

TReND Nigeria Neuroscience Outreach Report

Title: Neuroscience as a Career Option for Young Nigeria
Science Students and Scientist

Held at: the Hilal Private School Hall, Jos Plateau state.

Outreach Team Members:

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The third TReND Neuroscience Outreach in Nigeria themed: “Neuroscience as a career option for young Nigerian science students and scientists” took place at Plateau state Nigeria on the 26th November, 2013. Total Participants reached was about two hundred and fifty (250), which included science and non-science secondary (high school) students and their teachers.

The aim of the programme was to introduce the science field - Neuroscience, its significance, nature of neuroscience research, the tools and models used in this research, with emphasis on tools and models affordable for neuroscience research in Africa.

Secondary schools throughout Jos; the capital of plateau state were invited with ten representatives from each school. A total of thirteen (13) schools were present for the outreach programme. The programme took place at the Hilal Private school Hall, Jos Plateau state.

The schools in attendance were:

1. Hilal Private School Rikkos, Jos
2. Airforce Girls Comprehensive School Jos
3. Nassarawa Comprehensive High School Jos
4. Community Comprehensive Secondary school Tudun Wada, Jos
5. Hikma College Jos
6. Hassan Memorial High School Jos
7. Ihya’ul Islam Secondary School, Bukuru Jos
8. Albayan Secondary School Jos
9. Al-Ikhlass Private School Jos
10. Al-Khairat Private School Jos
11. College of Arabic and Islamic Studies Jos
12. Abu Na’ima Private School Bukuru Jos
13. Al-Ummah Academy Jos

Audience were toured through how to become a neuroscientist, career in neuroscience and the relevance of the neuroscience field in the social sciences, with emphasis on tools and neurobehavioural models affordable for neuroscience research in Africa.

An interactive session was held at the end during which audience had the opportunity to interact with the speakers and ask questions. Topics discussed included:

1. An overview of what TReND represents, her mission and vision.
2. A brief introduction to Neuroscience, its essentials, importance and recent developments in the field.
3. Nature of neuroscience researches, the tools and models used in these researches, with emphasis on tools and models affordable for neuroscience in Africa. Some of the models discussed were:
 - Drosophila model
 - Snail model
 - Animal models (rats and mice) of cognition, anxiety, motor strength and coordination, pain and inflammation, and environmental enrichment
4. A lecture was given on how to become a Neuroscientist, study opportunities in neuroscience and what established neuroscience do in their career.

This was followed by a very stimulating interactive session with the students and teachers, where they had the had the opportunity to ask questions and make comments. The event was concluded by a group photograph with students and teachers.

Innovations

- During the course of the lectures the students were ask questions about neuroscience at intervals and were given gifts by DANA foundation to encourage and motivate them.
- Branded gift items donated by DANA foundation were given to attendees.
- An exciting demonstration of muscles bio-electrical activity was demonstrated using backyard brains ElectroMyoGram (EMG) spiker box. Each school participated and the

EMG was shown using a volunteer from that school. The students found this segment particularly interesting and were very curious about how it worked.

- The media (television and newspaper) was present and some of the participants of the programme were interviewed and they were able to air their excitement about neuroscience. This ensured wider reach and greater awareness.

Achievements/Outcome of the Neuroscience outreach

- Increased awareness of Neuroscience
- Increased understanding of neuroscience
- Motivation of young Nigerian secondary school students to consider neuroscience as a career option.

Conclusion

It is believed that the program has achieved greater awareness and higher impact on the knowledge, benefits and prospects of neuroscience. The expected goals and target audience have also been met.

Acknowledgement

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- Backyard brains
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- Nigerian Television Authority Jos, Plateau Plateau state television
- Malam Salihu Dan Ismail
- Malam Umar Musa Adam

- Kaltume Shehu
- The Nigerian Standard Newspaper
- Principals and students of schools who were in attendance