

*By Charles Ndushabandi;*

Journalists in Rwanda have Monday commenced a 2-day Solution Journalism training workshop on effective reporting and building their capacity in coverage of stories in great depth and insight.

The two-day training workshop organized by Science Africa based in Kenya seeks to build capacity for journalists to understand reporting on Solution Journalism (SOJO), a rigorous reporting on responses to social problems.

Among the topics which journalists are trained in include Introduction and background to Solutions Journalism and key resources, Evolvement of Covid-19 and its latest updates, Reporting with Solutions Journalism angle, Health reporting with focus on Covid-19 vaccines and variants, SOJO story experience and ideas.

Speaking at the opening of the workshop, Daniel Otunge, the Deputy Executive Director of Science Africa said that, conventional journalism is on the decline and journalists need to adapt to new or emerging reporting.



Daniel Otunge, the Deputy Executive Director of Science Africa

He introduced the concept of solution journalism as a rigorous reporting and how it helps to complete a story explaining the guiding pillars where there is a problem and the pillars as response to the problem, insight, evidence of results and limitations.

“A SOJO story should investigate and explain how people try to solve widely shared problems. Journalists ought to know the way of reporting stories is changing and this is also being spear headed by the leading news broadcaster across the world including BBC and CNN, they have all doing solution journalism,” he said.

During the training, Dr. Menelas Nkeshimana, an expert from World Health Organisation (WHO) office in Rwanda briefed journalists on the current Covid-19 status and a general overview of the pandemic.



Dr. Menelas Nkeshimana, an expert from World Health Organisation

Dr. Nkeshimana, who is also on Rwanda’s Joint task force for Covid-19 gave

journalists deep insights on the current health crisis and how it has been managed to help reporters better understand in response to reporting health stories.

Dr. Alfred Rutagengwa, the Covid-19 Response Activities Coordinator at WHO, highlighted an important component in journalism which is information. He elaborated on infodemic as an overabundance of information -some accurate and some not -that occurs during an epidemic.

He said that this infodemic excessive amount of information about a problem makes it difficult to identify a solution. Infodemics can hamper an effective public health response and create confusion and distrust among people.



Journalists at the training wished for experts to be readily available to provide accurate information and data so that journalists are able to effectively report on issues at hand especially in the case of a health crisis.

The Deputy Executive Director of Science Africa emphasized the importance of reporting stories with the right information from the right sources. Adding that, “the training is aimed at increasing the capacity of journalists when it comes to effectiveness when presenting available evidence of results.”

The training will help journalism enhance their reporting skills particularly on solution journalism but also journalists will be expected to pitch SOJO stories in order to tap into the grants program at Science Africa.