

AREN Local Network Leads (LNLs) Training Program 2024

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Introduction

AREN’s first training program is dedicated to training Local Network Leads (LNLs). This will be part of a grassroots strategy for building a solid base for establishing institutional, national and regional networks that will help AREN advance its goals and objectives across Africa. We are looking for individuals who are passionate about promoting best research practices and are willing to lead such engagement efforts within their local research communities. If you have any questions, kindly refer to the FAQ section. If your question is not answered there, you can send an email to us at africanrepro@gmail.com or team@africanrn.org.

We will also organize a community info session for the training program. You can register and join us live to have all your questions answered. Kindly follow us on [X \(Twitter\)](#), [@africanrepro](#) and [LinkedIn](#), [@African Reproducibility Network](#) for updates.

Local Networks

Local Networks serve as communities of practice that allow direct engagement with grassroots researchers to provide a platform for training activities or workshops and discussions on collaborative efforts to promote best research practices at the institution/organization. Local Networks can either be established informally as Nodes or formally as Institutional Reproducibility Networks (RNs). Nodes allow community members to meet and work together despite lacking official recognition by the university leadership and is an ideal way for individuals without senior management support to begin a local network and build the community. On the other hand, local networks officially recognized by their institutions, i.e. Institutional RNs, typically have another person (the Institutional Lead) aside from the Local Network Lead who engages in discussions at the management level to ensure the university or research institute fully supports activities of the local network and factors into its plans strategies to promote best research practices.

Local Network Leads (LNLs)

Local Network Leads represent AREN and lead engagement efforts at the host institution. They are charged with helping us build a multidisciplinary group of researchers, and technical and professional staff at all career stages, who are interested in improving research culture and/or promoting the adoption of open and reproducible research principles. Their responsibilities include identifying researchers, research students, and technical and professional support staff across the institution who are engaged in or interested in such issues then leading and coordinating local network activities such as workshops and disseminating and encouraging good practice across that network.

Training Schedule and Topics

The training program is structured according to our three-level training model ([find out more here](#)). Several key open science topics (Reproducibility, Open Data and Open Source, Open Access and Open Repositories, Preprints and Open Peer Review) will be covered over a period of 6 months (approx.). All introductory sessions are compulsory, with flexibility introduced at the second and third levels. Trainees are expected to commit 5 hours (max) each week to training activities including live sessions, assignments, feedback surveys, etc. Attendance to live sessions is not compulsory as we acknowledge the possible busy schedule of various trainees. However, we encourage this as it will facilitate a more interactive and feedback-oriented learning experience. All sessions will be recorded and links shared with trainees.

Eligibility

The main goal of this training program is to facilitate the establishment of local networks at universities and research institutes across Africa. As such, a key eligibility criterion is an institutional affiliation where the trainee can establish a local network after completing the training program. We are looking for postgraduate students, postdocs, faculty, library services personnel, researchers at both private and public research institutes, individuals in management-level positions, etc.

Selection Criteria

We will aim for a broad spectrum of disciplines among our trainees, recognizing that open science offers not only universal advantages but also unique benefits tailored to each specialization. We also deem it important to have researchers at different career stages, a broad representation of countries and regions in Africa, and a gender-balanced training group. We believe these will help establish a rich diversity and perspective, allowing unique contributions during discussions. Although the training program is open to anyone within the African research or higher education ecosystem, preference will be given to individuals who are directly affiliated with a university or research institute.

Completion Criteria

Trainees are expected to complete at least 90% of all assignments, self-evaluation and feedback surveys aside from the requirements for each level. Although attendance to live sessions is not compulsory, we believe active participation is an indication of a strong interest in the training program and commitment to AREN's mission and vision as a whole and may influence final

decisions on who is qualified to start a local network as an LNL. As such we encourage trainees to attend as many live sessions as possible, at least 50%.

Conclusion

LNLs will be introduced to the global RN community and hosted on our website after completing the training program and starting a local network. This will provide them with a platform for collaboration with the international RN community and the global open science movement. Where possible, AREN will engage in and support discussions with an LNL's host institution to ensure they are recognized and supported.

FAQs

Are undergraduates qualified to apply?

No, current undergraduates are not qualified to apply. However, individuals with undergraduate degrees who work at universities or research institutes and will be in the role for a minimum of two years after completing the training program are eligible to apply.

Does a lack of experience or engagement in open science activities put me at a disadvantage?

No, prior experience or engagement in open science activities is not a major selection criterion and we look at several factors in the application during the selection process. However, individuals with such experience have it to their advantage.

Is there a specific number of trainees that will be accepted to the program?

No. There is no allocated quota of individuals that will be admitted to the program. However, based on our selection criteria, preference may be given to some applicants over others resulting in a reduced number of trainees compared to the total number of applicants.

I work remotely at my institution, can I apply?

Local Network Leads are expected to be physically present at the institution/organization and engage directly with community members and researchers at the institution. As such, individuals who work remotely are not ideal for the role. However, under certain circumstances, a remote worker can be considered for the training program so we encourage you to apply.

Can there be more than one Local Network Lead at an institution?

Yes. An institution may have one or more LNLs, depending on local factors such as the scale and diversity of research at the institution. LNLs at an institution are expected to closely work together to ensure their activities are properly coordinated.