

# CARTA News

The newsletter of the Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa

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## CARTA fellow wins prestigious NIH grant



Flavia Kiweewa Matovu, a Cohort 4 CARTA fellow

**F**lavia Kiweewa Matovu, a Cohort 4 CARTA fellow at Uganda's Makerere University, has won a grant from the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) worth \$625,000. The grant targets International Research in Infectious Diseases, including AIDS (R01). An R01 is one of the most competitive sources of NIH funding, which includes direct support to independent investigators who wish to establish their research careers. Getting an R01 grant is an enormous step in any scientist's professional development.

"I am humbled. I feel greatly honored and challenged by this award" said Flavia. "This is a result of what I have actually learned from the CARTA fellowship. Through CARTA I have learned to be the best I can and the grant will give me an opportunity to carve my niche as a research leader."

Flavia was awarded this grant as the Principal Investigator (PI) and will lead the study on *"The impact of the hormonal contraception Depo-Provera and the anti-retroviral drug Tenofovir on bone density/bone health in young women in Uganda."* "I am pleased with the progress made so far with our fellows in their quest to become research leaders," said Dr. Alex Ezech, CARTA director. "Our fellows are high achievers in whatever they do. They are already attracting grant money and with many of them completing their doctoral studies, this trend is likely to continue."

This research is the first study globally to evaluate combined effect of the hormonal contraception and the anti-retroviral therapy on bone health among young women. Its findings could inform clinical practice guidelines on antiretroviral therapy and hormonal contraceptive use among women in resource-limited settings. Kiweewa's grant runs for five years through May 2020. For Kiweewa, winning the prestigious grant has come with several other opportunities.

She has been invited to be part of the 2016 inter-CFAR Women and HIV Research Symposium planning committee, to be hosted by the University of Alabama at Birmingham in October 2016. She has also been invited to contribute to an upcoming issue in a high-impact journal, *Current Opinion in HIV and AIDS*, which publishes invited articles only. She plans to publish a review paper on bone health and HIV in resource-limited settings.



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# CARTA awards first post-doctoral fellowships

**C**ARTA has awarded its first post-doctoral fellowships to four graduates of the PhD program. The awardees were competitively selected through a rigorous process that culminated by an announcement in August. This new initiative in the CARTA program is geared towards supporting outstanding emerging scholars who wish to continue their research or develop new research programs and collaborations. The fellowship offers awardees the opportunity to cultivate new skills and improve existing ones; expand their networks; and encounter research leaders and role models. Mentorship is a key component of the initiative and each fellow is assigned a mentor who is carefully selected to ensure that they have the necessary skill-set.

Awardees must be CARTA fellows who have completed their PhD fellowships. They must be teaching or research staff at one of the participating African institutions and should be committed to contributing to building research capacity at their institutions.

The selection process puts emphasis on the fellows' previous research and academic achievements; the proposed activities for the postdoctoral fellowship period; and demonstrated evidence of support from the hosting institution.

The awardees are Linda Alinane Nyondo, Sulaimon Adedokun, Banjo Olufunmilayo and Joshua Akinyemi.

## Linda Alinane Nyondo



Linda Alinane Nyondo is a cohort 2 CARTA fellow at the School of Public Health and Family Medicine, College of Medicine, University of Malawi, Blantyre, Malawi. Nyondo will undertake her post-doctoral fellowship at the Malawi Liverpool Wellcome (MLW) Trust Clinical Research Programme. She will be mentored and supervised by Dr. Anja Terlouw.

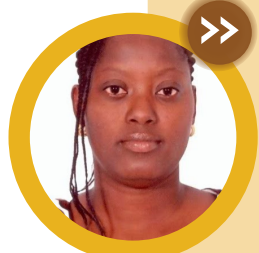
Linda's research project for her PhD work looked at "the feasibility of male involvement in prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV services in Blantyre, Malawi." She has recently published a paper in PLoS ONE journal from her PhD research titled, "Invitation Cards during Pregnancy Enhance Male Partner Involvement in Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) in Blantyre, Malawi: A Randomized Controlled Open Label Trial." Linda's research has been on maternal health and public health. She would like to focus more on health systems research utilizing mixed methods approaches.

## Sulaimon Adedokun

Sulaimon Adedokun is a Cohort 1 CARTA fellow who undertook his PhD studies at the Obafemi Awolowo University in Nigeria. He will be undertaking his post-doctoral fellowship at University of Warwick, Coventry, United Kingdom. Adedokun will be mentored and supervised by Dr. Olalekan A. Uthman, Assistant Professor in Research Systems at the Centre for Applied Health Research and Delivery (CAHRD) at the University of Warwick and Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine. "I wish to express my appreciation to CARTA for the award," said Adedokun. "It is a rare and great opportunity."



## Banjo Olufunmilayo



Banjo Olufunmilayo is a Cohort 3 CARTA fellow who did her PhD at the Obafemi Awolowo University in Nigeria. She will be undertaking her postdoctoral fellowship at the Demography and Population Studies Programme, School of Social Sciences, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. Banjo will be mentored and supervised by Prof. Clifford Odimegwu. "I am sincerely grateful to CARTA for this rare opportunity," said Banjo. "It is a platform to move on in the pursuit of my academic career."

Banjo's research topic for the PhD fellowship is on "Women's status and fertility behaviour among married women in sub-Saharan Africa". She recently published a paper titled, "Decision Making and Contraceptive Use among Women in a Peri-Urban Society in South-Western Nigeria". Her research interests are in sexual and reproductive health among women generally and married women particularly; and adolescents' sexual and reproductive health, particularly those with disabilities. She likes mixed method research with practical policy implications.

## Joshua Akinyemi

Joshua Akinyemi is a cohort 1 CARTA fellow who did his PhD studies at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He will undertake his postdoctoral fellowship at the Demography and Population Studies Programme, School of Social Sciences, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. Akinyemi will be mentored and supervised by Prof. Clifford Odimegwu. Akinyemi's PhD research thesis was on "Levels, Trends and Differentials in Under-five Mortality in Nigeria (1990-2008)".

Akinyemi is an Applied Medical Statistician/Demographer with interests in two areas. The first is demographic estimation and statistical modelling of mortality, maternal and child health outcomes. The second is innovative deployment of statistical methods in design and analysis of biomedical and epidemiological studies involving HIV/AIDS and cardiovascular diseases.



## CARTA fellow presents at "Ignite Talk" during the 2015 Mandela Washington Fellowship Leadership Training



Some of the participants during the Presidential Summit at Washington DC

**J**eanette Akinyi Cheptoo Dawa, a cohort 5 CARTA fellow, is among the 500 fellows from sub-Saharan Africa invited to attend the 2015 Mandela Washington Fellowship Leadership Training (MWFLT). MWFLT is one of the flagship elements of the Young African Leaders Initiative Network (YALI) launched by President Barack Obama.

The fellowship offers applicants a choice of participating in a six-week leadership training in either public management, civic engagement or business entrepreneurship.

"I was privileged to participate in the public management track at Florida International University (FIU) with 24 colleagues from across several African

countries," says Dawa. "The opportunity to make a presentation at the *Ignite Talk* during the Presidential Summit is one of a lifetime."

Dawa's presentation was on the opportunities for collaboration between institutions of higher learning in the field of global health security. It emphasized the need for greater collaboration between nations in preparation for our future global health security challenges.

"We live in an interconnected but more importantly an interdependent world," said Dawa. "The global health security challenges we face remind us of this fact every day. If there is anyone doubting how interconnected the world is, they should be reminded that the recent outbreak of

Ebola in West Africa spread faster to North America than it did to North, South or East Africa."

There are some similarities between the Mandela Washington Fellowship and the CARTA fellowship program. Both programs target young professionals from across Africa; use professional development plans as personalized career guides; and target to ultimately benefit the communities in which the scholars work and live.

"As doctoral candidates we are constantly reminded that learning never ends. The unique learning experiences provided by both the Mandela Washington Fellowship and CARTA fellowship serve to convince me of one thing that learning only gets better with age," said Dawa.



## CARTA directors awarded honorary doctorates



Dr. Alex Ezech at the KCA University graduation ceremony

**D**r. Alex Ezech, director CARTA, received the prestigious award of Doctor of Science (D.Sc.) (*Honoris causa*) by KCA University. This honorary degree is in recognition of his contribution to the society in leadership, research and capacity building.

Dr. Ezech holds an Honours BSc in Sociology from Imo State University in Nigeria, a Master of Science in Sociology from the University of Ibadan, a second Master's degree in Demography from the University of Pennsylvania, and a PhD in Demography from the same university. He was a USAID Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Demographic and Health Survey at Calverton, USA and subsequently a Research Associate in Applied Research and Development.

Due to his belief that Africa has the potential to produce the best scientists and leaders, he returned to Africa and was appointed a Senior Research fellow at the Population Council and helped to establish the APHRC thereafter. He served as the Interim Director of APHRC from 2000 – 2001 and was appointed to the position of Executive Director in 2001, a position that he holds to date.

Under his dynamic leadership, CARTA has grown and developed to become Africa's premier PhD training program in population and health research. CARTA supports 140 PhD students from 9 universities in Africa. In addition he co-leads the African Doctoral Dissertation Research Fellowship (ADDRF) which supports 167 doctoral students across sub-Saharan Africa. He has attracted multi-million research and capacity building grants that have built an army of talented research leaders and change agents.

Dr Alex Ezech's sharp intellect is accompanied by a wonderful, pleasant and humble nature. He is admired by his colleagues and peers globally. Despite his international reputation, he remains an African at heart and has a deep love for Africa and its people.



Prof. Sharon Fonn being conferred the degree  
Photo by Johan Wingborg

**P**rof. Sharon Fonn, co-director CARTA has been awarded an honorary doctorate by the Sahlgrenska Academy, at the University of Gothenburg, which is one of the participating institutions in CARTA. Sahlgrenska Academy awards honorary doctorates to those who have played key roles in the academy's research or education, or who have otherwise promoted progress in one of its focus areas.

Prof. Fonn was awarded this doctorate degree in recognition of her collaboration with Sahlgrenska Academy; her work with CARTA; and the immense contribution of her research to the public healthcare system. It was conferred at a ceremony in Gothenburg on October 16, 2015.

In her speech while receiving the award, Prof. Fonn talked about her work during South Africa's apartheid era; her research on integrating and strengthening health care systems; as well as about being a member of the team that initiated the CARTA program. Below is an excerpt from her speech.

“ It seems inconceivable to me when given such an honor, not to ask why me? So why would the University of Gothenburg honor me in this way? For me, being a doctor is a means to an end and not an end in itself. It is a way of redressing structural disadvantage at the population level. Structural disadvantage is a profound force and engaging in efforts to redress disadvantage and inequality can be one's life's work.

For those of us who make this part of our work, we are enormously privileged to do so. Being able to make a difference is tremendously rewarding and I can recommend it to anyone.

Working to redress structural disadvantage in the health sector has become one of my core values and one that I share with those that I work with at the University of Gothenburg.

We must focus on people, not diseases. The entire health system must be strengthened in order for it to work and be able to respond to future outbreaks of serious diseases such as Ebola.

Sahlgrenska Academy and the University of Gothenburg understands the impact of structural inequality and that doing something to redress structural inequality

is fulfilling and mutually beneficial. This is something I value a lot.

While the academy and university honors me so highly today with this honorary doctorate, I want to in a special way honor you for your commitment and action in promoting a more equal academic world and partnering with us in Africa. Thank you very much for this great honor.



Prof. Fonn's research has been greatly focused on the integration of health systems. She believes in interventions and actions targeting individuals rather than specific diseases, such as HIV because these prioritize the disease alone and have zero benefits to the health system as a whole.

## Brown University joins the CARTA program

**B**rown University has joined the Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa (CARTA) program as a northern partner. The prestigious Ivy League university is now among the network of partner institutions outside the African continent that also includes: Canadian Coalition for Global Health Research; University of Toronto, Canada; Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute, Switzerland; University of Gothenburg, Sweden; University of Warwick, UK; and WHO Special Programme for Training and Research in Tropical Diseases (TDR).

Located in the Providence, Rhode Island, Brown is one of the oldest universities in the world. It was established in 1764. It is the seventh-oldest college in the United States. It is an independent, coeducational Ivy League institution comprising undergraduate and graduate programs. Some of the prestigious schools in Brown include the Alpert Medical School, School of Public Health, School of Engineering, and the School of Professional Studies.

"For Brown University and its Population Studies and Training Center (PSTC), the partnership with CARTA formalizes a longstanding

**It is known for producing high quality graduates who are continuously becoming research leaders in their fields, including APHRC's own Dr. Blessing Mberu, who leads the Urbanization and Wellbeing program.**

relationship in which Brown faculty have worked with CARTA students, faculty, and institutions for a number of years," said Daniel J. Smith, Professor and Chair of Anthropology and a principal faculty partner in the Brown-CARTA collaboration.

It is known for producing high quality graduates who are continuously

becoming research leaders in their fields, including APHRC's own Dr. Blessing Mberu, who leads the Urbanization and Wellbeing program. Dr. Mberu earned both a Master's of Arts and PhD in Sociology at Brown.

"Brown is a university that believes intellectual property is the most powerful thing in the world," said Dr Mberu."

CARTA's overall goal is to establish a vibrant African academy able to lead world-class multidisciplinary research that impacts positively on public and population health and Brown University will be a key partner in this journey. Being a leading research university maintaining a particular commitment to exceptional undergraduate instruction and an accomplished faculty, Brown University brings a rich resource to CARTA.

"Brown is committed to internationally collaborative research and scholarship and the PSTC in particular has a decades-long commitment to help train the next generation of population scientists in Africa. Partnering with CARTA means working with an innovative and outstanding program that intersects with and strengthens Brown University's core mission. We are eager to play an active role," added Prof. Smith.

# Getting to YES: Helping researchers write winning proposals

**W**riting winning proposals is fundamental to becoming a celebrated researcher and an effective research leader. Yet writing an effective proposal is probably one of the most challenging tasks for many researchers. This is why CARTA has introduced a Graduate Workshop for its fellows to equip them with the skills they need to get to YES with a winning proposal.

"After eight years of focusing on advanced research training of the fellows, CARTA is now investing in corollary skill-building and complementary competency development, to make it easier for them to be successful, funded researchers," said Dr. Alex Ezech, CARTA Director. "We value the fact that in addition to actually DOING the research, they need to be able to fund it."

Reviewers often cite any number of reasons that a proposal is declined for funding. These include mechanical problems, such as with poor writing, bad grammar and a failure to clean up typographical mistakes, but also fundamental problems with structure and tone and a lack of clarity as to what the research question is. The graduate workshop is an effort to respond to these concerns and mitigate them, with practical writing sessions and critical reviews.

It is an objective of CARTA that fellows get to write winning proposals. Peer review and close collaboration between fellows, their supervisors, CARTA staff and other faculty members is encouraged as a way of increasing fundability of any proposals written by the fellow.

"The hands-on practical approach of the training was very useful in helping me identify some writing issues that I have never given much attention to," said Adedokun. "The highly-skilled, experienced and forthright facilitators who shared their expertise willingly helped a lot in shaping up my project idea."

To ensure that proposals coming out of the graduate workshops are fundable, reviewers were available for consultation during the workshop and afterwards, via email. Each document is reviewed by at least two different experts in the field of interest. The reviewers include seasoned reviewers of proposals and seasoned researchers in the fields of interests to ensure both research and donor requirements are met.

"The main highlight in this training was the external review and feedback from very experienced researchers



A facilitator at one of the sessions during the Graduate Workshop



Sulaimon Adedokun and Caroline Sambai, both CARTA fellows, during the writing session at the workshop

from a wide range of backgrounds," said Carol Sambai, also a participant. "I learnt a lot from the feedback I got and after incorporating them, I was proud of myself. My proposal was in a different shape and I was impressed. It is good to get feedback from potential funders and even groomed researchers in your field as this for me was a game-changer."

"At CARTA, we insist that all proposals written by our fellows for finding should be well-thought out, engaging, and reflective of the need to improve policy uptake of research," said Prof. Peter Ngure, CARTA program manager. "Even the best proposals can sometimes be rejected because they miss very tiny but critical details."

Twelve CARTA fellows attended the Sept 28-Oct 2 inaugural workshop. Similar annual workshops will be held for all subsequent CARTA cohorts, and this content will become part of the standard curriculum.



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# Memoir of CARTA

By Prof. Margaret Thorogood,  
University of Warwick, UK

I was with CARTA even before it had a name. My first CARTA memory is of Sharon Fonn visiting the University of Warwick to talk about a possible collaboration. We had a great day, the senior staff at Warwick were enthusiastic and supportive. Everyone went out of their way to make Sharon welcome and to share the University's experience of setting up doctoral training centres and organizing residential courses, and some of those ideas came through in the original bid to the Wellcome Trust.

The University of Warwick has been an enthusiastic supporter of CARTA ever since, with many different members of staff giving their time to CARTA. I retired from the University not long after CARTA was launched, so I have been able to spend more time on CARTA than my colleagues, even though they willingly give up their free time to juggle a full-time academic career at Warwick with their contribution to CARTA.

Looking back now over the last seven years, it amazes me to see how far we have come and how much we have achieved. Only a couple of months ago I was with a group of newly graduated CARTA PhDs in Nairobi helping them to prepare their first post-doctoral grant applications. It was particularly nice to have been with this group when the announcement came through that the Wellcome Trust had awarded CARTA a new block of funding, enabling CARTA to continue for a few more years.

What have been the best bits of being in CARTA? Well, there have been many; making new friends; visiting new places; but top of the list for me are the 'light bulb moments', when I see one of the fellows suddenly understand some concept they have been struggling with. And the worst? Exhausting journeys; grotty hotels; long, long committee meetings; –all easily forgotten each year when I meet a new cohort of fellows at the start of JAS 2 and become energized by their enthusiasm and inspired by the way they support and encourage each other. Long live CARTA!

## CARTA PhD fellowship fulfilled my lifetime dream

By Rose Okoyo Opiyo, CARTA PhD fellow, Cohort 1, University of Nairobi

Getting the highest academic certificate, and becoming a researcher, have been my dream since childhood. With encouragement from my mother, now 82 years old, who did not go beyond Primary Class Five, I promised myself to read until I get a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree. Being a professor, considered the highest academic qualification, has been my goal since I finished high school.

My PhD journey started in 1997 at Kenyatta University when I first wrote a draft PhD proposal that did not go far due to lack of funds to pay for tuition fees. Being a part-time lecturer at the university meant that I could not qualify for any support from the university to pursue my education like other full-time lecturers who had the benefit for staff training. I was demotivated by the fact that I could not get any support from my employer. I decided to quit teaching to look for a job with the NGOs hoping to get attract a better pay and save for my education. My first job was with the South Sudan World Food Program starting 1999.

Although I enjoyed working at the World Food Program, my quest for a PhD brought me back to the University of Nairobi in 2006. I thought of applying for a PhD scholarship outside Kenya but the fear of leaving behind my two adolescent boys held me back.

The call for applications for CARTA PhD Fellowship came at a time when I was desperately searching for a research grant to undertake my PhD at the University of Nairobi where I have been working since 2006. The CARTA fellowship application procedure, including the pre-selection modules and pre-JAS-1 assignments, however prepared me for the rough journey ahead with a key message of "be focused if you want to finish the journey". Along the way, I also realized that I had to sacrifice to work longer hours than



Dr. Rose Okoyo Opiyo

before and give up some of the things that I used to enjoy in order to create room for my PhD. I got used to unhealthy sleeping pattern of less than 6 hours a day. Sometimes I worked throughout the night at home, occasionally I left the office after 2.00 a.m. for a 30-minute drive home alone, and about three different occasions, I spent the nights working in the office till the following day.

When I started my PhD journey in 2010, the plan was to complete it within three years. I have taken five years! I don't however regret because the special skills and knowledge in research, reading, writing, critical thinking, analysis and communication that I have acquired during this 5-year period is more than worth the efforts. The networking with international public health experts from all corners of the world and my CARTA PhD Cohort-1 fellows also made the 5-year period appear shorter and fun than I thought. I now have my PhD thanks to CARTA and my dream has come true.

During my PhD fellowship with CARTA I got the opportunity to carve a niche in my area of interest. I built my interest in public health and nutrition with a focus maternal child nutrition, school child nutrition, Nutrition and HIV/AIDS. From this I was able to get a topic for my PhD research, "Effect of fish oil omega-3 fatty acids on reduction of depressive symptoms among HIV-seropositive pregnant women. I recently submitted a manuscript to PLoS ONE journal titled; "Determinants of severity of depression among HIV-infected pregnant women attending Prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV services in selected clinics in Nairobi, Kenya." It is currently under review.

# Post-doctoral fellowship award opens doors for Linda Nyondo-Mipando

**W**hen Linda Nyondo-Mipando (RNM, PhD), a cohort 2 CARTA fellow applied for her post-doctoral fellowship, she wanted to become a better researcher. Nothing could make her happier than receiving the good news from CARTA that she was one of the 2015-2016 post-doctoral fellowship awardees. Linda immediately started her post doctorate fellowship at Malawi Liverpool Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Programme under the supervision of Dr. Anja Terlouw on September, 1 2015.

A few months into her post-doctoral fellowship, Linda has been invited to join various committees and to participate in various meetings. She is already being seen as a research leader in her area of expertise. Recently, Linda joined the Malawi National Malaria Taskforce. This taskforce was established by the Ministry of Health to develop the 2017-2021 National Malaria Research Agenda, in



support of the new Malawi Malaria Strategic Plan for the same period. "Being a member of this national taskforce will help me develop my skills in research synthesis, scientific writing and national guidelines development, and understand the malaria research priorities for the coming years," explained Linda. "It will also help me develop a strong professional network with key stakeholders in malaria research, policy and control implementation in Malawi and the wider region. Overall, I hope to use this experience to develop competitive research proposals in the area of malaria health systems research during my fellowship."

Linda's interest has been grounding herself as a health systems researcher. She has specific interest on maternal health and this is where she is focusing her research. She aims to develop a research team that will be able to address key health systems questions across high-burden diseases in Malawi.

## My visit to the University of Warwick - a game changer for my studies

By Tumaini Malenga Chiseko, Cohort 4 fellow

**M**ost sincere thanks to CARTA for the support during my six-week stay at the University of Warwick, under the supervision of Prof. Frances Griffiths. I am a cohort 4 CARTA fellow pursuing my studies at the University of Malawi's College of Medicine. My research is embedded in the Majete Malaria Project (MMP). MMP is a collaboration of African Parks with Wageningen University, Amsterdam Medical Centre and University of Malawi's College of Medicine, to set up a community-driven malaria prevention intervention study in a low-income community surrounding a wildlife reserve. I will be assessing the social implications of the intervention with regards to health behaviour and changes in socio-economic indicators.

My time at Warwick was an incredibly fruitful experience in terms of getting me to think more critically about the approach to my research question, as well as polish up on my writing. I was very well supported at the medical school and had all the resources of a Warwick student at my disposal. I had access to the library, and online journals to perform my searches. I also had access to the student working space where I was able to interact with other Warwick doctoral students, some of whom were fellow Africans.

While at Warwick, I was given the opportunity to present my work at a seminar. My work was discussed and I responded to questions, while taking note of what I needed to work on later. This helped me improve on how to express my ideas. There were opportunities to participate in other seminars organized by the department. I was lucky to attend a seminar with a very similar topic to mine: something that gave me an opportunity to update myself on the current literature on behavior change communication as it relates to health, as well as other literature on influences of changes in



health behavior. Whilst there, Prof. Griffiths and I met four times a week for five weeks and talked through my systematic literature review. She took time out of an incredibly busy schedule to support me in a manner that helped me feel confident

in the work I was doing. The walk back to the library after each meeting was my way to reflect. There were days I would burn out mentally but was always comforted after a meeting as I felt I had made some progress. I learnt something new every day. It was a learning curve for us both as we tried to create a piece that brought something new to the arguments and seeing where the old thoughts were exhausted and the new gaps emerged. I did second-guess myself quite a lot and I must commend Griffiths for helping me believe that the answer was somewhere in my mind, I just had to trust that I can bring it all together.

Coincidentally I met with Prof. Donald Cole, also affiliated with CARTA, who has very kindly agreed to co-author my paper. He offered support on his visit to Warwick and has helped shape structure the paper and my line of argument. Also useful were the one-to-one sessions, lasting well over an hour, with the librarian Samantha Johnson. Sam helped me understand how to run searches for articles for a review and searching for literature in general. I also met Dr. Gillian Hundt who very kindly spent time with me helping me think about prospects for the future and options I would have as a young researcher in Africa. This visit gave me an opportunity to access quite a number of useful resources that I do not have access to in Malawi. My six weeks at



Warwick helped me shape my paper and I hope it will become my very first publication.

My gratitude goes to Profs. Frances Griffiths, Donald Cole, Gillian Hundt and Margaret Thorogood for mentoring and advice given before and during my stay at the University. Gaynor and Barbara with logistics of helping me settle in, and Samantha for helping me with the journal article searches.

And to CARTA, I do not have words to say special thanks. Through CARTA program availed me this opportunity. It has been an eye opener. The impact of this visit can only be proven by the quality of research that I will do going forward. I am confident now than ever before that I will excel in the remaining areas of my fellowship.

## I owe it all to CARTA, says Mary Obiyan

**T**he CARTA program has made me who I am today. In my academic journey, I had an ambition of becoming a professor and a researcher. Along the way, this ambition seemed like a dream due to the various challenges I encountered. Today, I am a PhD holder all courtesy of CARTA.

PhD students in Africa often face numerous challenges in their studies. Financial burden is one such common problem. I was lucky to have this burden fully lifted off by CARTA.

As a scholar, one needs to engage frequently in scholarly discourse and contribute towards their field of expertise. Through CARTA I have attended and presented my work at various workshops strengthening my presentation and writing skills. I got encouraged and supported to engage in scholarly discourses, networked and collaborated with other scholars in various parts of the world.



CARTA program trained and re-trained me in many areas especially those relating to my discipline. The learning environment and materials needed to support these are as critical as the skills offered and the tuition fees offered. CARTA provided us with necessary hardware; different software [e.g. Nvivo, STATA and END-NOTE]; and trained

us on the effective use of such in pursuing our studies. We got trained on how to use all the items provided as part of this fellowship and this enhanced my analytical skills in both quantitative and qualitative data which contributed to a huge success of my doctorate programme.

Further, as a CARTA fellow, I was a trainee during the many JAS sessions but during the course of the fellowship, I also became a trainer of other scholars. CARTA has changed my life and my career and this is trickling down to many more students some of whom I lecture at my department and some who we interact with.

Every time I see the CARTA brand I bow down. This is all I can give back to CARTA. It is the CARTA PhD fellowship that has made me who I am today.

## ADDRF, sister program to CARTA, produces 100<sup>th</sup> graduate

**S**amson Malwa Haumba, a cohort 6 fellow of the African Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship (ADDRF), is the 100th graduate from the program. Samson received his doctor of philosophy degree from University of South Africa (UNISA) on October 20, 2015 after joining the program in 2013. He holds a Master's in Medicine (Internal Medicine) and a Master's in Public Health, both from Makerere University, Uganda.

In 2008, the African Doctoral Dissertation Research Fellowship program was launched by the African Population and Health Research Center as one way to respond to the growing need to strengthen the quality of research training in African universities. With a clear focus on the provision of doctoral fellowships to students working on governance, equity, health or population-related issues in Africa, ADDRf aims to ensure as many graduates as possible graduate and become quality researchers in their fields of study.

"There is a major deficit of PhDs on the continent. Thousands of PhDs are needed in Africa in the next few years to meet the growing need for highly-trained people. Unless the production of quality PhDs is fast-tracked in the region, we are unlikely to meet this need and we will remain underdeveloped," said Dr. Chimaraoke Izugbara, the director of Research Capacity Strengthening, APHRC.

ADDRF scholarships are very competitive and open to all African scholars who are preparing to begin their PhD dissertations. "I came across the research funding opportunity through the internet while I was doing a search for potential funding opportunities. However, I was not successful on the first application in 2012. I got



Dr. Samson Haumba with his wife during the graduation

the scholarship on the second application attempt in 2013," said Dr. Haumba. He did not find the search easy. "It was difficult to find sponsors who would allow one to undertake the doctoral studies in Africa," he says, "Hence after searching and failing, I decided to commence the doctoral studies through personal sponsorship. I had determined that funding should not be a barrier for my long-term dream of a terminal degree."

Doctoral students face many challenges ranging from finances, balancing work and studying, and not having dedicated supervisors. These challenges call for proper planning of one's time and resources. A result of poor planning on the part of the students contributes to the high number of registered students who never complete their studies. Dr. Haumba, like many other students, had to stop mid-way his studies to fundraise for his PhD research and this is how he came across ADDRf.

"The ADDRF offers an essential framework for meeting the region's need for quality PhD training. It not only provides grants to allow students to graduate in time, but it also provides the right methodological and theoretical training to produce a good thesis and write it up for publication in quality outlets such as peer-reviewed international journals," said Dr. Izugbara.

Managing negative responses from potential funding sources is also challenging and something many scholars have to contend with. "After failing to land the ADDRF scholarship the first time in 2012, I felt very bad because I felt that my topic was very relevant and important for translating of research to practice and policy; one of the criteria listed as a requirement for funding," said Dr. Haumba. "While the reviewers agreed with the sentiments, they thought I had not provided enough time after data collection for analysis and report writing. My supervisor, however, encouraged me to try again the following year. Hence, I was elated to receive the sponsorship in 2013, and in my view, it was fair process. I had learned from the first application process and acted on the feedback provided by the reviewers on my initial application."

Dr. Haumba dissertation was on hearing loss in patients being treated for multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB). The purpose of the project was to extensively review the literature on the subject, to collect data from patients on the incidence and determinants of hearing loss related to MDR-TB treatment in Swaziland, and to develop best practice guidelines to prevent permanent hearing loss associated with management of MDR-TB through raised awareness and monitoring.

"ADDRF beneficiaries enjoy an international research network that puts them at the cutting edge of developments in their field and ensures that they have all the support to become research leaders within the shortest possible time," said Dr. Izugbara.

Dr. Haumba is the Swaziland Country Director for University Research Co., LLC's. He also provides overall leadership and strategic direction for technical and administrative operations the URC projects in Swaziland. He is a principal investigator for a PEPFAR/CDC project "Provision of comprehensive Clinical HIV/TB care and Treatment services in Lubombo Region and central level support to Swaziland National AIDS Programme under PEPFAR" and the Swaziland Chief of Party for the PEPFAR/USAID project "Applying Science to Strengthen and Improve Systems". He is also a member of international TB and HIV technical working committees and working groups and the WHO TB team and the WHO-Afro regional Green Light Committee technical assistance mechanism.

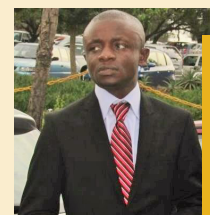
For ADDRF, Dr. Haumba is not only the 100th fellow to graduate but is a demonstration of how successful this program has been in contributing to the production of African researchers.

*Similar to the CARTA program, ADDRF aims to respond to the growing need to strengthen the quality of research training in African Universities. Both programs provide fellowships to students working on areas of population and health. While ADDRF only gives fellowships for students to conduct their dissertation, CARTA offers full PhD scholarships that grows the students from the time of registration to the time of graduation.*

## PROGRAM UPDATES

### Dr. Jude Igumbor new focal point at the University of Witwatersrand

**D**r. Jude Igumbor has been appointed as the new focal person at the University of the Witwatersrand, for the Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa (CARTA) program. Dr. Igumbor is a senior lecturer, PhD program in the School of Public Health, which offers an interdisciplinary PhD program. He is a public health specialist, epidemiologist and biostatistician with 10 years experience in public health program design and management, strategic information systems and capacity building related to monitoring and evaluation. His other experiences include teaching, research and communication of data to inform programmatic decision-making.

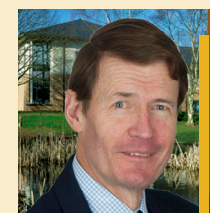


Before he joined Wits, he provided technical assistance to district health teams to meet DoH, and USAID evaluation requirements on the PEPFAR cooperative agreement with USAID/South Africa. He also provided operations research to support company innovations with empirical evidence; documentation of program outcomes and impact as well as ensuring all data collected and reported meet data quality standards and guidelines.

He has served in various capacities as Researcher, Senior Lecturer and Project Manager in HIV and TB related interventions and academic capacity development projects. Dr. Igumbor has also published numerous peer review papers on HIV, diarrheal diseases, health-related quality of life and health system strengthening. Dr. Igumbor takes over this role from Prof. Sharon Fonn who is the co-director for the CARTA program.

### Richard Lilford - University of Warwick

**P**rof. Richard Lilford has over ten years' experience as Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and over five years in the Department of Health. Currently he is Chair in Public Health at the University of Warwick. He additionally holds the position of Director for Warwick Centre for Applied Health Research and Delivery. Previously he was Professor of Clinical Epidemiology at the University of Birmingham, Vice-Dean for Applied Health Research and Director of the Primary Care Clinical Trials Unit. He directs the NIHR Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research & Care for West Midlands (CLAHRC-WM); a NICE External Assessment Centre and is Co-Investigator on many other research grants.



He also has an extensive research portfolio in Clinical Trials, Decision Analysis and Bayesian Statistics. He was a member of the Technology Strategy Board, Regenerative Medicine Mission delegation to the USA in 2010. Previous grants held include an EPSRC grant for Innovative Manufacturing: Regenerative Medicine; an EU Framework 6 grant, A Systems Approach to Tissue Engineering Processes and Products; and the Health Economic Workstream in the EPSRC Multidisciplinary Assessment of Technology Centre for Healthcare (MATCH).

His greatest interest is in research methodology and Health Economics where his special expertise lies in supply side evaluations of new technology at the idea and design stages. He is Chair of the MRC/NIHR Methodology Advisory Panel and the DH Multiple Sclerosis Risk Sharing Scheme and is a NIHR Senior Investigator.

## Prof Daniel Jordan Smith is the CARTA focal point at Brown University

**P**rof. Daniel Jordan Smith has been appointed the focal point for CARTA program at Brown University. Prof. Smith joined the Department of Anthropology at Brown University in July 2001. He received an A.B degree in Sociology from Harvard University (1983), an MPH from Johns Hopkins University (1989), and a PhD in Anthropology from Emory University (1999). He conducts research in Nigeria that explores social change, political culture, kinship and health. He won the 2008 Margaret Mead Award for his book, *A Culture of Corruption: Everyday Deception and Popular Discontent in Nigeria* (Princeton University Press, 2007).

Prof. Smith has completed several research projects with grants awarded by US National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH), with a major focus Nigeria. He is currently chair of the anthropology department. Prof. Smith has an enduring relationship with CARTA, although Brown's official partnership is relatively new.

Broadly, Prof. Smith's research focuses on understanding the intersection of social change and social reproduction, particularly as it unfolds in population processes and health-related behavior. Completed research projects have investigated the influence of migration on family organization and reproductive behavior as people live across rural-urban boundaries.



"Personally, I am deeply committed to CARTA's mission, and this is the reason I wanted to take a leading role in Brown's partnership. In addition to working directly with CARTA students, faculty, and institutions myself, one my goals is to encourage even more faculty and graduate students at Brown to become involved."

Although Brown's official partnership with CARTA is relatively new, Prof. Smith has been working with CARTA students individually for several years.

## JULY-DECEMBER 2015 PUBLICATIONS

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# CARTA mourns the late Prof. Charles Opolot-Okurut

CARTA is mourning the death of Prof. Charles Opolot-Okurut who was working at the School of Education in the College of Education and External Studies at Makerere University as Associate Professor of Mathematics Education. He had supervised several undergraduate and graduate students at Masters and Doctoral level. Prof. Opolot-Okurut has served as external examiner for several universities in Africa and abroad.

Prof. Okurut was highly involved in pedagogical training of academic staff at Makerere University and other tertiary institutions in Uganda. His research interests were Students' affective variables in mathematics learning; Teachers' Continuous Professional Development; Learning Environment Research; Teachers' Attitudes and Instructional Practices; Staff Appraisal; and Mathematics Curriculum Development and Assessment and Evaluation.

"In Charles' death, CARTA has lost a friend and supporter, and Africa has lost a scholar, mentor, and teacher. We share the grief of his friends,



CARTA has lost a friend and supporter, and Africa has lost a scholar, mentor, and teacher

family, colleagues, and country," said Dr. Chimaraoke Izugbara, Director of Research Capacity Strengthening at APHRC.

He was involved in various aspects of the CARTA program. He facilitated at the CARTA Joint Advanced Seminars (JASes) and supervised CARTA fellows. He used to facilitate sessions on theories of pedagogy, andragogy and learning styles; critical reflection on JAS 2 methods; goals, aims, objectives, taxonomies and learning outcomes; supervision, mentorship, and menteeship and wrap-up of the educator week's activities.

CARTA has lost a scholar who had a strong commitment to transform research training in the region and we all observed salient attributes in him especially that he epitomized quality, ethics, standards and professionalism in all forms and manner. He leaves an indelible mark on higher education and civilization as a whole.

## Carta Calendar of Activities: January - December 2016

Activity	Date	Venue
JAS 1 Cohort 6 & JAS 4 Cohort 3	February 29 - March 23, 2016	Nairobi
13 <sup>th</sup> CARTA board of management meeting	March 18, 2016	Nairobi
Funders' bi-annual review meeting	March 19, 2016	Nairobi
Curriculum review meeting for CARTA trainings and CARTA M&E strategy meeting	June 13-17, 2016	University of Gothenburg
JAS 3 Cohort 4	August 1-26, 2016	University of Ibadan
7 <sup>th</sup> CARTA partners' annual forum	September 12-13, 2016	Moi University
14 <sup>th</sup> CARTA board of management meeting	September 14, 2016	Moi University
CARTA graduate workshop	September 26-30, 2016	Nairobi
JAS 2 Cohort 6	November 2 - 25, 2016	University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa
Supervisors' training	November 21-25, 2016	University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa



Chimaraoke Izugbara | Daniel Adero | Evelyn Kemunto | Justus Musasiah | Lauren Gelfand  
Maureen Siele | Peter Ngure | Ruthpearl Ng'ang'a | Shylee Mbuchucha | Thomas Yebei

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