

Motivation Letter for Esther Nakkazi:

Before 2006, I was a young journalist reporting on anything and everything. I started covering science out of interest but it was difficult since I had no science training background.

In 2016, a call from the World Federation of Science Journalists (WFSJ) to mentor young reporters under the peer-to-peer project, SjCOOP that came through my email was the ultimate opportunity.

The mentorship through the SjCOOP project improved my reporting, understanding, and coverage of science. Most importantly it also created among us a network of journalists around the world that still exists and a pool of scientists who could trust us.

SjCOOP also helped me I believe to get a scholarship at the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) for the Knight Science journalism fellowship. To say the least, it was the best part of my life, ever and it was not just my life that changed.

Since the MIT fellowship and WFSJ mentorship, the benefits have not only improved me but my wider community. I am now a defined science and technology journalist, mentor and a media trainer.

I was a mentor under WFSJ SjCOOP-II which required me to make time virtually to talk to my mentees frequently, file reports for the WFSJ secretariat, physically turn up for meetings and actively participate in most of the conferences around the globe.

I have been an active participant at the WFJ conferences since they were initiated in Canada. At some of these conferences like the 10th World Conference of Science Journalists (WCSJ) held in San Francisco to which I was self sponsored I played a double roles; to vote on behalf of my country association the Uganda Science Journalists Association (USJA) to which I am a member.

I also founded the Health Journalists Network in Uganda (HEJNU) in 2010, which has over 80 members throughout the country. Most HEJNU members also double for USJA membership. In a way, HEJNU is sort of an affiliate of USJA.

At HEJNU, we have activities like science cafés, which help journalists understand science and create a link between scientists and the media. I am also a member of the 'Building the bridges' project which brings together scientists, journalists, policymakers, and librarians.

I have trained African health journalists on 'health emergencies' under WFSJ and Kenya's MESH. I have also trained journalists independently and with the African Centre for Media Excellence (ACME) and in partnership with my former mentor Otulah under Science Africa. As well as a lot of local training especially in efforts to link scientists to the media and to help them understand how the media works.

Through all these activities, I have had a chance to interact with many science journalists and scientists. As a journalist, I freelance for various local and international media outlets across the globe and as a leader at HEJNU, I have fundraising and mobilising skills, which I believe will benefit the WFSJ board.

