

# CARTA News

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## My vision for CARTA's future: ruminations from Emeritus Executive Director Alex Ezeh



 Prof. Sharon gives Dr. Alex Ezeh a card with farewell messages from the participants of the Board of Management Meeting in Nairobi, Kenya in September 2017.

*By Eunice Kilonzo, CARTA communications officer.*

**D**r. Alex Ezeh has a clear vision for how research can support African development: to grow the size and scope of African researchers from across the continent able to generate quality, relevant and prodigious amounts of evidence that can answer the most pressing questions of our time.

Through the CARTA program, and its 12 partner institutions around the continent, this is becoming a reality. The APHRC emeritus director sat down to mull over the “interesting, exciting, real journey” that CARTA has taken, while laying out his hoped-for vision for the future.

“Perhaps of all the things that I did at the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) the one that I am really proud of, is CARTA,” he said. “The program is innovative, impactful and clearly thought through. It has the right type of impact we want to see happen in Africa and within African institutions.”

CARTA was born from a seed planted in 2005, when an unsuccessful candidate for an APHRC staff position noted with concern that there were no APHRC staff who had achieved doctoral degrees from African institutions.

“We did a review of all the staff at APHRC and indeed, we had never given a job to someone with a PhD from an African university,” he said, which prompted an investigation that revealed three main reasons such candidates were ultimately unsuccessful in joining the APHRC team.

“Three things stood out: first, they were not able to speak to the current debate in the areas they are working on – to the point that many times their ideas were 5-10 years behind where the current discourse is. Secondly, [there were concerns about] the methodological sophistication of their research. Were they able to apply the right models, were they able to interpret the results well? “Finally, these candidates were largely unable to defend their intellectual position.

These assessments yielded a convening of leaders from universities around the continent a year later, and that 2006 meeting was a turning point: the realization of the critical need for a PhD program that provided clear markers for future success that included sustained commitments to research output on and for the continent, to keep the best and brightest minds in Africa rather than contributing to the brain drain that has impeded national and continental socio-economic development.



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By 2007, a plan was formulated and brought to South Africa, to a meeting convened by the Wellcome Trust that was meant to inaugurate the African Institutions Initiative.

"I called the organizers and shared with them the ideas we had been talking about over the years and I went to the meeting. There were more than 40 universities from sub-Saharan Africa and many UK universities as well," said Dr. Ezeh. "The UK universities in attendance were well-prepared. They already mapped out who their partners were going to be and what they were going to work on."

The second day of the meeting brought African participants together to discuss ways to build and strengthen the capacity of doctoral research in Africa, the first of several conversations that continued in February 2008 in Dar es Salaam and now comprised 18 institutions.

That meeting was focused on a single agenda: to develop institutional ownership of strong doctoral training programs for junior faculty members from each of those institutions, including research centers that would serve as models for research excellence.

Each successive meeting provided opportunities for faculty and administrators from different disciplines to interact with one another and develop a collaborative and multi-disciplinary approach to improving health and wellbeing in Africa.

"So that is how we began. Our idea then was to create a program that could train junior faculty to get their PhDs, but most importantly, to do good research, with a focus on population and public health that recognizes that health

is not just the absence of disease, especially in the broader context of social determinants of health," he said.

After 10 years, CARTA has supported nearly 190 fellows, with more than 40 graduates. Together they have published close to 500 peer-reviewed articles and earned over US\$ 5 million in research grants as principal investigators. This, Dr. Ezeh, describes as the "right output that we want to see".

The future of CARTA is bright – and its potential is unbounded. "These programs have to be owned by the universities, so in the past year we have started conversations about how to institutionalize the innovations that we have brought into doctoral training in African universities, to make them available to every student," he said.

Another best practice for CARTA to transfer is the how of teaching at the university level, so as to create centers of innovative pedagogy. "It is not just the routine didactic teaching where lecture notes and reproduced during exam time," he said. "It's more about being able to use innovation to facilitate learning, and bring experts from outside who may never have gone to university but are actually innovators in their own ways."

Broadening CARTA's focus beyond public and population health is another possible avenue for the future, said Dr. Ezeh. "Africa's contribution to the STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) has been dropping by about 2% every year. How do we build strong capacity and expertise for us to contribute knowledge in these areas?" The solution, the impatient

optimist said, is for synergy across universities, particularly those on the continent, bringing institutions together "to do more than we can do on our own".

*Watch this interview on the CARTA website*  
<https://youtu.be/izcirso-7PI>

## Dr. Alex Ezeh biographical sketch

- He joined APHRC in 1998 (then a program of the Population Council in Nairobi) as a Senior Research Fellow.
- In 2000, he was appointed APHRC's Interim Director and in 2001 appointed the Executive Director.
- Prior to joining APHRC, he worked at ORC/Macro International where he provided technical assistance to governmental and non-governmental institutions in several African countries in the design and conduct of Demographic and Health Surveys.
- Dr. Ezeh has more than 20 years of experience working in public health and has authored numerous scientific publications covering the issues of population, demographics, health and health metrics.
- He received his PhD in Demography from the University of Pennsylvania (USA) in 1993. He also has an MA in Demography from the same university (1991), and an MSc in Sociology from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria (1988).

## Farewell Message



**Prof. Sharon Fonn, CARTA co-director:** "The important thing to recognise about Alex is that he could be anywhere in the world and at a high level but he is here in Africa because that's where he values and commitments are. I suppose it is those common values that I certainly share with him."



**Prof. Akinyinka Omigbodun, CARTA board member:** "I didn't get to meet Alex in person until ten years ago but our paths had crossed at the University of Pennsylvania where he obtained his PhD. His colleagues spoke a lot about him, two of who were my friends, spoke positively about him and I wondered, who was this guy? Then we ran into each other in South Africa and he was talking so much about developing research in the African continent. He was so excited!"



**Prof. Anne Nangulu, CARTA focal person Moi University:** "Alex has a lot of energy, passion and vision for this continent. I am privileged to have interacted and worked closely with him. His passion is infectious to the entire consortium and while we will miss him, I am glad to have known him over the years."

# CARTA welcomes Dr. Evelyn Gitau, our new director of Research Capacity Strengthening Division



Dr. Evelyn Gitau was the program manager at the African Academy of Sciences prior to joining APHRC.

CARTA is pleased to welcome Dr. Evelyn Gitau to APHRC, to lead the Research Capacity Strengthening Division. Dr. Gitau joined APHRC in November 2017 and has been on the move ever since, most recently in Uganda for a two-day planning meeting at Makerere University for the next Joint Advanced Seminars. JAS 1 & 4 begin on March 5 and run until March 28, drawing some 54 fellows for a month-long residential seminar.

Since arriving to replace Dr. James Kisia, Dr. Gitau has also represented the Center at a number of forums, serving as a panelist during the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) meeting in Nairobi from January 31–February 2, 2018 aiming to showcase grant opportunities for researchers from developing countries and the UK to discuss

opportunities to optimize how GCRF research can translate research into policy and practice.

"I am excited about the opportunities available for growth at the Research Capacity Strengthening (RCS) division. I am keen to cultivate this potential to see that the division, which is doing a lot already, does even more in research leadership."

Dr. Gitau's most recent role was as a program manager at the African Academy of Sciences, where she stewarded the Grand Challenges Africa at the Academy under the Alliance for Accelerating Excellence in Science in Africa (AESAI) program. Prior to that, she was part of the team at the KEMRI-Wellcome Trust Program in Kilifi, Kenya, conducting research on developing biomarkers of disease among seriously ill children.

She earned her PhD in Life Sciences from the Open University/Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine in the UK, investigating neurological infections in children living in malaria-endemic areas.

Alongside her more than 15 years of experience in medical research, Dr. Gitau is committed to mentoring and supervising students, believing that the next generation of research leaders in

Africa must be at the forefront of the continent's development agenda, in order to shape decision-making and policy with evidence.

"Evelyn brings dynamism and great passion for scholarship and mentorship to APHRC. She is well placed to drive our strategy to produce the research leaders Africa desperately needs. We are thrilled to have her onboard," APHRC Executive Director Dr. Catherine Kyobutungi said.

Among her awards and accomplishments include a 2015 appointment as a fellow of the Next Einstein Forum, where she is the ambassador for the development of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics in Africa.

Dr. Gitau's vast networks have brought her positions on numerous advisory boards for organizations advancing the agenda of research and evidence generation in Africa. These include the Independent Scientific Advisory Board (ISAB); Malawi-Liverpool-Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Programme College of Medicine, Blantyre, Malawi; University of Oxford (MSc International Health and Tropical Medicine) and the Investment Committee Grand Challenges Canada. She remains a member of the Steering Committee for Grand Challenges Africa.

## CARTA program updates

### Emmanuel Oloche Otukpa: CARTA Monitoring & Evaluation officer



Emmanuel is responsible for the design and implementation of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities for CARTA. More specifically, he will be tracking the research progress of CARTA fellows, their publications, and will collect and analyze data from CARTA.

He holds a Bachelor's degree in Pharmacy from the University of Jos and is currently pursuing an MSc in Epidemiology and Biostatistics from the University of the Witwatersrand. He was previously a technical officer at FHI-360 in Nigeria in the Malaria Action Program for States (MAPS), where he implemented malaria control and prevention programs. His interests include pharmacy informatics and pharmacovigilance. He is driven by the sense of accomplishment that comes with surmounting challenges through teamwork. Emmanuel speaks Idoma (one of the dialects in Nigeria), French, and a little Spanish.

### Dr. F. Xavier Gómez-Olivé-CARTA focal person at Agincourt, University of the Witwatersrand (Wits)

Dr. F. Xavier Gómez-Olivé is a senior researcher and the head of field research at Agincourt School of Public Health, at the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa. He completed his medical studies in 1990 and three years later, graduated with an MSc in Tropical Medicine and International Health from the Universitat de Barcelona, Spain. His first field experience was in Rwanda (1996 – 1997) where he was a district doctor, coordinating clinical work in seven health facilities and a district hospital. He later achieved an MSc in Communicable Disease Epidemiology at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (1997–1998).

His work in the Agincourt Health and Demographic Surveillance System (Agincourt HDSS) sites began in Mozambique, where he

worked at the Centro de Investigação em Saude de Manhica for six years (1999 – 2004). In March 2005, he moved to Agincourt HDSS as scientific manager and was promoted to lead the field research program in 2011. He graduated with a PhD in public health from the University of the Witwatersrand in 2014.

In 2014, he received the prestigious David E. Bell Research Fellowship at the Center for Population and Development Studies at Harvard University's T.H. Chan School of Public Health. His research interests include the health and wellbeing of older populations, quality of life, functionality, multi-morbidity of chronic communicable (HIV/TB) and non-communicable (hypertension, diabetes) disease, sleep disorders and the integration of chronic care in the primary health care system.





# Scientific breakthrough

## Study by CARTA fellow critical in malaria research

By Eunice Kilonzo, CARTA communications officer

Nearly nine in every 10 new malaria infections in rural Tanzania are transmitted by the *Anopheles funestus* mosquito. This is despite its smaller population in comparison to other mosquito species, a new study by a CARTA fellow shows.

Emmanuel Kaindoa, Cohort Five fellow from the Ifakara Health Institute (IHI), demonstrated that while different mosquito species (*Anopheles arabiensis*) dominate in numbers, a far more competent vector (*Anopheles funestus*) now transmits most of the residual malaria parasites, despite occurring in far smaller numbers.

These research findings are critical as globally, one child dies from malaria every two minutes, according to the World Health Organization, even as the countries with the

highest levels of endemicity across sub-Saharan Africa are facing massive shortages in their ability to prevent and respond to the disease. How to manage disease burden and reduce mortality from malaria were major questions confronting heads of state and government at the January summit of African Union leaders.

*Anopheles funestus* is responsible for 82-95% of local malaria infections. Unfortunately, the vector is also resistant to pyrethroids (insecticide) used on bednets. It survives unexpectedly longer, has a highly cryptic

### Paper Title:

*Interventions that effectively target Anopheles funestus mosquitoes could significantly improve control of persistent malaria transmission in south-eastern Tanzania*

aquatic ecology, and bites people both indoors and outdoors.

Monthly mosquito sampling was carried out between January 2015 and January 2016, in randomly selected households in three villages using Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention (CDC) light traps and back-pack aspirators. The sampling was conducted four years after the last mass distribution of long-lasting insecticidal bednets (LLINs).

In rural southeastern Tanzania, where malaria prevalence has reduced by more than 60% since 2000, low-to-moderate transmission still persists despite very high coverage with LLINs. Like in most residual transmission settings within East Africa, populations of the formerly notorious malaria vector (known as, *Anopheles gambiae*), have significantly diminished or completely vanished.

As a direct impact of the findings, Ifakara Health Institute has initiated two major research initiatives funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, according to the director of science at IHI, Dr. Fredros Okumu. The scientific breakthrough will facilitate the development of new approaches that specifically target the mosquito species, with the aim of drastically reducing residual transmission.

### More about the Research Paper

**Authors:** Emmanuel W. Kaindoa, Nancy S. Matowo, Halfan S. Ngowo, Gustav Mkandawile, Arnold Mmbando, Marcelina Finda, Fredros O. Okumu

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## How talking about mosquitoes opened me up to potential collaborations in the US

By Emmanuel Kaindoa

CARTA Cohort Five fellow from University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa.

I was excited about my trip to the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (ASTMH) meeting in Baltimore, United States in November 2017. This was a great opportunity to meet fellow researchers and experienced scientists in global health. I was not disappointed as I got a rare chance to interact with notable researchers and be in the midst of 400 participants from different countries.

The informative and insightful sessions helped me re-examine the relevance of my career in public health. For instance a session meant for young investigators award, I listened to different scientists talk with much authority about their research and afterwards, I followed up with some of them to see potential areas of collaboration and knowledge exchange.

I also made a presentation on the new evidence of mating swarms of *Anopheles arabiensis* in Tanzania which led to a pleasant conversation with Prof Tom Kline, the director of Kline Health Group, a global healthcare company. Prof. Kline said he would love to visit Ifakara Health Institute—where I am based—for collaboration, especially on how we can work around vector control in Tanzania.

I also had chance to visit the malaria laboratory at the Maryland University, which is located a few meters away from the conference venue. I was particularly fascinated by their lab structure, their work and advanced diagnostic tools.



Emmanuel Kaindoa CARTA Cohort Five fellow from University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa in a recent photo.

I would like to express my heart-felt gratitude to CARTA for funding my research and facilitating my attendance to the ASTMH conference. I also thank Ifakara Health Institute for allowing me to attend the conference. I have been able to present my research at the ASTMH, to interact with different scientists and to establish collaborations.

# Kudos!

## CARTA fellow and team win US\$3.6 million NIH grant to fight blindness in Africa



▲ Olusola Oluyinka Olawoye, Cohort Seven fellow is also the president of her cohort. She is a senior lecturer and glaucoma specialist at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Olusola Oluyinka Olawoye, Cohort Seven fellow, is part of a research team from the University of Ibadan that won an H3 Africa National Institutes of Health (NIH) research grant worth US\$3.68million. The grant is for a collaborative research project titled 'Eyes of Africa: the genetics of blindness.' It will be carried out in Nigeria, Gambia, Malawi and South Africa over a five-year period.

Dr. Olawoye is part of a seven-member team from the University of Ibadan investigating the genetics of blindness with a focus on primary open angle glaucoma (POAG) in sub-Saharan Africa: a global cause of blindness that is among the most preventable. The condition leads to optic nerve damage and potentially irreversible visual loss. Progression of this optic nerve damage can usually be halted with treatment but cannot be reversed once the damage is done.

Dr. Olawoye said that while the application process was demanding, the skills she gained as part of her participation in CARTA helped her draft the grant proposal submitted in November 2016.

The Human Heredity and Health in Africa (H3Africa) Initiative seeks to facilitate a contemporary research approach to the study of genomics and environmental determinants of common diseases with the goal of improving the health of African populations.

## CARTA fellow elected deputy dean

CARTA Cohort two fellow, Linda Nyondo Mipando, has been selected as deputy dean at the School of Public Health and Family Medicine in the College of Medicine, University of Malawi. She is a registered nurse-midwife by training and is currently a lecturer in the Department of Health Systems and Policy at the college.

Cohort Five fellow Lester Kapanda congratulated Dr. Mipando on her new role and described her as "our mentor, a dedicated and hardworking lecturer". "She is the first woman to attain this high position at our college; once again, congratulations and keep up the good work!!"

Dr. Mipando's research interests include health systems and implementation science research with a focus on service delivery. She is also keen on researching on HIV and AIDS across different populations, malaria, maternal and child health.

Dr. Mipando completed her PhD in health systems research from the University of Malawi's College of Medicine in 2015, funded by CARTA and the National Commission for Science and Technology. Her doctoral research explored the feasibility of male involvement in services to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV in Blantyre, Malawi.

In 2004, she graduated with a Master's degree in Community Health Nursing from the University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN) in South Africa, with a thesis on client satisfaction with Primary Health Care Service in Lilongwe, Malawi. She completed her Bachelor of Nursing at the University of Natal, South Africa in 2003. She obtained her nursing diploma and a university certificate in midwifery from the University of Malawi in 1997 and 1998 respectively.

In September 2015, Dr. Mipando was one of four postdoctoral fellows to receive a 12-month postdoctoral fellowship from CARTA, joining the Malawi Liverpool Wellcome Trust in the malaria epidemiology group that contributed to a national taskforce review of current malaria evidence so as to inform the 2016-2021 national malaria research agenda.



▲ CARTA Cohort Two fellow, Linda Nyondo Mipando is the deputy dean at the School of Public Health and Family Medicine in the College of Medicine, University of Malawi.



# Photo gallery



CARTA co-director Prof. Sharon Fonn discusses with Cohort Seven Fellow Nomfundo Moreo on her Abstract presentation in Accra, Ghana during the three-day Developing Excellence in Leadership, Training and Science (DELTAS) Africa Annual Meeting on July 3, 2017. Ms Moreo later won the Best Abstract Award at the convening that brought together African health researchers from 31 African countries to showcase some of the ground breaking research being done on the continent to address Africa's health challenges.



Participants of the 8th CARTA Partners' Annual Forum in Nairobi, Kenya from September 18-19, 2017 where the selection of CARTA fellows, ratification of new partnerships, revision of policies, and equitable sharing of resources were discussed.



Visit by Director, Reproductive Health and Research at the World Health Organisation Ian Askew in Nairobi on November 17 where he met with Catherine Kyobutungi, executive director APHRC, Evelyn Gitau RCS Director, Peter Ngure CARTA program manager on APHRC becoming the Regional HUB for east and southern Africa for the HRP Alliance.



CARTA Fellows pay a courtesy call to Prof. Peter Ngure (center seated) during a visit at APHRC on September 14 during the launch of The Path to Longer and Healthier Lives for all Africans by 2030 report. The report was authored by the Lancet Commission on the Future of Health in sub-Saharan Africa.



Acrobatic performances during Dr. Alex Ezech's Farewell dinner at the Safari Park Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya on September 20, 2017. In attendance were members of CARTA's Board of Management and Funder's.



The seventh Faculty and Administrative Staff workshop (FAS) held on July 17-19 at the University of Rwanda in Kigali, Rwanda. One hundred and twenty participants from CARTA partner universities and research institutes attended.



# Photo gallery



The team from the Inter-University Council for East Africa on September 13, 2017 visit APHRC center to discuss potential areas of collaboration with CARTA. IUCEA continuously sets higher education and research policy strategies and develops appropriate interventions so as to ensure that the institution continues to effectively serve the East Africa Community.



Prof. Sharon Fonn, CARTA Co-director with University of the Witwatersrand Vice Chancellor Prof. Adam Habib at a dinner on the evening of the first day of the 2nd Vice Chancellors' meeting in July 10-11, 2017 in Nairobi, Kenya. The summit brought together eight vice chancellors from CARTA's African partner universities, three heads of CARTA's partner research institutions as well as two representatives from CARTA's Northern partner institutions.



Folusho Balogun (Center), CARTA Cohort 5 fellow, from the College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, Nigeria when she won the UNESCO-MARS Best African Women Researcher 2017 award for her work on cervical cancer and HPV vaccine for adolescents in Nigeria. She was awarded during the 3rd edition of the annual UNESCO-Merck Africa Research Summit (MARS) that was held in Port Louis, Mauritius from November 28-29, 2017.



Representatives from the Department for International Development (DFID) office in Nairobi visited APHRC on 10 November, 2017. The purpose of the visit was to familiarize themselves with the DELTAS program through AESA and learn more about the CARTA program. The team was led by the DFID's Deputy Director, Sian Rasdale, Head of Evidence Department, Research and Evidence Division. Also present were representatives from the African Academy of Sciences (AAS) Tom Kariuki, Director, AESA and Alphonsus Neba, DELTAS's Program Manager.



Peter Ngure (at the back) represented APHRC at the WHO Human Reproductive Programme (HRP) Alliance partners' meeting on October 31-November 2 in Accra, Ghana. Part of the discussion was on technical updates on the research capacity strengthening activities of the HRP Alliance as well as HRP sexual and reproductive health and rights research. The WHO hubs discussed the modalities of collaboration in capacity building and the possibilities for multi-country research. APHRC will collaborate with other hubs to fundraise for the planned activities.



CARTA Graduate Workshop Coordinator Hakan Billig from the University of Gothenburg consults with CARTA Graduate Diana Menya on September 25, 2017 during the five-day workshop in Nairobi at the Safari Park Hotel. The aim of the workshop is to equip post-doctoral early career researchers with key skills to develop grant-winning proposals.

# International Conference Presentations by CARTA fellows

## Proud moment in Italy as I spoke about my research on the impact of ARVs on bone-density

*By Flavia Matovu Kiweewa*

*Cohort Four fellow from Makerere University, Uganda.*

I participated in the 19th International Workshop on Adverse Drug Reactions and Co-Morbidities in HIV, October 23–25, 2017 in Milan, Italy. My presentation on October 24 was chaired by one of my mentors, Professor Todd Brown, an endocrinologist and bone health expert from the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, USA. It was titled, “Baseline Bone Mineral Density in a Cohort of Young Women using Depo-provera and Tenofovir”. I discussed the baseline findings from my PhD work on bone mineral density in untreated HIV infected young women and the independent effects of depo-provera on bone mineral density.

In summary, we observed low bone mass especially at the hip among HIV-infected women compared to uninfected women. The background to this work is the high burden of HIV in Uganda and other sub-Saharan African countries that has necessitated wide spread use of anti-retroviral treatment. However, these medications are not without complications, metabolic bone complications are a great concern.

The most commonly used anti-retroviral agent – tenofovir – has been shown to lead to accelerated bone loss especially in the first two years of use. Of note, all HIV-infected individuals in resource-limited settings are offered tenofovir based anti-retroviral therapy unless contra-indicated. Of the 19 million HIV-infected patients on antiretroviral therapy, more than 70% are on tenofovir based anti-retroviral therapy.

In addition, the choice of contraception by women affects their bone health. Depo-provera, a reliable and a widely available contraceptive, is the most preferred option among women of all age groups, with over 15 million users in sub-Saharan Africa. However, depo-provera, similar to tenofovir is also associated with reduced bone mass. Since tenofovir and depo-provera are independently associated with reduced bone mass, there is a possibility that concurrent use of these two agents may potentiate each other's effects leading to early osteoporosis (a severe form of bone loss), and increased risk of fractures.

These workshops are central avenues in distilling and disseminate cutting-edge scientific data in the areas of drugs complications especially around HIV co-morbidities and areas of further research.



↑ Flavia Kiweewa during her presentation titled “Baseline Bone Mineral Density in a Cohort of Young Women using Depo-provera and Tenofovir” during the 19th International Workshop on Adverse Drug Reactions and Co-Morbidities in HIV in Milan, Italy from October 23–25 2017.

## Grandparents have a role to play on the family structure and schooling of adolescents

*By Macellina Yinyinade Ijadunola*

*Cohort Six fellow from the Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria.*

I attended and made an oral presentation at the 28th International Union for the Scientific Study of Population held in Cape Town, South Africa from October 28–November 4, 2017. The conference takes place every four years and gathers more than 2,000 scientists, policymakers and practitioners in the global population community to take stock of recent research on population trends.

My work focuses on the influence of grandparents on family structure and schooling of adolescents in Ile-Ife, a town in South-West Nigeria. My research shows that grandparents are increasingly filling parenting gaps in Nigeria. The cross-sectional study involves 408 secondary school adolescents (10–19 years) using facilitated, self-administered questionnaires to gather information about students' socio-demographics, type of family structure, and schools' academic performance.

Apart from their roles as family historians, grandparents have increasingly begun to fill the “parenting gaps” left by their children, a trend attributable to the growing number of households with skipped generations caused by the absence of biological parents. Financial constraints rather than family bonding (which is defined by cultural beliefs in this part of the world) is the commonest social factor responsible for the re-emergence of this family structure.

Other social factors responsible for this rapidly increasing family structure include: mortality, morbidity, economic/study migration or incarceration of biological parents. This financial constraint in nuclear families kindles the natural impulse of financially empowered grandparents to fill the parental support gap.

## Bola in Berlin: Culture has a role to play in sexism in Nigeria

*By Boladale Mapayi*

*Cohort Four fellow from the Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria.*

Through generous sponsorship from CARTA, I joined over 10,000 specialists and allied professionals in Berlin to participate in the World Psychiatry Association XVII World Congress of Psychiatry from October 8–12, 2017.

The conference was filled with new interactions and experiences for me and our team of eight. I met notable professionals in my field, which allowed me to appreciate the usefulness of their work to my own research. My two oral presentations went well and I got positive feedback. A lot of people had questions about how culture shaped the experiences of the Chibok girls. More than 270 girls were kidnapped from their school in the north-east Nigerian town of Chibok in 2014 by militant Islamist group Boko Haram. We also took a number of questions about the role that culture plays in sexism in Nigeria.

The CARTA experience helped me manage my first time ever chairing a symposium session; I was so grateful for the blitz session that we practiced in JAS 3! The conference also exposed me to a number of innovative strategies for my work back home. I have always been interested in psychological remedies and I sat in on a session focused on integrating psychotherapy in low-resourced settings. I hope to put some of those strategies to use. Another interesting session discussed ways to improve mental health in the workplace, based on research that a team had operationalized and used in diverse work settings.

It was inspiring to see the work of others and learn how their research had changed the communities around them. Thank you, CARTA, for making my participation possible; it was a great learning experience for me.



# CARTA Funders and Northern partners

## A funder's insight into the CARTA program

*By Eren Zink, representative of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) to CARTA.*

CARTA is pleased to welcome Eren Zink to replace Maria-Teresa Bejarano, who served for three years as the representative of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) to the consortium. He is joining as a Research Advisor with Sida's Research Cooperation Unit. Dr. Eren Zink is a cultural anthropologist trained at Uppsala University (Ph.D. 2011), the University of Cincinnati (MA 1998) and Kenyon College (BA 1996).

He joined Uppsala University in 2007 and carried out research on the practice of science and the production of scientific knowledge in the fields of health, agriculture and environmental conservation. He is the author of *Hot Science, High Water* (2013 NIAS Press).

Below are some of his insights about where Sida sees its role going forward, and where he is excited for new areas of engagement.

*In September 2017 I had the pleasure of attending CARTA's Annual Partners Forum and the Board of Management and Funders Meeting. Both were excellent opportunities for me to get to know CARTA and to interact with many of the people that make CARTA such an exciting organization and initiative.*

*The CARTA model of strengthening research capacity appears to be a very effective one, with CARTA students completing their training in less than four years on average. I was particularly impressed by CARTA's use of Joint Advanced Seminars to strengthen students' research skills, facilitate interdisciplinary learning, and promote interaction amongst different cohorts of CARTA students. CARTA's model of PhD training, including stipends that are sufficiently large to enable PhD students to dedicate significant amounts of time to their PhD research and writing -- as well as additional support to women PhD students with infants so that they can participate fully in CARTA seminars -- is a model that Sida and other organizations can learn from.*

*During the 2017-2021 period, Sida is supporting CARTA with a total of 71.1 million SEK (US\$ 8.8million). In addition, Sida contributed 5.9 million SEK (US\$ 734,550) to APHRC's demographic surveillance site in 2017. Sida funds these activities because it is convinced that CARTA and APHRC have identified areas for research and research capacity strengthening that are of great importance for improving human health and wellbeing, and for achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.*

*I foresee that one of CARTA's immediate challenges is to secure full funding for Cohorts 9 and 10 of the PhD training program. To achieve this, CARTA and its existing partners must convince other funders to join in supporting CARTA's work, and/or convince African countries and universities to contribute.*

## Q&A with Northern Partner Prof. Nino Künzli, the Deputy Director Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (SwissTPH) and Head of Department of Education and Training (ET)



### What are some of the upcoming activities that the Northern Partners will be working on with CARTA in 2018?

The Northern Partners are coordinating an in-person meeting with CARTA leaders in Basel, Switzerland, in June 2018, to discuss strategies to foster collaboration between the CARTA

community and its partners that takes into consideration both the growth potential of CARTA and the evolving academic environments globally.

The Basel meeting will be critical as we map a path forward to the future for the fruitful collaboration between northern institutions and CARTA partners. As the chair of the Northern Partners, the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (Swiss TPH) and I welcome this CARTA workshop with great excitement. Swiss TPH has long-standing collaborations with many African institutions. Tanzania's Ifakara Health Institute (IHI) for example just celebrated 60 years of partnership with our institute. With the University of Basel, Swiss TPH is a lead partner for the Swiss-African Cooperation (SARECO), launched by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) within the framework of its international strategy.

### Where are the new opportunities to engage with CARTA going forward?

With the steady increase of CARTA student cohorts finishing their PhD studies, I am looking forward to in-depth discussions about the possible role Northern Partners can play in supporting the post-doctoral generation. It is a global phenomenon in academia that post-docs get far less career guidance than PhD students, so this demonstrates where CARTA can provide leadership that could be a global model in strengthening not just PhD education, but also the post-doctoral track for future research leaders.

Internationally competitive career paths are still characterized by a post-doctoral experience at another academic institution. CARTA could leverage the mobility of young researchers, among the cluster of CARTA partners as well as additional African universities -- but also with Northern Partners. The post-doctoral period could follow the so-called "sandwich period", whereby scientists work on research relevant to their home country while spending part of their post-doctoral years at a foreign institution. Not only will this allow young researchers to broaden their scientific experience and knowledge, but will provide them numerous opportunities to extend their own international networks of collaborators. Our workshop in Basel will certainly discuss how Northern Partners could contribute in this domain.

# JULY - DECEMBER 2017 PUBLICATIONS

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# Calendar of Activities: January - December 2018

Activity	Date	Venue
AESA Risk Management Workshop	February 26–27, 2018	Nairobi, Kenya
JAS 1 Cohort 8 & JAS 4 Cohort 5	March 5–28, 2018	Makerere University, Uganda
17th CARTA Board of Management Meeting	March 20, 2018	Makerere University, Uganda
CARTA/IUCEA Postgraduate Workshop	April 23–25, 2018	Kigali, Rwanda
Regional REDCap Training	May 7–11, 2018	Nairobi, Kenya
Northern Partners' Meeting	June 11–12, 2018	Basel, Switzerland
DELTA Annual Meeting	July 9–11, 2018	Johannesburg, South Africa
Faculty and Administrators' Workshop (FAS)	July 16–18, 2018	University of Malawi, Malawi
JAS 3 Cohort 6	July 30–August 24, 2018	University of Ibadan, Nigeria
9th CARTA Partners' Annual Forum	September 17–18, 2018	Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria
18th CARTA Board of Management and Funders' Meeting	September 19, 2018	Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria
CARTA Graduate Workshop	October 1–6, 2018	Nairobi, Kenya.
JAS 2 Cohort 8	November 5–28, 2018	University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa
Supervisors' Training	November 26–29, 2018	University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa



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Emmanuel Otukpa | Eunice Kilonzo | Evelyn Gitau | Justus Musasiah  
Lauren Gelfand | Mercy Ndwiga | Peter Ngure

## Contact us:

### Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa

African Population & Health Research Center  
APHRC Campus, 2nd Floor, Kirawa Road, off Peponi Road  
P.O. BOX 10787-00100, Nairobi, Kenya

Telephone: +254 (20) 400 1000, 266 2244, or 266 2255 | Mobile: +254 722 205 933, 733 410 102

E-mail: [carta@aphrc.org](mailto:carta@aphrc.org) | Website: [www.cartafrica.org](http://www.cartafrica.org)

