



ATAF / ICTD Research methods training and dissemination workshop

Wednesday 4 – Friday 6 November 2015 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Research Methods Training and Dissemination workshop

The African Tax Administration Forum (ATAF) and the International Centre for Tax and Development (ICTD) are organising a training event on research methods for researchers involved in the area of taxation. This Research Methods Training and Dissemination workshop will be the key capacity building activity of the African Tax Research Network (ATRN) and will take place every year after the ATRN annual Congress. The inaugural Research Methods Training and Dissemination workshop will be launched in **Addis Ababa from 4 – 6 November 2015**. The course aims at strengthening the research capacity of researchers who are already working in the area of taxation and development but who feel their work could be improved with more rigorous methods. The training aims at providing an opportunity to reflect on the researchers' work in a critical way, rather than being an introduction to entirely new methods. This will ensure 'hands on' learning where researchers will think about their own work more rigorously and receive practical feedback on how to improve their research. Furthermore, a dissemination and publication session is intended to provide useful tips and tools to publish the research papers as academic articles and to communicate key findings to broader policy audiences.

Dates	Wednesday 04 – Friday 06 November
Places	15
Fee	None – the 15 successful applicants selected through a competitive process will be fully funded
Application deadline	20 September 2015 . Successful applicants will receive final notification on 25 September 2015.
Language	The course will be taught in English and to derive the maximum benefit from the course, participants should be proficient in English and able to follow and take an active part in course discussions.
Location	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Entry Requirements	The candidate must submit a research paper in progress (this can be a first draft or a detailed proposal). The final paper must be submitted to a double-blind peer review process for publication in the ATRN Working paper Series
Target Audience	This course is aimed at junior to mid-career researchers who are working on a paper in the area of taxation. Interested researchers will also be part of the ATRN Network and some of them will have already presented a first draft of their paper at the ATRN congress. Participants that are currently not part of the ATRN Network will also be welcome, but they must apply to the course by submitting a research paper in progress along with the application form.



Trainers	The trainers for this course are internationally recognised experts in the field of research in taxation, with a mix of excellent research and teaching records as well as extended practical experience in developing countries.
Application and logistics	Participants will need to apply by filling in the online application form (http://bit.ly/1UifbTJ). Successful participants will be fully funded (travel, accommodation, subsistence expenses) by ATAF and ICTD.

Course Content

Sessions & Topics	Main Issues Covered
Session 1 Quantitative methods	This will include basic tools and principles for data analysis, such as research design, sampling, the effective use of descriptive statistics, identification, and methods to establish causality.
Session 2 Qualitative methods	This component will focus on research design, interviews, focus groups, and qualitative data collection in the field.
Session 3 Dissemination and publication	This session aims at providing useful tips and tools to publish the research papers as academic articles, and to communicate the key findings to broader audiences.

Qualitative methods

This seminar seeks to support participants in creating and critiquing qualitative research designs and methods, with participants invited to explore the techniques, uses, strengths, and limitations of these methods. After briefly reviewing elements of concept formation and research design, the session will cover three key topics:

First, we will discuss interview and field research techniques, including techniques for semi-structured, in-depth, expert, and elite interviews, as well as focus group discussions. Attention will be given to interpreting testimonies for truth telling and evasion. Second, participant observation will be explored as a method for examining and interpreting power dynamics and group relations. Third, we will discuss methods and best practices of archival research and interpretive text and content analysis.

After reviewing these concrete skills, we will discuss philosophy of science and research ethics issues relevant to qualitative research, with a particular focus on issues that may arise in the realm of research on taxation. Attendees will receive constructive feedback on their own papers and qualitative research designs, with illustrations provided through exemplar studies that employ qualitative methods in the field of research on taxation in Africa.

Quantitative methods

The quantitative methods will include basic tools and principles for data analysis, such as sample design, the effective use of descriptive statistics, identification, and methods to establish causality. It will focus broadly on two areas, namely, survey design and data analysis from different sources.

Survey design is an important stage in quantitative research and deficiencies in design cannot always be corrected by analysing data. The quantitative methods will start with discussions on basics of sampling design. It will cover issues of sample size, stratification, multi-stage clustering and probability proportion to size sampling. The data analysis part will focus on the discussion of the use of descriptive statistics as a tool that



provides useful first insight into the data, and as a tool that gives preliminary checks (preparation) for more robust analysis. The main discussion will be about establishing causation using both experimental and observational data. The discussion on causality will look at the role of experiments in establishing causality; in particular, random assignment as a tool to solve the selection problem. Random assignment is not always feasible, either for ethical or practical reasons, therefore, the session will also discuss instrumental variable estimation, regression discontinuity, difference-in-difference, and other methods.

Dissemination and publication

This session will cover, among others, the following topics:

- **Publishing your research in academic journals:** this session will consist primarily of a research presentation format for publication in academic journals, including common outlines of academic papers (qualitative and quantitative); the importance of presenting a focused research question that is sufficiently answered in the paper; transparency in the methodology; how to manage large annexes and the basics of the peer-review process; among other topics. It will focus on journals and publications most likely to accept articles on issues of taxation, review protocols for submission, and mention some 'back doors' to getting published.
- **Locating research in real-world debates:** some practical tools and tips will be provided so that publications translate into real-world implications. The session will look at the different kinds of influence that are possible from research, drawn from real examples pertinent to taxation policy and tax systems. It will also look at how to locate one's research within current and future debates about taxation.
- **Articulating the significance of research:** tips on how to formulate a policy argument from one's research covering different forms of argument and illustrated by examples from the ICTD and elsewhere, e.g. that an important taxation issue has been neglected, that a current policy is likely to fail, or that there is a common misunderstanding about a particular issue, etc.
- **Write-shop:** the rest of the session will lead the participants through a hands-on write-shop, guiding them through a process to turn their draft papers into concise, one-page arguments that position the research within a real-world issue and articulate its significance.