

CARTANews

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Second Cohort Hails Program's Success


After four years of hard work, 19 fellows finally completed their journey in the CARTA program. The journey that began in 2012 officially came to an end and was celebrated in style by the fellows, facilitators, and CARTA consortium partners. The Cohort 2 CARTA fellows expressed their appreciation of the program's contribution to their career development.

During a Town Hall meeting with the CARTA Director, Dr. Alex Ezeh and other CARTA program staff, the fellows expressed their gratitude to the program and the people behind this great idea. This meeting marked the end of the Joint Advanced Seminars for the cohort 2 fellows who were in Nairobi for the JAS 4.

To most of the fellows, the CARTA program has put them on the right track academically. They have had an opportunity to interact and be mentored by a number of academics drawn from across Africa and the Global North. The fellows have had, compared to other PhD students anywhere in Africa and even the world, an opportunity to spend more uninterrupted time with a number of facilitators via the JAS training model that is fully residential. Unlike many other PhD students in other universities in Africa, CARTA fellows unanimously agreed that they have been nurtured on critical areas needed to become research leaders in any areas of population and public health.

'Publish or perish' a common refrain in the research world is an issue of the past for CARTA fellows as each of them has published during their journey in CARTA. Some of the fellows never had an idea of how to go about publishing but CARTA



 Cohort 2 fellows with CARTA leadership at the end of JAS 4 in March 2015, Nairobi, Kenya.

has made this happen just within the four years of interaction. The fellows said that through CARTA they have published in peer reviewed journals and with other scholars as either lead authors or co-authors.

Researchers also need to be able to attract grants in order to continue with their work. For this cohort of CARTA fellows, they testified that the proposal writing training they underwent through CARTA has made a great impact in their lives. Most of them are now able to write winning proposals and have attracted grant from various donors either as Principal Investigators (PIs) or co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs). To the fellows, CARTA program is uniquely structured and has the interest of the African continent at heart.



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Mwamtobe Peter Mpasho, University of Witwatersrand: "I am the first in my family to get a PhD and I would not have done so if it was not for the CARTA fellowship".

Wells Utembe, University of Witwatersrand: "I have moved from writing one conference paper to nine! That's a huge improvement! I no longer hide my CV. And I owe it all to CARTA."



Fagbamigbe Adeniyi Francis, University of Ibadan: "I was selected for a post-doc position without an interview. This is due to my good profile which I have developed through the CARTA fellowship program".



Nyondo Alinane Linda, University of Malawi: "CARTA should not underestimate its contribution to research policy in Africa and its ability to develop research leaders for Africa".



Longwe Herbert Hudson Thulasoni, University of Malawi: "Being a CARTA fellow can open many opportunities. In a recent interview for my current job, I was asked to define what CARTA is and I got the job".

Oluwatoba Olufunke Abiodun, University of Ibadan: "We are the output and outcome of your proposal. CARTA has given us an opportunity to know each other, network and even do joint research".



Being Single Puts you at Higher Risk of Brucellosis

A study conducted by a CARTA fellow at Makerere University in Uganda has revealed that human brucellosis is a significant public health problem among pastoralists, yet it has been neglected by researchers. The risk of being infected by this disease is aggravated by consumption of unpasteurized milk products. Brucellosis popularly known as the milk disease is a bacterial disease caused by *Brucella abortus*. The disease leads to spontaneous abortion in infected cattle and is transmissible to humans. In humans, the symptoms of the disease are strikingly similar to those of malaria with fever, headache, malaise, and vomiting.

Aware that brucellosis remains a neglected zoonotic disease in Uganda, Gabriel Tumwine, a Cohort 2 CARTA Fellow, led a cross-sectional study to determine the sero-prevalence and risk factors associated with human brucellosis in communities where livestock rearing is a common practice. The country-wide study revealed that individuals that are in agro-pastoral communities and consume milk and milk products are at higher risk.

According to the study results, in Uganda, human *Brucella* sero-prevalence was at 17.0% and is higher among males at 20.5%. Sex, age, occupation, religion, education levels, knowledge of the disease, keeping animals at home, processing local milk products, slaughter of animals, handling of *abortus*, assisting animals giving birth, drinking of animal's urine and sharing water points with animals were not significantly associated with brucellosis.

Being single puts you at a higher risk of getting this disease. This is because, according to the study, of the lifestyle that single people adopt. Single people tend to eat food that is easy to

prepare. Milk and milk products that have been locally processed are readily available and need little time to prepare and hence an option for many single people. Moreover, single people, in many communities are often charged with the responsibility of looking after animals in livestock keeping areas and most cases end up consuming unpasteurized milk products. These put single people at a higher risk of acquiring *Brucella abortus*.

According to this study, there is a need to initiate screening and early treatment of infected humans and a much higher need of awareness creation amongst the public about brucellosis.



Gabriel Tumwine, a Cohort 2 CARTA fellow, presents findings from his study on Human Brucellosis at CARTA's regional conference held in Safari Park, Nairobi, Kenya.

CARTA Board of Management Elects New Chair



Seated from left: Peter Ngure (Program Manager, CARTA and BOM Secretary), David Owiny (Representing Makerere University BoM Member), Alex Ezeh (CARTA Co-Director, BoM Member), Anne Nangulu (Moi University, BoM Chair), Maria-Teresa Bejarano (Sida, Funder Representative), Kamija Phiri (University of Malawi, BoM Member), Ian Christoplos (Sida, Independent Evaluator).
Standing from left: Evelyn Kemunto (CARTA Program Accountant), Justus Musasiah (CARTA Program Administrative Officer), Mercy Ndwiga (CARTA Program Assistant), Goran Bondjers (Northern Partner Representative, BoM Member), Chimaraoke Izugbara (APHRC, Director of Research Capacity Strengthening, BoM Member) and Thomas Yebey (APHRC, CARTA Program Monitoring and Evaluation Officer).

In March, the CARTA Board of Management held its 11th meeting in Nairobi, Kenya. The members elected Prof. Anne Nangulu as the new board chair. Prof. Nangulu took over from Prof. Akinyinka Omigbodun of the University of Ibadan who rotated out after completing his term. Prof. Nangulu has worked as a lecturer, mentor, and researcher since 1989. Currently, she is the Deputy Commission Secretary at the Commission for University Education (CUE) in Kenya. At the Commission she is in charge of Quality Standards and Audit.

Prof. Nangulu, an accomplished historian earned her PhD in Economic History from the West Virginia University, USA. She also has longstanding experience in graduate and undergraduate teaching, curriculum development, and supervision. She is widely published in her field. She represents Moi University, Kenya on the CARTA Board of Management.

In her acceptance speech, Prof. Nangulu said, "I will do my best in my duties and responsibilities as the chair of the CARTA board. Together we will work to see CARTA achieve its dream of developing research leaders in population and health for Africa."

Wide Breadth of Research Displayed at the 2nd CARTA Fellows' Conference

A wide breadth of research was displayed during the 2015 CARTA fellows' conference held in Nairobi, Kenya alongside two Joint Advanced Seminars (JASes) for CARTA fellows. CARTA organizes a conference during the last JAS for every cohort of fellows to offer them an opportunity to present on their research to a wide audience that is drawn from various institutions and various scholars.

The depth of research presented is a confirmation of CARTA's aims to foster vibrant and viable multidisciplinary research hubs at African universities

The fellows' conference helps fulfil the vision of CARTA of building a vibrant African academy that is able to lead world class multidisciplinary research that makes a positive impact on public and population health. They are held annually during the JAS 4, the final JAS for CARTA fellows.

The presentations at this year's conference were a clear display of quality work being done by the students and an indication of growth towards becoming research

leaders in Africa. They tackled a number of topics on health ranging from non-communicable to infectious diseases; HIV, family planning, food security, malaria, health of the aging, environmental health related issues and knowledge, attitudes and practices in health.

“The wide variety of issues being addressed by the fellows through their presentations is a true reflection of the depth and breadth of the programme,” said Chima Izugbara, Director of Research and Capacity Strengthening Division at APHRC.

Did you know that brucellosis is a significant and neglected public health problem among human population living in livestock keeping and the risk is being aggravated by consumption of unpasteurized milk products? And that investment in the education of the slum households may, in the long term, contribute to reduction in the prevalence of food insecurity? These are some of the findings from papers presented at the conference.

The depth of research presented is a confirmation of CARTA's aims to foster vibrant and viable multidisciplinary research hubs at African universities and creating locally-trained internationally- recognized researchers on areas of health and population in Africa. Participants drawn from CARTA partner institutions and Jomo Kenyatta University of Technology, University of Nairobi, Moi University, Kenyatta University, United States International University and Daystar University are some of the institutions from which a section of the conference participants were drawn.

“The conference was very informative. I loved so much the medical related presentations. They were well researched and used current data and information. I would not mind being part of such a conference anytime it is held,” remarked Judith Otele Karimi an epidemiologist from Daystar University and Quality Assurance and Benefits officer at the National Hospital and Insurance Fund in Kenya.

CARTA Program: Setting Standards in Research and Training

By Paul Ruto

This year's CARTA fellows' conference was perfect timing for me. The diverse participants at this conference brought in rich knowledge and experience. The participants had high expectations - but I had no doubts since the CARTA program upholds high standards. The organization of the conference was professionally done from the setup of the room, choice of presenters and facilitators, strict time keeping, conference evaluation forms and the materials given to all participants.

The highlights was presentations from the PhD fellows who depicted high quality research. From health issues, communicable and non-communicable diseases, to sexual behaviors across different countries, it was evident that time and resources was invested in each research. Moreover, the PhD trainees' good presentations was a reflection of the high quality of research they had undertaken. I only wished we had more time to delve deeper into their findings.

Presentation after presentation, I developed the urge to hear even more. If time was extended a little bit, I am sure that presenters and participants would have more time for detailed presentation, questions and interaction especially on emerging interesting topics such as football, risky sexual behaviors, food security, brucellosis, cotrimoxazole and the mathematical model. I believe many in the academics field can benefit from such conferences. There was so much to learn, including PhD training and supervision, research methodology, presentations and much more. For published/ accessed papers, it will add value for participants to access these even prior to the presentations as this would even stimulate more academic discussions.

That said and done, the CARTA fellows were very warm, welcoming, humorous, displayed diverse culture, and were able to articulate their findings. CARTA fellows proved that quality research can be used to solve societal problems! Regardless of the country, background or discipline, quality is key and CARTA is setting the standards in PhD training in Africa.



Paul Ruto is an Associate Researcher at United States International University.

From health issues, communicable and non-communicable diseases, to sexual behaviors across different countries, it was evident that time and resources was invested in each research

Meet the New CARTA Staff



Peter Ngure joined the Secretariat on 5th January 2015. He is responsible primarily for overseeing the CARTA Program. Prof. Ngure holds a PhD in Parasitology and Entomology. He formerly worked as an Associate Professor and Dean, School of Science, Engineering and Health at Daystar University, Kenya. You can reach him at pngure@aphrc.org or pngure@cartafrica.org and on twitter [@Profngure](https://twitter.com/Profngure)



Emma Bergstedt is the new Northern Partners Coordinator in CARTA. She works as International Coordinator at The Sahlgrenska Academy, which is the faculty of health sciences at University of Gothenburg, Sweden and is seconded part time to APHRC to work in the CARTA Team (from Gothenburg). She has also studied and worked in Belgium, The Netherlands and United States, mainly with EU and UN. You can reach her on emma.bergstedt@sahlgrenska.gu.se



Daniel Adero joined the CARTA Program on 2nd February 2015 as Communications Officer. He joins from the Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) where he worked as Web, Media and Digital Specialist since October 2012. He holds a bachelor's degree in Communications and Media and is currently pursuing a master's degree in development communication. You can reach him on dadero@aphrc.org or dadero@cartafrica.org and on twitter [@aderodaniel](https://twitter.com/aderodaniel)



Justus Musasiah is the Program Administration Officer for CARTA. He worked as a Training Officer under the Research Capacity Strengthening Division of APHRC. Before joining APHRC in March 2014, Justus worked as a senior training officer in the Training and Development Department at the Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Kenya (ICPAK). Justus is currently pursuing a master's degree in business administration. You can reach him on jmusasiah@aphrc.org or jmusasiah@cartafrica.org and on Justus Musasiah: [@Musasiah_](https://twitter.com/Musasiah_)



Mercy Ndwiga is the new Program Administrative Assistant. She has been working at APHRC as Program Administrative Assistant since 2010 and joined the CARTA secretariat on 8th January 2015. Mercy is currently pursuing a master's degree in sociology. You can reach Mercy at mndwiga@aphrc.org or mndwiga@cartafrica.org

My PhD study and the CARTA experience – By Stephen Ojiambo Wandera

I remember in 2012, I had interrupted nights answering questions for the preliminary screening for CARTA fellowship. I would wake up in the middle of the night to continue from where I had left then go back to sleep. This was a hectic time for me but I needed to do a PhD. Finally, I answered all questions and submitted. Few months later, I received an email from the CARTA secretariat awarding me a CARTA fellowship.

In the award letter, the aspect of Joint Advanced Seminars (JAS) moved me. I looked forward to attending them. What I needed was state of the art training in scientific writing. This was critical for my future success and career as a researcher. I had learnt to aim high from my childhood. This time round, my mission was to be an academic, “a young African professor by age 40”. To say the least, JAS made a huge impact in my career.

My journey through the CARTA JASes

JAS 1 in Nairobi Kenya helped me to reshape and refine my research idea. Initially, I wanted to investigate how “intergenerational support is associated with access to healthcare among older people”. I realized that it was a narrow aspect. I broadened it to focus on “Healthcare access inequalities among older people in Uganda”. The ESEO team gave immense support and hands on experience in building a strong theoretical foundation for this work.

JAS 2 at the School of Public Health, University of the Witwatersrand (2012), was another building block. During this time, I concretized data analysis skills using NVIVO. I am using NVIVO to analyze qualitative data. This is a useful skill for a lifetime. I have started transferring these skills and competencies to graduate students at Makerere University.

JAS 3 at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria (2013) was an incredible landmark. I had an opportunity to interface with advanced and senior statisticians: Jonathan Levin and Max Petzold; and to write and present two journal articles from my PhD research. The input and comments from CARTA Cohort 2 members was a great addition. The inspiration and feedback from the facilitators (Prof. Uche, Dr. Funke and Dr.



Stephen Ojiambo Wandera is a Cohort 2 CARTA fellow pursuing his doctoral studies at Makerere University in Uganda.

As a way of giving back to the community, I intend to do a transfer project by setting up an NGO to support older people's health needs in Uganda.

Izugbara) were very helpful. I managed to submit these two papers during and after JAS 3. I acknowledge the support from Prof. Donald Cole and Prof. Max Petzold for their support to reviewing my manuscripts.

JAS 4 held at Safari Park Hotel in Nairobi Kenya was incredible. We got inspiration from a number of facilitators. I will never forget Prof. Nangulu's story of a persistent mentor and academic, who

has risen through the ranks to become professor at age 46. This was very important to me because it shows that goals, however difficult they are achievable. Everything is possible to them that believe and say it out. You remain challenged to stay focused knowing that you have a great cloud of witnesses to your confessions and aspirations.

Bringing Cohorts 2 and 5 in the same venue for their JAS 4 and JAS 1 respectively is a brilliant idea. It gave me an opportunity to look back and reflect on where we have come from in the CARTA program.

Where do I go from here?

CARTA has really made my future brighter. I look forward to becoming a professor by age 40. It sounds over-ambitious but I have learnt over time that to achieve more in life, you have to set a very high target and aspiration for yourself. I intend to engage in research and publishing on the issues affecting the African continent including population ageing, inequalities in health and access to healthcare, and gender-based violence. I have to build capacity to apply for and win research grants while at Makerere University (JAS 4 is an answer to this need). In addition, I will build the capacity of other researchers through the Health Access Research Consult, registered in 2012. As a way of giving back to the community, I intend to do a transfer project by setting up an NGO to support older people's health needs in Uganda.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge CARTA funders for supporting us as a Cohort. In particular, I am grateful to the Wellcome Trust (UK), the Department for International Development (DfID), and Carnegie Corporation of New York, Ford Foundation, Google.Org, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), and MacArthur Foundation. In addition, I appreciate the contribution of German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) for additional funding, Population Association of America (PAA, 2014) for the travel award to Boston, where I presented a paper on disability. The CARTA facilitators & secretariat and cohort 2 fellows have been a great resource to me. To my supervisors, who have included: Professor James Ntozi, Dr. Betty Kwagala, Dr. Isabella Aboderin, thank you for your mentorship and supervision. All things are possible for them that believe and work towards them.

CARTA in the month of March 2015

By Taiwo A. Obembe

The journey to Nairobi, Kenya for JAS-1 on the March 1, 2015 was certainly a trip filled with many expectations. Waking up in the early hours with mixed feelings of anxiety, confusion and most importantly, hope; this would be my first journey to East Africa. The desire to start a doctoral program started for me over 3 years ago when I was employed as a 'lecturer' in the Department of Health Policy and Management, at the University of Ibadan. Even though it was a requirement for employment, it was also a personal desire that was finally a reality.

I became aware of the CARTA fellowship in February 2013 through Dr. Babatunde Adedokun (Cohort-1 CARTA Fellow) and Dr. Adebimpe Obembe (ADDRF fellow) who strongly encouraged me to apply for the fellowship. Even though my initial application that same year was unsuccessful which was very discouraging, I was able to re-apply a second time in 2014 with encouragement from Dr. Oluwaseun O. Akinyemi (Cohort-4 CARTA Fellow) who kept re-emphasizing that re-applying for CARTA fellowship repeatedly without giving up the fight was worth every bit of it.



↑ Taiwo A. Obembe is a Cohort 5 CARTA fellow pursuing his PhD at the Department of Health Policy and Management, University of Ibadan.

On arriving in Nairobi, and after spending close to 3 weeks in the city, I realize the words of Dr. Akinyemi are all very true. The highly professional APHRC staff received us in the most organized manner checking us into Safari Park Hotel in the heart of Nairobi with the help of the most amiable hotel staff. The training kicked off immediately with exposure to renowned professors and researchers of very high repute from Africa, Canada and Europe who started fine-tuning our research proposals with keen interest.

The quick progress with re-aligning our proposals, the exposure to willing professors, visits to APHRC office and to Korogocho site, presentation of fellows with laptops loaded with necessary software, have all been very humbling experiences and most definitely a month to remember. A month I describe and will always remember as "CARTAcious"; a month that has justified every bit of work invested into application and a significant beginning to the reality of being a PhD holder in months to come.

Merits of a Regional Approach to Doctoral Training in Africa

By Prof. Peter Ngure, Program Manager, CARTA

African nations continue to grapple with the acute shortage of PhDs. For example, South Africa produces 1300 PhDs every year and yet the nation needs a minimum of 6,000. On the other hand, Kenya produces less than 300 PhDs and yet the demonstrated need is 1000. The quality of the doctoral programmes in most countries in Africa is low with students struggling to fund their research with meagre resources.

The quality of supervision and mentorship has dwindled over time with the few supervisors being stretched to the limits. Many doctoral students wait for more than a year to get a supervisor and in many instances the supervisor they get is not an expert with the subject matter. Some supervisors are no longer active in research, and they offer little in shaping the student's research protocol. The supervisor ends up correcting grammatical errors and ensuring that the student adheres to the recommended thesis structure.

Timely completion of a PhD is more of a luxury than a necessity, with most of the students taking between five to eight years to earn their doctorate. Some give up and move on to other endeavors. Doctoral studies are quite demanding and statistics indicate that the on-time-completion rate in USA is 57% while in UK the Higher Education Council indicates that 81% of PhD students earn their degrees within the maximum agreed time limit of 25 years. After 25 years we give up on your probability of ever getting a PhD.

The question that arises is, "How do we accelerate the completion rate of PhDs that we produce in Africa?" One of the tested solutions to this is a regional approach to PhD training. The Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa (CARTA) has developed a model that can be adopted for training PhDs in Africa and beyond. Nine leading universities came together to form



↑ Prof. Peter Ngure, CARTA Program Manager.

a consortium that focuses on population and health research. University faculty are selected through a competitive process that includes taking examinations in critical thinking, quantitative techniques and writing. They undergo four residential trainings in developing a research protocol, data collection and analysis using NVivo and STATA, leadership, translating research outputs to policy and career growth after PhD.

The regional approach comes with several benefits including: creating a critical mass of PhD holders who are networked and carry out inter-country studies, economies of scale since facilitators drawn from member universities and overseas train the students in one location. The students spend time together and exchange ideas. They have a better appreciation of the issues affecting our continent. Studying as cohort creates a forum where there is pressure for the student to make steady progress in their doctoral journey. The regional programme provides opportunities for the students to undertake research in partner universities and research institutes. A multidisciplinary approach adopted in the training broadens their perspectives. Infusion of training in leadership, work-life balance, leading teams, translating research outputs to policy briefs, curriculum development and pedagogy

prepares the students for a career in teaching research and community service.

This collaborative approach to doctoral training involves northern and southern partners in co-supervising students and mentoring them to become the next generation of research leaders. The model has been tested by CARTA for four cohorts of transdisciplinary group of population and health research doctoral students drawn from South Africa, Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, Rwanda, Nigeria, and Tanzania. The 115 CARTA fellows spread across five cohorts have published 186 papers in peer-reviewed journals and attracted over \$800,000 in research grants. Most students are on course and are expected to complete their PhDs within five years. Their supervisors are trained on student mentorship while key university support staff including librarians, information technology and administrators are trained on how to effectively support the students.

There is need to explore the establishment of similar regional consortia that can address the challenges that universities face in training PhDs in Africa. African governments can join hands in funding such consortia and supporting them to achieve the critical mass of experts required to stimulate socio-economic growth and development.

Digitizing Higher Education in Africa

Prof. James R. Carey, Distinguished Professor of Entomology at the University of California, Davis

One of the most important developments in higher education over the last decade is the revolution in instruction and scholarly outreach made possible by exciting new innovations in digital technology. Never before have the number and kinds of possibilities for educational content delivery been so great, the individual learning potential so extensive, the disciplinary scope so wide-ranging, the access to courses so far reaching, and the prospects for academic synergy so boundless. The implications of this revolution extend far beyond classrooms and lecture halls, and include strategic aspects of course development, curriculum strategies, program creation, and degree conferral.

CARTA Well Positioned

Although CARTA is in the preliminary stages of academic digitization, the fact that the majority of universities worldwide are still in the early transformative stages means that CARTA is not that far behind the rest of the academic world. CARTA's track record of success and the quality of the PhD cohorts from the top universities in Africa suggests that the consortium is well positioned for taking a leadership role in digitizing higher education on the continent. This would initially involve narrowing the digital divide between universities in Africa and those in most developed countries, and later in contributing both scholarly content and informed dialog in this global revolution.

Relevant Trends

I believe that the following trends in university digitization are of particular relevance to the future of higher education in Africa in general and to CARTA in particular.

(1) Expanding digital literacy. This extends the traditional view of literacy as the ability

to read and write to encompass the ability to appropriately use technology tools to produce teaching materials, solve instructional problems, and transform existing pedagogies. In as much as teaching with technology is inherently different from learning with it, supporting digital literacy in Africa will require strategies that address digital fluency training in faculty along with the students they teach;

(2) Personalizing learning. The increasing focus on customizing and adjusting instruction to meet students' unique needs is driving development of new technologies that provide more learner choice and allow for differentiated instruction. This individualized learning concept is particularly important for teaching classes consisting of students from a wide range of academic and cultural backgrounds. This is the case for students enrolled in virtually all universities but particularly for students in the majority of African universities;

(3) Collaborating cross-institutionally. The global environment is allowing universities such as those in CARTA to unite across international borders and work toward common goals concerning technology and research. Digitizing CARTA will help to foster greater academic integration, scholarly complementarity and scientific synergy across the group;

(4) Accessing Open Educational Resources (OER). These resources (OER) represents a broad variety of digital content that is available for free in the public domain including full courses, course materials, textbooks, videos, tests, and software. Open textbooks are seen as a viable means for cutting excess costs with the goal of making education more affordable for students across the globe;

(5) Learning by mobile device. In light of the explosion of mobile (e.g. smartphone;

The increasing focus on customizing and adjusting instruction to meet students' unique needs is driving development of new technologies that provide more learner choice and allow for differentiated instruction.

tablets) devise use in Africa in the past decade, it follows that any strategy for digitizing higher education in Africa needs to incorporate the use of these digital tools for “anytime/anywhere” learning on small screens. Mobile computing devices and the use of social media can create opportunities for interaction, provide opportunities for collaboration and allow students to engage in content creation and communication using social media and web tools.

Road mapping

Although any roadmap designed to move CARTA and other African universities into the digital world of higher education will need to be based on a range of technological and pedagogical strategies, I believe that the following two considerations are especially important. The first involves my past experience and the experience of many others I know. The use by faculty and students of digital technology in instruction and research needs to be incentivized and rewarded, training must be mandated, and accountability built in. Simply making digital hardware and software available is a recipe for non-use since it is always easier for instructors to revert to their old methods (e.g. long-form lectures using PowerPoint or blackboard). Although a strategy involving a competitive small-grants program is one approach that has proven effective at my university in motivating and incentivizing faculty to learn and use digital technology, there are likely other approaches that could be explored. The second consideration involves looking to the digital future in Africa.

By the year 2020 internet access in Africa has the potential to be ubiquitous and cell phones even less expensive and more powerful than many low-cost phones that are currently available. Indeed, universal internet access is the hoped for outcome of

Google- and Facebook-financed projects designed to provide internet access to unconnected locations around the world (e.g. including all regions of Africa) using solar-powered balloons (Project Loon) and drones (Project Titan). Cheap cell phones from India (though manufactured in China) are already available for around \$30 USD.

By 2020 low-end phones will be even less expensive and even more powerful. The importance of these future developments in the current context is that the infrastructure for digitizing higher education in Africa will likely not be a limiting factor in the near future. Thus in principle and hopefully in reality, educational content can be made available to anyone with a cell phone at any location on the continent. Strategies for content development and delivery can thus be framed primarily around mobile learning concepts.

Personal Perspective

Having taught three classes at CARTA (Nairobi; Kampala) and two at APHRC over the past two years on digital and video techniques, I have been struck with how open the students and other participants were to learning to use these tools, how empowered they felt after having acquired this new digital skill set, and how quickly they all learned the basics and at the same time recognized and appreciated the broader strategic uses. These observations are exactly the same as those I have made of participants in similar workshops I have offered at my own university as well as at universities in other U.S. states and in Europe. Clearly academics in Africa are as keen to move forward in this new digital age as any of the scholars worldwide. I can think of no better time than now for CARTA to lead African academics forward in the digital world of higher education.

An open letter to **CARTA**

Delivered by Yolanda Kolisa from the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa, during the official opening of JAS 1, March 2, 2015 on behalf of Cohort 5 CARTA Fellows

Greetings,

My name is Yolanda Kolisa from University of Witwatersrand, South Africa. I'm incredibly honoured to be speaking on behalf of Cohort 5 fellows.

Most of us Cohort 5 fellows met during the JAS 1 held in Nairobi, in March 2105, some of us got to chat via email, skype etc. but I believe there's one thing that is common amongst all of us.

We feel privileged and honoured to be fellowship recipients. We appreciate the opportunity afforded to us by CARTA. We particularly appreciate the following:

Firstly, we cannot express the extent of our happiness to be associated with the lucrative CARTA program!

Secondly, we're grateful of the fact that as we conceptualise our proposals, we will have the benefit of support. It is not always given or obvious that when one decides to pursue a PhD degree they will get the kind of support that we will be getting by virtue of being CARTA fellows.

Thirdly, the CARTA fellowship, going by the kind of contracts we have signed presents a unique kind of learning model through

the Joint Advanced Seminars (JAS). Having attended our first JAS in Nairobi, we can attest to the fact that CARTA model is truly unique, providing unique learning environment from a diverse pool of facilitators.

Fourth, we will all not just have support, but we'll have benefit of support from a collective of the best brains from 9 leading institutions in Africa. We cannot afford to take this lightly because we think it is not anyone who will be working on their proposal with such wealth of knowledge behind them.

Last but not least, we are thrilled by the very nature of the south-south partnership that CARTA has. We are confident this will provide us with a perspective beyond our individual countries. It will provide us with a perspective of Africa as we think of African problems, for the African population and come up with African solutions.

All of us are eager, ready and we'll make necessary sacrifices that match the value of the CARTA fellowship.

We are confident that we will have a good foundation paving a clear and realistic path until 2018 when we finish the JAS journey and possibly graduate from the CARTA program.

Words cannot fully express our gratitude; we're humbled and eternally thankful.

Publications by CARTA Fellows

July – December 2014

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CARTA JAS 1 and JAS 4 2015

Joint Advanced Seminars (JAS), are key to the CARTA training program of fellows and are uniquely designed to enhance their skills and knowledge; guide and propel them through the research process; and provide a foundation for building networks of researchers, peers, and mentors. From March 2-25, 2015 cohort 2 and cohort 5 CARTA fellows were in Nairobi for their JAS 4 and JAS 1 respectively.



⤴ Cohort 5 CARTA fellows pose for a photo with a family in Korogocho slums. This was during their field visit to APHRC's field office and some of the households under the DSS study.



⤴ Cohort 2 and Cohort 5 CARTA fellows pose for a photo with facilitators and CARTA staff after the opening of JAS 4 and JAS 1 at Safari Park Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya.



⤴ Prof. Göran Bondjers, CARTA Northern Partners' representative hands a certificate of completion to Evaline Mcharo, Cohort 2 fellow.



⤴ Cohort 2 fellows in a group work session.



⤴ Prof. Peter Ngure, CARTA Program Manager takes cohort 5 fellows around the APHRC campus during their visit planned within JAS 1.



Prof. Bondjers (far left) and Dr. Ezeh (2nd left) with CARTA fellows cutting the cake to mark the closure of JAS 1 and JAS 4 held in Safari Park, Nairobi Kenya.

Upcoming Events

- Sixth Faculty and Administrator's Workshop, July 27 - July 29, 2015, University of Nairobi, Kenya
- JAS 3 for Cohort 3 CARTA Fellows, August 3 - August 28, 2015, University of Ibadan, Nigeria
- Sixth CARTA Partners' Forum, November, 2015, University of Witwatersrand, South Africa
- Twelfth CARTA Board of Management, November, 2015, University of Witwatersrand, South Africa
- CARTA Graduate Workshop, September 28 - October 2, 2015, APHRC Campus, Kenya
- JAS 2 for Cohort 5 CARTA fellows, November 2015, University of Witwatersrand, South Africa
- Supervisors' Workshop, November 2015, University of Witwatersrand, South Africa



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