.

The facilitator introduced the Cohen-Bradford Influence Without Authority (IWA) Model which presented the key principles to be harnessed in achieving personal influence as shown in this figure on the left.
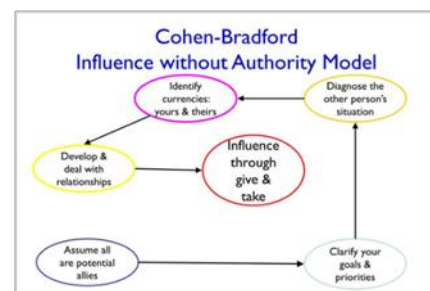
This session was facilitated virtually, the participants were divided into two groups and were given a scenario to discuss and present about how they can use the Cohen-Bradford model to influence without authority. It was a wonderful discussion and confirmed that participants understood the concept.

12. SESSION 12: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT (VIRTUAL SESSION)

In this session, the administrators learnt the essentials of conflict management. This included a general understanding of conflict and how conflict happens, the types of conflict and their characteristics and then proceeded to understanding the different types of conflict behavior and where/when they are likely to occur. To develop effective responses to these conflict behaviors, the administrators briefly looked at conflict analysis and then shifted the focus to the various techniques of conflict resolution and concluded with the OPEN model, a well-recognized, tried, and tested conflict resolution model.

The participants were given a case scenario for role play. Volunteers played different roles in the case scenario for the conflict situation and used the OPEN model to resolve the conflict. This exercise helped thes participants to understand the model as well as the importance of timely resolution of conflict The role play was extremely lively and enjoyed by all.

2.2 Evaluation of Face-to-Face Training by Participants

The training participants were exceptionally satisfied with the facilitators' training experience and the exercises. The participants gave a very positive overall rating of the workshop, with **95%** rating it as either outstanding **(63%)** or good **(32%)** (see Figure on the right). Imprint used its custom-made training evaluation questionnaire designed to reflect Kirkpatrick's New World description of Level 1 training evaluation. The questionnaire uses a 4-point Likert scale and measures aspects including the effectiveness/appropriateness of the training and the performance of the facilitators on many effective facilitation indicators. The questionnaire also looks at participant engagement, their self-evaluation and the training venue/facility.

Overall Rating for Workshop…
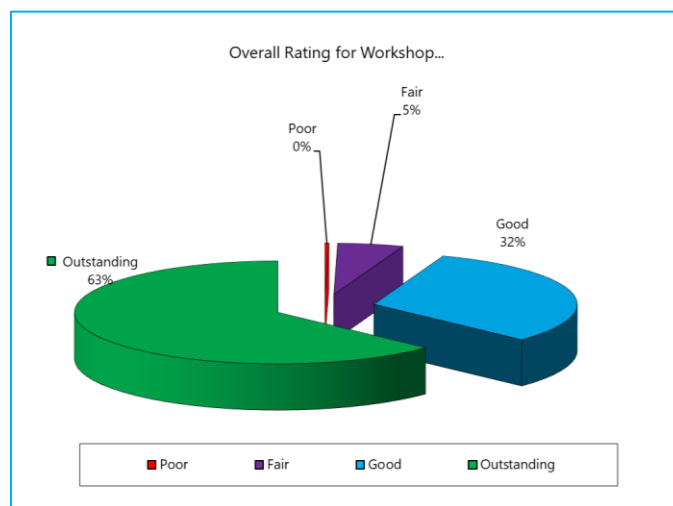
The effectiveness of the facilitators and the participants' self-evaluation was the highest rated among the evaluated components with emphasis on facilitators showing content mastery, explaining materials, stimulating discussion, and motivating participants.

In their verbal and written comments, the participants felt that this was an opportune moment for them to hone their leadership and management skills to manage the REC effectively and efficiently. They emphasized that the training met and exceeded their expectations for the two (2) days, however, capacity cannot be built in two days. There is a need for continuous training.

Below are the overall comments and suggestions from the participants regarding the face-to-face training:

- The training was really amazing.
- The training was great; however, it was so packed with too much to learn and understand. I would suggest that the training be conducted for more than 2 days, maybe 4 days.
- The training was relevant.
- Training was very relevant to my role as REC Administrator. Thank you to the organizers and facilitators from Imprint.
- Great training, more of these should be organized.
- This training was really productive and engaging. Wow!
- This was very fruitful and inspirational.
- I wish to attend more training like this.
- It was an excellent workshop.
- It was a privilege to participate in the training. More is needed given the changing landscape in REC operations.
- The facilitator was good, but it would have been better to have two (2) or three (3) facilitators.
- I am grateful for the knowledge attained in this training and hope to change to a better person at my place of work.
- This was more than an excellent training session. The execution style was top-notch. I learned a lot more than I expected.
- The training was very good.

The Biggest Takeaways

At the end of the face-to-face training, the participants were asked to give three (3) big takeaways from the training using a digital tool called Mentimeter. The word cloud below represents the map of their response. The words in larger font represent a higher frequency of responses.

What Participants Found Most Interesting

The participants were also asked to list the things they found most interesting during the face-to-face training. Below are the results

What did you find most interesting?

The training delivery mode	Interactive and practical	Role plays in handling difficult customers?	The training was more practical.The facilitator was wooThe training was timely.
Knowledge and passion of the facilitators.	Facilitator was wow	Interactive and practical to adopt the skills	The participatory nature was engaging and kept the trainees alert. The trainers ensured the trainees were always interested and motivated

What did you find most interesting?

The interactive and practical sessions brought out the reality of the day to day life's challenges.	The presentation of topics	Wow Facilitators, Demonstrations, Good food, Relevant content	The leadership and management compliment each other
The facilitator is knowledgeable and has a nice smile.	the training delivery mode, and choice of content was great.local illustrations	The content was 'trainee centred'	Practical illustration Information delivery
Conflict resolution Stakeholder analysis	Conflicts resolution skills	The facilator discussed practically the personal effectiveness and leadership courseFood was niceThe administrators were active	Handling difficult stakeholders was most interesting whereby you have to cool down once you get to meet with these kind of people.
Ability of the facilitator to breakdown complex Theories into workable daily life activities.	Leadership n managemmet r complementary to eachother	Conflict management	improving performance by planning
Giving constructive Feed back	Team work of facilitators and several practical examples.	The fact that leadership and Management are inseparable	Excellent facilitator
The Facilitator was wowExcellent mode of deliveryKnowledgeThe content of the program was excellent	The facilitator has a smile all through and she gives practical illustrations.	When dealing with feedback, use SBI	Good and knowledgeable facilitators, good teaching strategy,very good topics chosen fitting our roles as rec admins

What did you find most interesting?

Interactive	the time aspect vs training volume needs to be looked through, especially for the face-to-face	training is helpfull in all my planing and budgeting, managing my clients and doing self and situation analysis for continuous improvment in the work environment	planing based on priority

What Participants Found Least Interesting

The participants were asked to list the things they found most interesting during the face-to-face training. Below are the results;

What did you find least interesting?

The leadership part	woow experience conflict management	None	Nothing
Food	Nothing really!!	Maybe one facilitator for two sessions can be improved.	none
Research Ecosystem	Everything was interesting	Surely nothing	Missed evening tea
I did not find anything least interesting.Everything was great.	REC eco system	The REC ecosystem	It shld have been a 2 days physical training since the training is very crucial to our roles as rec admins

# How you can use this training in your work going forward

Using the information learned to improve self and those o am serving to improve my work.

Application of what I have learnt to my workplace. Improving weaknesses and building on existing strengths

Improve customer service Timely feedback

Two trainers per a session

Refer to the notes everytime to make me better both in my personal and my work life.

effective communication

Reduce bottlenecks at protocol submissin andnreview especailly regafing delays

Effective communication and feedback

Literally everything was practical; Communication, Feedback, SBI, wowing clients, it was all great. ALL Practical.

improve on my service delivery to stakeholders

Apply knowledge and skill in the tasks at the Secretariat

Communicate effectively and provide effective feedback

I will improve on my communication skills

I will be more interested in what my clients want.I will always plan weekly and prioritize.I will ensure to deliver the best that I can.

Knowledge acquired will help on developing weekly calender For the REC, Follow up and follow through, will be helpful in

Even mentimeter 😂🥹 is super

Creating productive and intensional systems aimed at continuous improvement

Putting into practice all that i have learnt to improve on my communication and leadership skills both at my workplace and outside

This training is going to help on how to dill with all types of our clients and even our bosses at our insititutions

I will utilize in our departmental Management

Efective feedback to researcbers

have more days

Provide leadership to the REC by proposing adaptive work methods Make use of communication technologies to improve efficiency at work,

Improve my performance by documenting the entire process, limiting bottleneck.

## 2.3 EVALUATION OF ONLINE LEARNING BY PARTICIPANTS

a) Online Learning Delivery

The participants were given the opportunity to evaluate online learning delivery. Using the Mentimeter tool and a Likert scale of 1 – 5 where 1 (Poor), 2 (Fair), 3 (good) and 4 (Outstanding), the participants rated the online training delivery as shown in the figure below:
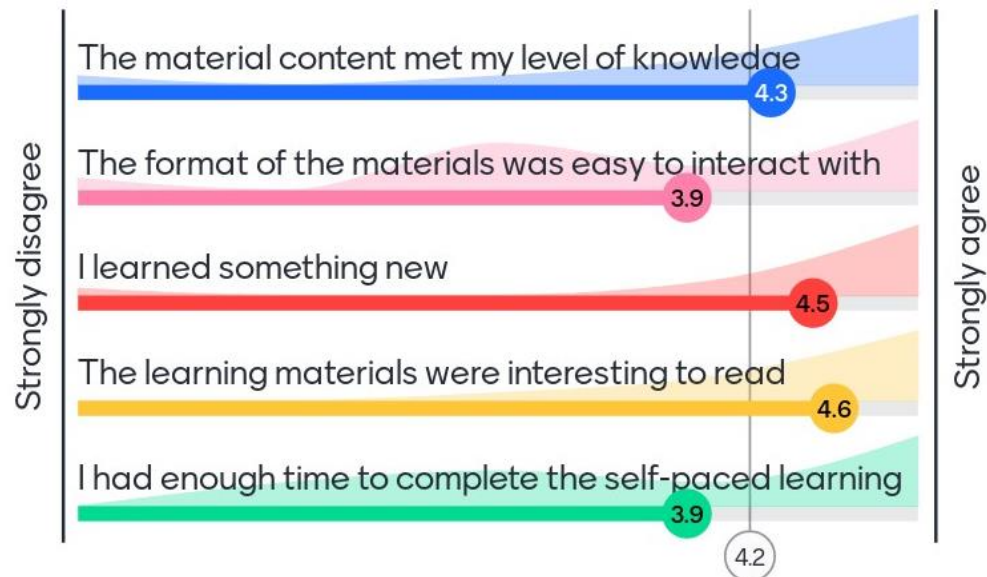

b) Interaction with Facilitators and Peers

The participants evaluated how well they interacted with the facilitators and their peers during the intersection (After the face-to-face and before the virtual session). Using the Mentimeter tool and a Likert scale of 1 – 5 where 1 (Poor), 2 (Fair), 3 (good) and 4 (Outstanding), the participants rated the online training delivery as shown in the figure below:
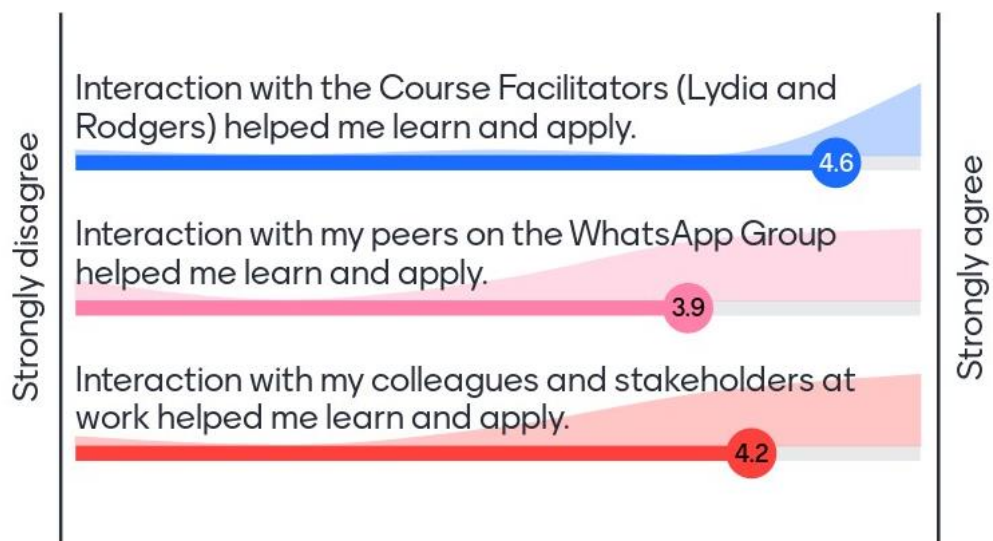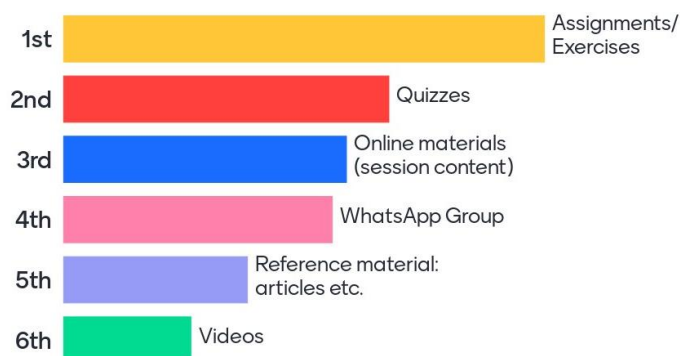
c) *The Part of online learning that participants found useful.*

The participants also rated the part of the online learning that they found most useful. The figure below shows the results.
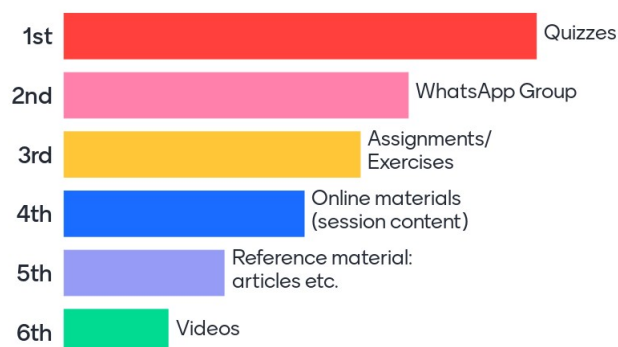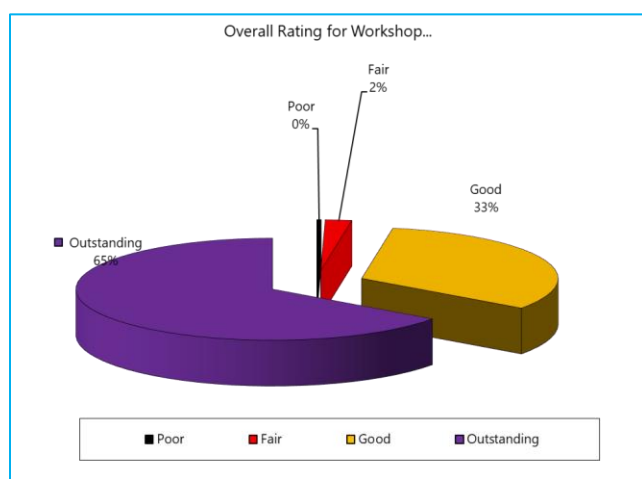

d) *The Part of online that the participants enjoyed most.*

The figure below shows the results of the part of online delivery that the participants enjoyed most.

2.4 EVALUATION OF VIRTUAL TRAINING SESSION BY PARTICIPANTS (KIRKPATRICK LEVEL 1)
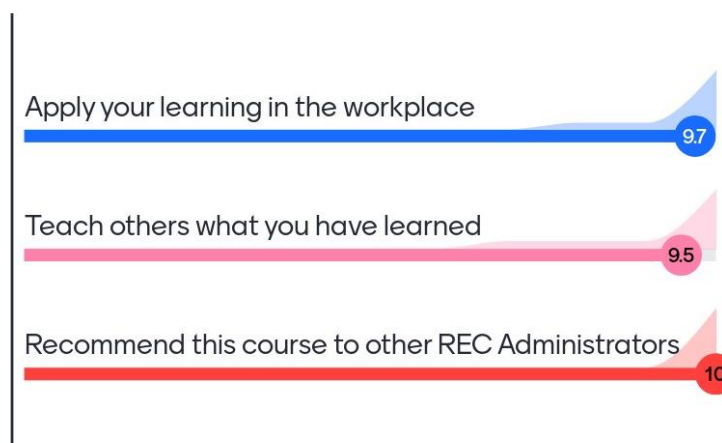

The participants in the training were satisfied with the virtual training experience with the facilitators and the training exercises. The participants gave a very positive overall rating of the session, with 98% rating it as either outstanding (63%) or good (33%) (see Figure on the left). Imprint used its custom-made training evaluation questionnaire that is designed to reflect Kirkpatrick's New World description of Level 1 evaluation of the training. The questionnaire uses a 4-point Likert scale and measures aspects including the effectiveness/appropriateness of the virtual training and the performance of the facilitators on many effective facilitation indicators. The questionnaire also looks at participant engagement, their self-evaluation as well as the training virtual training experience.

Below are the overall comments and suggestions from the participants regarding the virtual training:
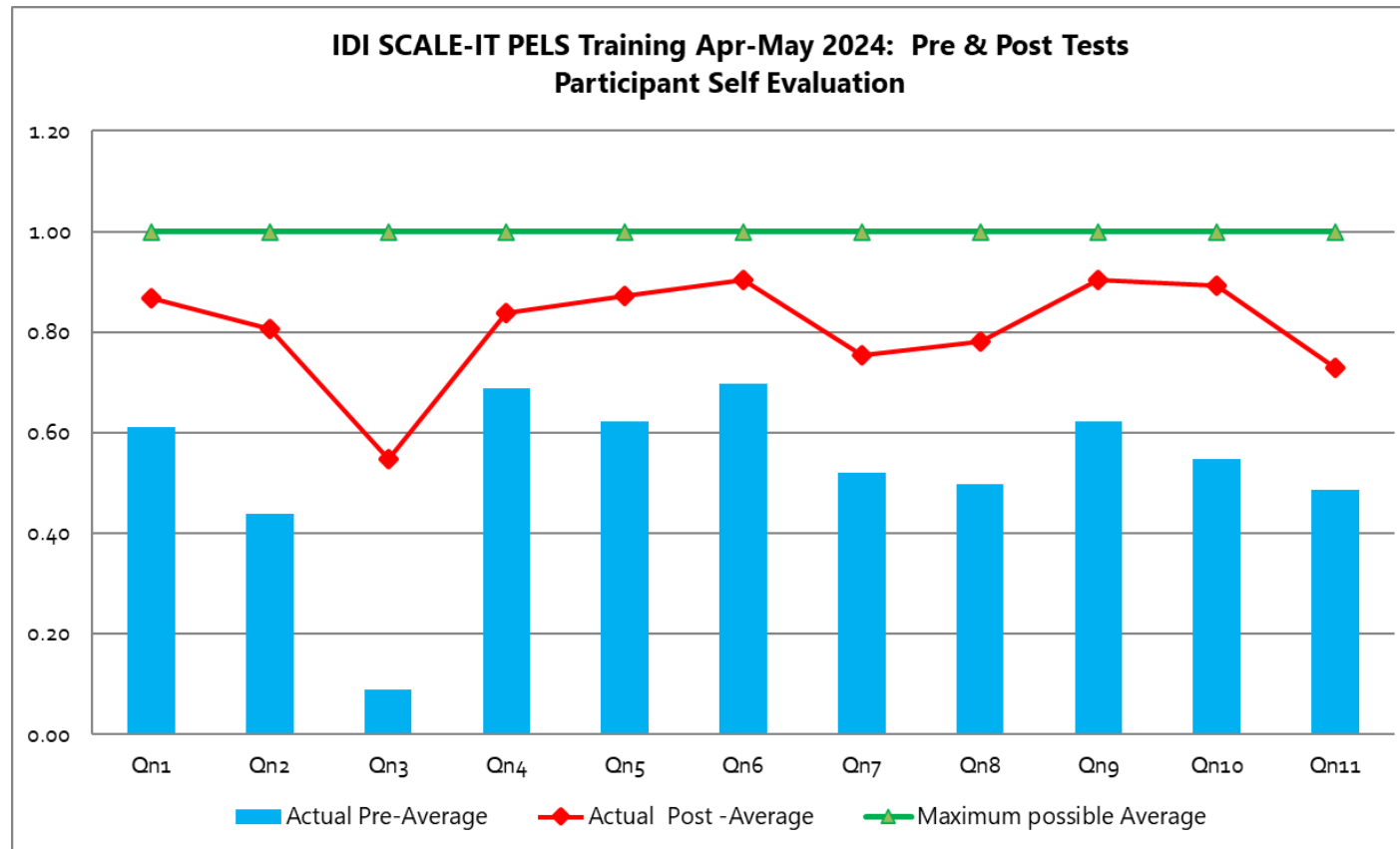
- Well done
- Good start with potential for greater success
- It is a great opportunity to be part of this training. I am 100% grateful.
- Lovely experience
- The training was really productive and engaging.
- Great training with great facilitators. I am beginning to enjoy the application of the training at the workplace. Blessings.
- Very resourceful training, well designed.
- I loved the course and can't wait for another RAP. Thank you, a lot.
- I was not disappointed at all; the session was fantastic and very interactive.
- It was all good, but physical meetings are by far a preferred option. Virtual limits in so many ways, like practical examples, narrations, body language, etc.
- I am grateful to the organisers of this training, it was so useful to me as an admin and in my everyday life.

The participants were asked to indicate their likelihood of applying the learning using a scale of 1 (Not at all likely) to 10 (extremely likely). How likely are you to:

Apply your learning in the workplace — 9.7

Teach others what you have learned — 9.5

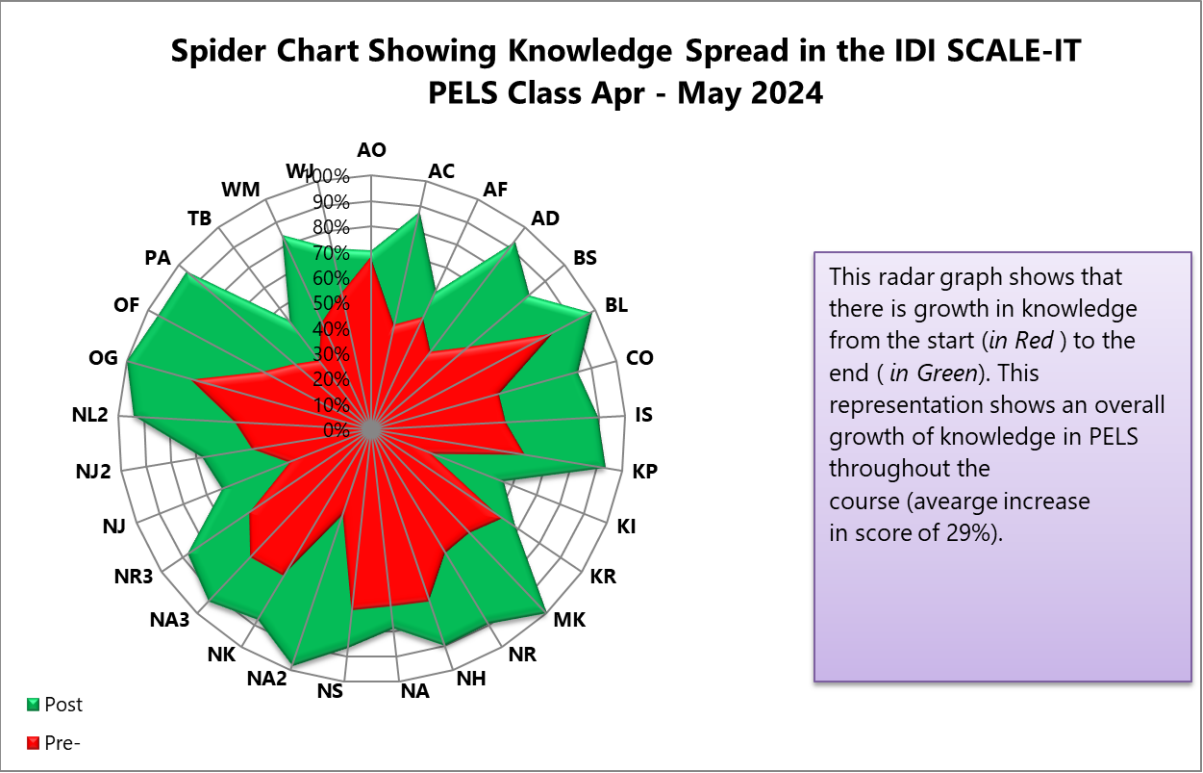Recommend this course to other REC Administrators — 10

2.5 Pre-Course Competency Self-Assessment Analysis

The blue bar chart displays the pre-test assessment indicating the participants' level of knowledge and skills in the competencies addressed in the PELS Course. The pre - participants' self-evaluation was vital as it helped the facilitators to support and give real-time feedback to the participants on the areas, they felt needed more enhancement, which is the likely reason that the post-assessment results show a greater improvement as indicated in the chart. From the post results, the participants indicate that their level of knowledge and skills greatly improved after the training. Their verbal comments further reflect the shift exhibited in the graph above.

From the results, Imprint is confident that the training intervention greatly improved the participant's appreciation of the training concepts. The participants are enthusiastic to apply this learning and the facilitators look forward to hearing about their progress.

2.6 LEARNING - PRE- AND POST- COURSE KNOWLEDGE SHIFT

Spider Chart Showing Knowledge Spread in the IDI SCALE-IT PELS Class Apr - May 2024

This radar graph shows that there is growth in knowledge from the start (*in Red*) to the end (*in Green*). This representation shows an overall growth of knowledge in PELS throughout the course (avearge increase in score of 29%).

The graph in Figure on the left shows the average overall percentage of 29% knowledge shift for the participants' pre and post-tests. There was a significant positive knowledge shift in the participant's pre and post-test results, as shown in the table below with both the post and pre-test average scores of 54% and 83% respectively.

Post-Test Average Score	83%
Pre-Test Average Score	54%
Average Knowledge Shift	29%
Average Attendance for all sessions	92%

It is important to note that out of the total of 41 participants who did the pre-test assessment, not all managed to do both the pre-and-post-tests. Only those who did both tests (29) were included in the above analysis.

2.7 TESTIMONIES OF APPLICATION OF LEARNING AFTER FACE-TO-FACE

During the intersection between the Face-to-Face and the virtual session, the facilitators engaged the participants and challenged them to apply the learning. The facilitator asked the participants to share what aspects of the training they were practising the learning at work and home following the physical training.

Emotional intelligence. It's something interesting to apply and very necessary in our work - Brian.

I am working hard to give a wow service to my people - Juliet.

Wow customer service my side is working magic 🤗🤗 – Patience.

1. I communicate without offending others.
2. I ensure feedback when communicating - Fiona

Thank you, now a junior staff included senior staff in his study for funding and the senior staff got to know about it when funding was available. All the junior staff said was that he tried getting the senior staff but he was busy, so he submitted without his awareness. What I did was listen to all sides and fault Junior for not having a record for all he was saying but I am halfway the situation but at least all are agreeing to sit on the round table and agree – Brian

Applying FUFT to ensure swift feedback and reducing turnaround time for protocols.
For the first time! I had a protocol for expedited review approved within three days. 👏🏻👏🏻👏🏻 - Fiona

Yesterday I had a long lecture on follow-up and follow-through with my colleague.
I told her what people want; Timely response and being handled with care.
I honestly downloaded a few lessons I learnt like customer care and that all people come with problems and expect answers from us.
I felt a bit proud of myself - Osborn

Thank you so much Dr. Lydia.
For me, it's been giving everyone who interfaces with my office à wow customer experience. Yesterday I got a fee Waiver Approval in less than 1-hour. I did this by helping the PI work on the request letter, then I took it for her just to sign.

Thereafter, I requested one of the nurses in OR to give me a call immediately after the chair is done with his first procedure.
As soon as he came out, there was the letter for approval and it was done. Remember this PI is a Finance Manager. High power, High Interest 😜 – Alice

SBI Strategy in Feedback

I tried to follow and FAST-TRACK a study that was delayed to be reviewed by 21 days contrary to 5 days in our REC SOP.
1. *I described the situation based on guidelines from our REC and UNCST:*
2. *Reminded them of the bottlenecks. Delays in reviews of a fast-track study by 21 days.*
3. *Elaborated on the impact of the behavior on the researcher and REC reviews turnaround time.*
4. *I concluded by appreciating them for their usual cooperation in protocol reviews.*
Results: In just 2 hours got reviews from 3 reviewers -
Thanks to PELS Team 🤝 - Francis

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the participant's verbal and written comments about the training as well as the facilitators' observations during the training, we would like to make the following observations as a way of enhancing the PELS training:

Enrolment of Participants on the E-learning Platform. The Ugandan participants were enrolled on the e-learning platform during the first day of face-to-face training, taking up about two and a half hours of the precious face-to-face time. This meant that the participants did not interact with the materials before, and neither did they do their pre-course test. The short time allocated to cover all the course content affected the implementation of the training program. We suggest that for other countries, the participants be enrolled before the face-to-face, not during the physical training. If possible, we could have an hour's virtual introductory session (Session 0) the week before the face-to-face session, to save time in physical class.

Time for the training. Gauging from the participant's feedback, the two days of physical training were insufficient. Even though the training was relevant to their roles and engaging, they felt the training was rushed and needed more time to internalize the concepts. We thought that the online self-paced training and virtual session would bridge the gap, but participants preferred three or four days of face-to-face training. In the future, while designing a program like this, ample time is required for the course.

Session Quizzes: Half of the session quizzes were posted late on the e-learning platform which slowed the participant's progress with online learning. This is because we have been building the course as we go (Pilot training) but along the way, this was rectified, and the participants were able to take the quizzes. The quizzes are now ready for the subsequent country cohorts.

Action Learning Projects (ALPs): This program is aimed at changing participants' behaviour, and attitudes and enhancing their leadership and effectiveness skills. Attitude and behavioural change cannot happen overnight. Secondly, as the saying goes, practice makes perfect. This course would have been even more effective if participants were given a chance to work on real-life problems in their workplaces, which Action Learning Projects offer. This would improve their ability to identify and solve problems. In the inaugural PELS programme, ALPs not only consolidated the participants' learning and behaviour change, as evidenced in the Level 3 Assessment six months later, but provided benefits to their host organisations, such as change in policy, and improvement in on-boarding practices and procedures. For future leadership programs like this, we recommend the addition of the ALPs.

4 CONCLUSION

We are grateful for the continued partnership between Imprint and IDI in developing the capacity of its staff. This training was a good opportunity for the participants to build their confidence, appreciate leadership, and prepare them for effective leadership and management.

We appreciate the opportunity that we had to deliver this intervention as part of our continued engagement with IDI. We remain committed to delivering excellent and high-quality interventions that address IDI's needs in its bid to deliver on its mission and vision.

Kind regards,
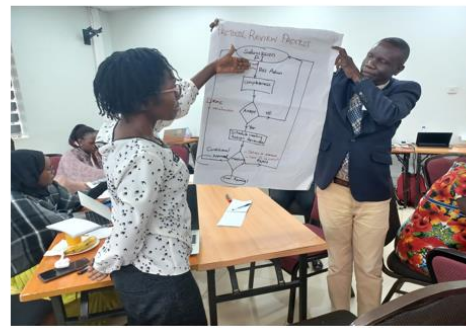
Dr. Jeff Sebuyira – Mukasa

May 2024.

5 APPENDICES

5.1 APPENDIX 1: ATTENDANCE LISTS

Attendance Sheet – IDI SCALE - IT PELS TRAINING **Project**: "Scaling Up Capacity To Support Conduct of Clinical Trials in EAC" (SCALE-IT) **Organisation**: Infectious Diseases Institute (IDI) **Date**: F2F: 11th – 12th April 2024, Virtual: 9th may 2024										
S/N	Name of Participant	Organisation	Designation/ Job Title	Email	Tel	11th Apr	12th Apr	9th May	Planned Attendance	Actual % Attendance
1	Namajja Ketty	MUST	REC Admin	Namajja_ketty@yahoo.com	782665888	✔	✔	✔	100%	100%
2	Nalubiri Agnes	Mbale RRH	Ass Rec Admin	nalubiriagnesck@gmail.com	788358723	✔	✔	✔	100%	100%
3	Nali Alice	CURE Hospital	REC Admin	nalialice@gmail.com	774088016	✔	✔	✔	100%	100%
4	Okwii Charles	Mbale RRH	REC Admin	rohocharles@gmail.com	779838293	✔	✔	✔	100%	100%
5	Patience Kamarunga M	IDI	Admin	pkamarunga@idi.co.ug	776100963	✔	✔	✔	100%	100%
6	Rebecca Kabugho	UVRI REC	Ass Rec Admin	rkabugho@uvri.go.ug	776738918	✔	✔	✔	100%	100%
7	Kyomuhendo Medrine	KIU REC	REC Admin	kmedrine@gmail.com	774833477	✔	✔	✔	100%	100%
8	Wanziima James Gidale	Bugema Uni REC	REC Admin	jamesgidwan@gmail.com	778005090	✔	✔	✔	100%	100%
9	Apuno Catherine	Lira Univ REC	REC Admin	cathyapuno1@gmail.com	782964562	✔	✔	✔	100%	100%
10	Regina Namusisi	JCRC	REC Admin	rnamusisi@jcrc.org.ug	779110725	✔	✔	✔	100%	100%
11	Gloria Odeke	IDI REC	REC Admin	godeke@idi.co.ug	787422982	✔	✔	✔	100%	100%
12	Atim Fiona	CIU REC	REC Admin	fatim@ciu.ac.ug	772641823	✔	✔	✔	100%	100%
13	Harriet Nakiganda Muganga	HAU REC	REC Admin	hnakiganda@hospice-africa.org	782542196	✔	✔	✔	100%	100%
14	Adongo Pamelah	Mengo REC	REC Admin	pamelahyvonne@gmail.com	702901996	✔	✔	✔	100%	100%
15	Okongo Francis	Lacor REC	REC Admin	frokongo@gmail.com	779757910	✔	✔	✔	100%	100%
16	Rita Nabuduwa Gibu	Busitema	REC Admin	ritagibu@gmail.com	782456282	✔	✔	✔	100%	100%
17	Namukwaya Gorret Kamoga	CAES REC	REC Admin	mukwayagorret@gmail.com	775471980	✔	✔	✔	100%	100%
18	Juliet Nangendo	SOMREC MAKCHS	REC Admin	nangendojuliet2@gmail.com	703860680	✔	✔	✔	100%	100%

19	Jellan Tugeineyo	Kabale Uni	Admin Officer	jtugeineyo@kab.ac.ug	772689707	✓	✓	X	100%	67%
20	Wadia Moses	UHI	REC Admin	mwadia@uhi.go.ug	774450774	✓	✓	✓	100%	100%
21	Sumayiya Nalubega	TASO REC	REC Admin	nalubegas@tasouganda.org	704223423	✓	✓	✓	100%	100%
22	Dorcas Atuhaire	NARC	REC Admin	d.atuhaire@uncst.go.ug	779931026	✓	✓	✓	100%	100%
23	Joanita Nansubuga	MakSPH - REC	Ass REC Admin	joanitanan@gmail.com	781490159	✓	✓	✓	100%	100%
24	Robert Kiduma	GU REC	REC Admin	m.kiduma@yahoo.com	776812147	✓	✓	✓	100%	100%
25	Laura Nyero	UNCST	RMQA Director	l.nyero@uncst.go.ug	706512439	✓	✓	✓	100%	100%
26	Samuel Barasa Muhuro	UNCST	Science Officer	s.barasa@uncst.go.ug	779452441	✓	✓	✓	100%	100%
27	Annah Atuhaire	BSU	REC Admin	aatuhaire@bsu.ac.ug	754048786	✓	✓	X	100%	67%
28	Rachel Nabicu	UNHLS/CPHL	REC Admin	rachkaytee@gmail.com	781354143	✓	✓	✓	100%	100%
29	Allen Nambooze	COBAMS REC	REC Admin	allennambooze@yahoo.com	775529727	✓	✓	✓	100%	100%
30	Eve Namitala	Mildmay	REC Admin	namitax@yahoo.com	774011240	✓	✓	✓	100%	100%
31	Osborn Ahimbisibwe	UCU REC	REC Manager	oahimbisibwe@ucu.ac.ug	775737627	✓	✓	✓	100%	100%
32	Brian Tumushabe	UCI REC	REC Admin	briantumushabe@gmail.com	776888223	✓	✓	X	100%	67%
33	Imot Stellah	MakSPH - REC	REC Admin	stellaimot@gmail.com	774313924	✓	✓	✓	100%	100%
34	Nalujja Sumaya	VCD REC MoH	REC Admin	nalujjasumaya21@gmail.com	788124187	✓	✓	X	100%	67%
35	Ronald Bahati	BSU REC	REC Admin	rec@bsu.ac.ug	772512551	✓	✓	X	100%	67%
36	Lily Batebe	IDI	Admin Officer	lilybatebe2000@gmail.com	773131136	✓	✓	✓	100%	100%
37	Flavia Ayebazibwe	UVRI REC	Admin	fayebazibwe@uvri.go.ug	773203697	X	✓	✓	100%	67%
38	Kasajja Anthony	BUFHS REC	Ass Admin	kasajjaanthony@gmail.com	777729017	X	✓	✓	100%	67%
39	Irene Kange	IDI	Admin	irenekange@gmail.com	770700967	X	✓	✓	100%	67%
40	Carol Nakafeero	Nsambya HSPT	REC Admin	ncarolhall@gmail.com	771892561	✓	✓	X	100%	67%
41	Evelyne Namwase	Mulago Hospital	REC Admin	evelynnamwase@gmail.com	752818584	X	✓	✓	100%	67%

5.2 PICTORIAL – DAY 1

5.3 Pictorial – Day 2