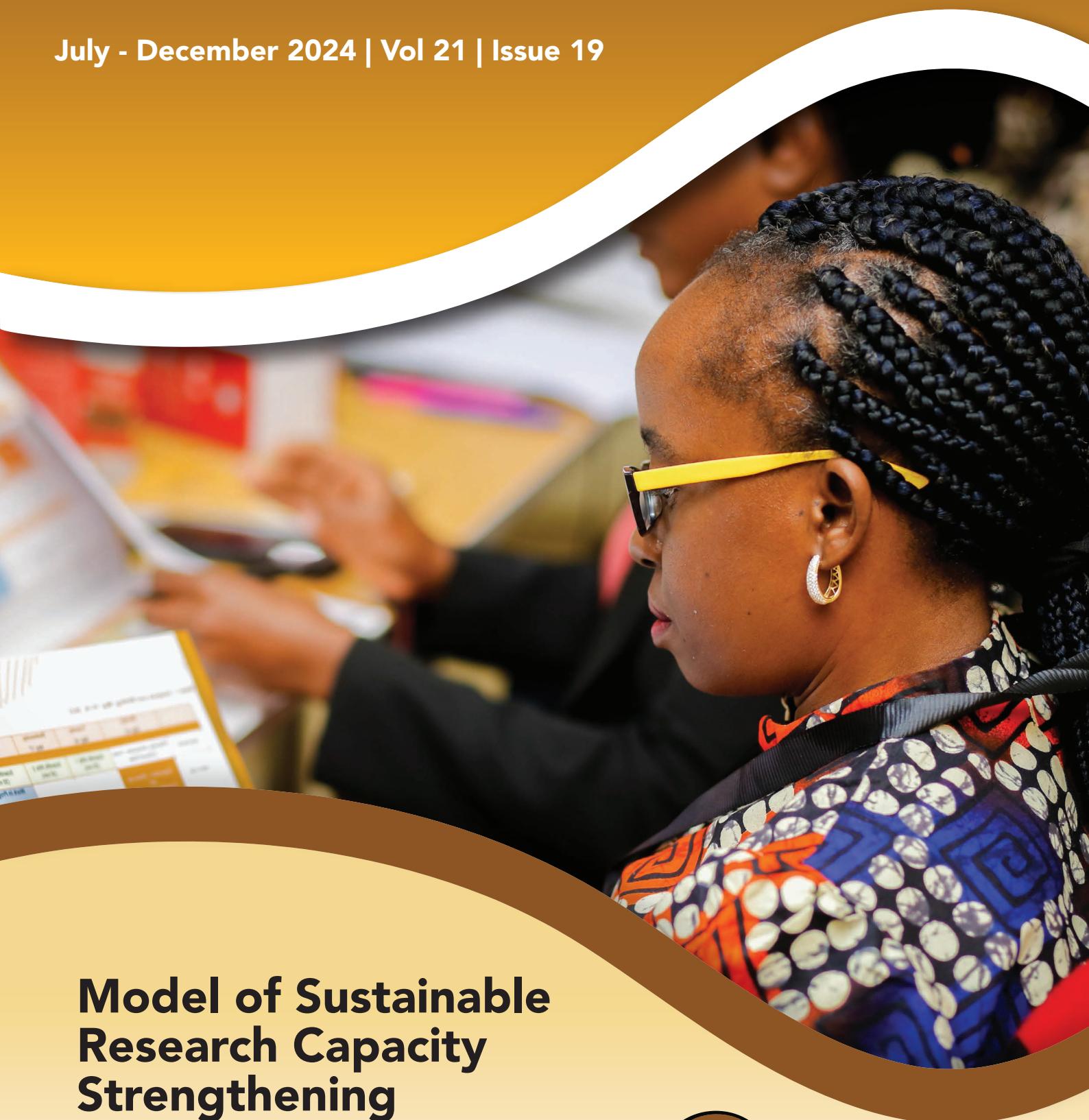


CARTA News

The Newsletter of the Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa

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Model of Sustainable Research Capacity Strengthening



Welcome Note

By Cavens Kithinji
CARTA Program Coordinator



As the Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa (CARTA) family, we close 2024 celebrating the collective efforts that have upheld our commitment to building a vibrant multidisciplinary African academy leading world-class research. This year, a significant focus has been on institutionalizing CARTA interventions within our African partner institutions, reflected in this issue's theme: **'Model of Sustainable Research Capacity Strengthening.'**

Since CARTA's establishment in 2008 and the launch of its first PhD fellowship in 2011, our mission has been clear: to train PhD fellows as research leaders and transform research training in Africa. Over time, innovative research capacity-strengthening interventions have proven highly effective. With this success, CARTA has prioritized the mainstreaming of these interventions at partner institutions during its second (2016 - 2020) and third (2021 - 2025) strategic phases. Substantial resources have been invested to ensure these efforts reshape individual institutions' research environments and Africa's broader Research and Development (R&D) ecosystem.

Key achievements include research infrastructural grants, the publication of adaptable research **training curricula**, and training over 2000 partner institution staff as supervisors, research support staff, and Trainers of Trainers (ToTs).

As these interventions are mainstreamed, hundreds of postgraduate students including master's, PhD, and postdoctoral fellows are benefiting directly or indirectly, as research cultures evolve. Six institutions have already adopted CARTA's training interventions, with others in the process.

Mentorship remains central to CARTA's approach. By fostering mentorship at individual, departmental, and institutional levels, CARTA has cultivated change agents driving the philosophy of research capacity strengthening within and beyond the consortium. This ripple effect is transforming research environments, not just at partner institutions but across Africa.

Are you curious about how research-intensive institutions can flourish in Africa



Over the past 15 years, CARTA, in collaboration with global funders and partners has sought to answer these questions. This newsletter highlights stories of change from our partner institutions, showcasing how empowering individuals, building a critical mass of research-active faculty, and strengthening institutional frameworks are reshaping the research landscape across the continent.

Researchers Do Not Thrive in a Vacuum: Institutions Matter

By Ann Waithaka

Senior Communications Officer, African Population and Health Research Center

In the dynamic field of research, individual excellence alone cannot drive progress. A robust, well-supported research ecosystem is essential to sustain innovation and impact. This resonates deeply in Africa, where the potential for groundbreaking discoveries often collides with institutional and systemic challenges. Institutions are pivotal in nurturing researchers, providing them with the tools, mentorship, and environments needed to thrive.

Both immense potential and significant hurdles mark Africa's research ecosystem. With its wealth of biodiversity, unique sociocultural dynamics, and pressing health challenges, the continent offers researchers an unparalleled opportunity to address critical global issues. However, challenges such as inadequate funding, insufficient infrastructure, and limited mentorship frameworks often hinder African researchers from reaching their full potential.

Increased interest from international donors, the emergence of collaborative research models, and initiatives like CARTA are creating pathways for Africa to strengthen its research ecosystem. CARTA's model underscores that nurturing researchers requires more than just academic training; it necessitates institutional reforms and sustainable support systems. Over the years, CARTA has evolved to meet not only the demands of individual and institutional capacities but rippled to have an impact on Africa's R&D ecosystem.

With a current focus on eight African public partner universities, the program is making efforts to integrate best practices in areas such as research training, fund management, and institutional governance. By embedding its innovative approaches, CARTA ensures partner universities can produce world-class researchers and foster sustainable academic environments.

One of CARTA's most notable interventions has been the adoption of its **Joint Advanced Seminars (JAS)** model, which equips PhD students with critical skills in research methodology, grant writing, and academic publishing. Several partner universities, such as Makerere University and the University of Ibadan, have adopted these seminars as integral parts of their doctoral training programs, significantly improving the quality of postgraduate education.

Beyond the JAS model, CARTA has also introduced other transformative interventions to strengthen institutional capacity. The **Supervisors Workshops (SW)** intervention has standardized supervision practices, enhancing the quality and

consistency of postgraduate mentorship. For instance, Moi University adopted a Supervision Manual developed through CARTA's training, which has improved faculty-student relationships and streamlined doctoral training.

Similarly, the **Academic, Professional, and Administrative Staff (APAS)** workshops emphasize the interconnectedness of research, teaching, and administration. These workshops have broadened doctoral training by involving multiple university functions, as seen at Moi University, where the APAS curriculum is now integral to postgraduate education. Additionally, CARTA has supported **Graduate Grant Writing Workshops (GGWW)**, enabling faculty and early-career researchers to craft competitive grant proposals, thus enhancing research funding prospects.

CARTA has also championed the Good Financial Grant Practice (GFGP) certification, a standardized framework for managing research funds transparently and efficiently. As partners work toward certification with CARTA's support, they are benefitting from GFGP processes and training, transforming their perspectives on financial management and accountability. GFGP certification enhances the ability of institutions to attract and manage large grants which is critical as sustainable funding is a cornerstone of robust research ecosystems.

CARTA-trained researchers have emerged as leaders in academia and research, driving transformative change across Africa. CARTA fellows are securing significant grants, publishing impactful research, and taking on leadership roles that influence policy and institutional strategies. Their successes demonstrate the value of CARTA's model in bridging individual excellence with institutional growth. Beyond individual achievements, CARTA's cohort-based approach has cultivated a vibrant network of researchers who collaborate across disciplines and borders.

The ripple effects of CARTA's interventions extend beyond its fellows. By strengthening institutional frameworks, CARTA ensures that its impact is long-lasting. The integration of CARTA's training models by partner universities into their policies, making them mandatory for all doctoral candidates enhances the quality of education and ensures that future generations of researchers are equipped with the skills needed to navigate the global research landscape. Through its innovative approaches, CARTA is laying the foundation for a resilient and inclusive research ecosystem in Africa.



Institutional Case Studies

Elevating Moi University's Research and Training Landscape

Authored with contributions from **Christopher Odhiambo** - Professor, Department of Literature, Linguistics, Foreign Language and Film Studies & **Anne Nangulu** - Professor, Department of History, Political Science and Public Administration School of Arts and Social Sciences & Ambassador, Kenya Embassy, Dakar, Senegal, both CARTA Focal Persons, Moi University

Established in 1984 as the second public university in Kenya, Moi University is renowned for its excellence in research, innovation, and community engagement. Among other areas of achievement, the university has taken significant strides in advancing postgraduate education and fostering a dynamic research culture. With approximately 350 doctoral candidates annually, the institution's commitment to excellence is underscored by continuous efforts to build its academic and research profile.

One of these efforts is its active partnership with CARTA as one of eight of the program's long-standing African partner universities. The partnership has transformed postgraduate training frameworks, faculty development, and research management, ensuring sustainable growth and institutional progress.

CARTA's interventions have been instrumental in refining Moi's postgraduate research and faculty development. In 2020, CARTA provided notable support to the School of Arts and Social Sciences by equipping a dedicated postgraduate workstation with desk computers, laptops, and furniture. This workstation, open to all postgraduate students across the university has become a vital space for postgraduate collaboration, administrative tasks, and student-supervisor interactions.

CARTA has also been supporting faculty development through targeted training programs. A virtual faculty workshop held in early 2021 enhanced supervisory skills, introducing clear contracts between students and supervisors and standardizing expectations. One of the most significant outcomes is the adoption of the supervision manual, developed through the training. Before this, supervision approaches varied widely among faculty members, leading to inconsistencies. With the formalization of the standardized manual, students and supervisors now have clear expectations and responsibilities, improving the quality and consistency of doctoral training.

Further, CARTA has provided the university with further grants in 2024 to run supervisors' ToT workshops, enhancing the efforts that were archived in 2021, and sustainability by upscaling the training in various schools.

Another notable milestone emanating from CARTA's strategic and comprehensive support has been the adoption of CARTA's APAS workshop curriculum. Introduced during a workshop in March 2023, this curriculum emphasizes the interconnectedness of research, teaching, and administration. Its adoption has broadened the scope of doctoral training, involving multiple university functions to support students comprehensively. Toward sustainability and maintaining

quality and consistency, there are ongoing efforts to train staff across the university on the APAS curriculum and its delivery. For instance, the School of Tourism, Hospitality, and Events Management has already sourced funding to step down the curriculum. Several other schools are organizing APAS workshops, and the curriculum has been shared widely across schools to ensure scalability and accessibility.

In May 2024, the university held a GGWW to empower graduate faculty and early-career researchers (ECRs) to craft competitive grant proposals. Training more than 35 participants (20 Women; 15 Men) drawn from different faculties of the university, the workshop boosted participants' understanding of funding criteria, enhancing their competitiveness in securing research grants and empowering them to cascade the same to their facilities and schools.

CARTA's collaboration has fostered a robust research culture at Moi University, supported by a growing cohort of CARTA-trained fellows, now serving in leadership roles. Prominent alumni such as Fredrick Okaka, Caroline Sawe, Jepchirchir Kiplagat, and Diana Menya are influencing policy and programmatic action, and mentoring emerging researchers. Their contributions have shaped curriculum reforms, streamlined research management, and elevated the university's research output. These fellows have also driven innovative projects, such as Jepchirchir's implementation science research on community-based care models for older adults with HIV and hypertension. Similarly, Fredrick's study on urban agriculture's socio-economic impacts highlights the innovative research emanating from CARTA's influence.

While CARTA's initiatives have driven significant progress at Moi University, their implementation has not been without challenges. The university has faced issues such as capacity constraints, limited resources, and the need to establish effective financial management systems to ensure transparency in handling research funds. One notable hurdle has been the integration of the Good Financial Grant Practice (GFGP) framework, which required the adoption of new



Participants during an Academic, Professional, and Administrative Staff (APAS) workshop held in March 2023 at Moi University School of Law, Kenya

practices to meet international standards. With CARTA's support, Moi is making steady progress toward GFGP certification, a milestone that will enhance its grant management systems and increase its appeal to funders.

Moi University is also leveraging CARTA's frameworks and integrating them into other existing initiatives. For instance, the university's involvement with the Centre for Educational Research, Methodologies, and Management in Eastern and Southern Africa (CERMESA), the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence, Africa Centre of Excellence II in Phytochemicals, Textile, and Renewable Energy (ACE II-PTRE) and the African Network for Internationalization of Education (ANIE) is greatly enhanced by the research management and training methodologies fostered by CARTA.

Additionally, the university is involved in several EU-funded programs, such as Erasmus+ initiatives (DigiGrad Africa project, IMPACT-HE project), which also benefit from CARTA's training methodologies. These initiatives provide further opportunities for research collaboration and the institutionalization of best practices in postgraduate training. The external collaborations and funding sources amplify the sustainability of the university's research environment and continued access to resources for doctoral training further ensuring the long-term sustainability of CARTA's impact.

Reflecting on CARTA's transformative contributions, Moi aspires to further enhance its doctoral and ECR training programs. Plans to host a JAS (as part of efforts to institutionalize the intervention) targeting new postgraduate students, and establish a dedicated research hub underscore the university's ambition to sustain a vibrant research culture. Expanding international collaborations and integrating CARTA's best practices across all schools are central to this vision. With these efforts and the presence of CARTA-trained leaders at Moi, the university is poised to remain a hub of research excellence and innovation in Africa.



CARTA Focal Person of Moi University, Anne Nangulu leads session during an Academic, Professional, and Administrative Staff (APAS) workshop held in March 2023 at Moi University School of Law, Kenya

Catalysing Research Growth and Academic Leadership at the University of Rwanda

Authored with contributions from **François Niragire** - Professor, and Director of Research and Innovation, College of Business and Economics & **Moussa Hakizimana** - Lecturer, College of Medicine and Health Sciences, both CARTA Focal Persons, University of Rwanda

The higher education landscape in Rwanda is characterized by rapid growth, deliberate reforms, and a focus on addressing national development priorities. The University of Rwanda (UR) serves as the country's flagship public institution, merging several universities and colleges in 2013 to create a unified system. It offers a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate programs, playing a leading role in research and innovation. In the *Times Higher Education Sub-Saharan Africa University Rankings 2024*, UR ranked sixth (6th) underscoring the institution's commitment to fostering academic excellence and impactful research.

UR has placed a strong emphasis on fostering quality education while expanding access. This dual approach has led to an increase in enrollment numbers and created opportunities for students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, though challenges remain in ensuring equitable access for rural and low-income populations. The institution has also adopted policies and initiatives to improve gender equity, further broadening the pool of participants in higher education.

A key driver of this progress is UR's strategic and diverse collaborations such as its long-standing partnership with CARTA. This collaboration has strengthened postgraduate education, enhanced research outputs, and laid the foundation for long-term academic sustainability. By providing financial support, mentorship, and collaborative opportunities, CARTA has facilitated the training of 25 PhD fellows (10 women; 15 men) at UR, many of whom have gone on to hold key academic and leadership positions. The collaboration has also contributed to a significant increase in peer-reviewed publications and multidisciplinary research initiatives.

Institutional Changes and Mainstreaming CARTA Practices

Though relatively young, UR's doctoral program is highly diversified, attracting 80 to 100 candidates annually. UR has strategically adopted CARTA's interventions, mainstreaming them into its doctoral training framework.



Participants during a Joint Advanced Seminar (JAS) training of trainers workshop held in October 2023 at the University of Rwanda

A notable milestone at the university has been the integration of a multidisciplinary research methodology module, inspired by CARTA's JAS intervention. Approved by the university's academic senate in July 2020, the module is now a core component across all doctoral programs. It addresses a significant gap in the institution's curriculum by providing in-house training for doctoral candidates, who previously had to seek such courses externally.

This intervention, facilitated through the CARTA-funded Intra-university Collaboration for Advanced Research Training (ICARU) project (2017–2019), has directly benefited 72 doctoral students, improving research output and ensuring timely PhD completions. As a result, the module has influenced broader postgraduate policies, including curriculum design and academic regulations.

Further, faculty members have participated in CARTA's specialized training, including the APAS workshops, ToTs for JAS program (CARTA PhD training), supervision workshops and grant writing sessions. These efforts have enhanced doctoral supervision, research collaboration, and funding acquisition capabilities.

 APAS workshops: **9 faculty members**

 CARTA PhD training/JAS ToTs: **51 faculty members**

 Supervision workshops: **4 faculty members**

Overcoming Challenges

Implementing CARTA's interventions has come with challenges. The delivery of the multidisciplinary research methodology module for doctoral studies has faced inconsistencies due to varied learning materials used across schools, highlighting the need for harmonization. Additionally, some academic units lack sufficient qualified teaching staff to deliver the module effectively. Addressing these gaps requires financial resources and collaboration between colleges to ensure comprehensive coverage.

Since 2024, CARTA has supported UR to harmonize teaching materials through the ***Expanding the Institution Capacity Strengthening for Enhanced Doctoral Research Training at the University of Rwanda (ECASERT)*** project. These materials are being made accessible to the wider UR community via the university's e-learning platform. CARTA has also expanded UR's capacity to deliver the module through ToT workshops under the institutionalization of CARTA (**iCARTA***) project. Valuable lessons have emerged from this process. Collaboration between academic units has been critical for the successful adaptation of the CARTA model. Additionally, integrating CARTA-inspired training into university policies has demonstrated its potential for scalability across other institutions in Rwanda.

Contributions of CARTA-Trained Fellows

CARTA-trained fellows have been instrumental in advancing UR's research output and academic leadership. With 16 of the 25 CARTA fellows completing their PhDs, these individuals have taken on critical roles in supervising students, leading academic departments, and influencing institutional policies. For instance, François Niragire, now a Professor of Applied Statistics and a CARTA Focal Person for UR has significantly advanced the university's research agenda as the College Director of Research and Innovation since 2019. Similarly, Uwizeye Dieudone is leading the PhD program in Peace, Conflict, and Security Studies at the UR Centre for Conflict Management and recently achieved the rank of Associate Professor of Demography and Population Studies. Priscille Musabirema was appointed Coordinator of postgraduate programs in the School of Nursing and

Midwifery, while Celestin Banamwana is the Coordinator of postgraduate programs in the School of Public Health since 2024.

Other notable contributions include mentorship initiatives and enhanced research infrastructure through grant acquisitions. For example, CARTA fellows at UR have secured postdoctoral grants and re-entry grants, enabling continuous engagement in impactful research. Their efforts have also fostered collaborations through initiatives like the NORHED II-iCARTA project, connecting UR staff with peers from CARTA partner institutions and Norway.

Sustainability and Long-Term Impact

The partnership between UR and CARTA has catalyzed transformative changes in doctoral education, research management, and academic leadership. The institution's leadership sees CARTA's research collaboration model and staff exchange programs as key to future growth. The most valuable aspect of CARTA's collaboration, as celebrated by UR, lies in its emphasis on research capacity building, mentorship, and regional collaboration. CARTA has not only enhanced UR's postgraduate training quality but also positioned the institution as a hub for innovative research practices. Through the strategic adoption of CARTA's models, UR has created a sustainable and conducive environment for postgraduate education.

Looking ahead, UR aims to expand CARTA's training approaches to more universities in Rwanda. By extending CARTA's training approaches to other universities in Rwanda, UR aims to amplify its impact on the country's higher education landscape. Strengthening staff exchange programs and research collaborations are central to its strategy. By fostering a cohesive research culture and integrating CARTA's principles further, the university is set to continue its journey toward academic excellence.

* Funded by the Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development (NORHED II), **iCARTA** aims to ensure the long-term sustainability of its interventions by institutionalizing certain CARTA activities into the routine functioning of three member universities in Malawi, Rwanda, and Uganda.

A New Era of Postgraduate Education in Malawi

Authored with contributions from **Fanuel Lampiao** - Professor, Department of Biological Sciences and Biomedical Health Sciences & **Adamson S. Muula** - Professor and Head of Community and Environmental Health, both CARTA Focal Persons, Kamuzu University of Health Sciences

The Kamuzu University of Health Sciences (KUHeS), established in 2021, is a leading institution in Malawi for health sciences education and research. Its journey began as the University of Medicine in 1993, later evolving into Kamuzu College of Health Sciences (KCHS) under the University of Malawi (UNIMA) before becoming an independent university. KUHeS was founded to address the nation's critical need for skilled health professionals. Today, KUHeS not only carries forward its rich history but also serves as a regional leader, mentoring other institutions formed from the UNIMA split and embodying a collaborative spirit akin to CARTA's goals: to foster academic excellence and institutional growth.

What began as a strategic partnership between CARTA and KUHeS has grown into a comprehensive transformation for postgraduate education and institutional culture. With its postgraduate program still growing, KUHeS' collaboration with CARTA has been crucial in catalyzing growth and innovation in the institution's postgraduate training. The program has facilitated the introduction of critical academic interventions like supervisor workshops, manuscript writing programs, and graduate grant writing workshops. These initiatives have been pivotal in addressing long-standing challenges, such as poor supervision and the difficulties students face in meeting the publication requirements for graduation. By adopting CARTA's practices, KUHeS has cultivated a robust academic support structure, enabling students to publish quality research and graduate on time.

CARTA's influence extends beyond individual mentorship to systemic change. KUHeS' doctoral programs benefit from enhanced supervision and mentorship frameworks, modeled after CARTA's principles. Faculty members, empowered through CARTA trainings have significantly improved their ability to guide postgraduate students, contributing to a thriving academic environment. The curriculum adaptations inspired by CARTA, such as structured writing workshops, have resolved key issues hindering student progress. Moreover, the collaboration has fostered global research connections, exemplified by KUHeS' participation in the NORHED-funded iCARTA project together with Makerere and UR. Such partnerships have bolstered the university's research profile and expanded its reach regionally and internationally.

A testament to CARTA's impact is the remarkable milestones of its fellows. CARTA scholars at KUHeS have



Participants during a supervisors training of trainers workshop held in August 2022 at the Kamuzu University of Health Sciences, Malawi

risen to prominent academic and leadership positions. Felix Khuluza, now an Associate Professor and Head of Pharmacy, serves as a consultant to the World Health Organization. Similarly, Enock Chisati and Linda Mipando have assumed leadership roles, influencing academic standards and health systems research. Chisati is an Associate Professor of Exercise Physiology and a key member of the academic standards committee of KUHeS, while Linda is an Associate Professor of Health Systems. Their achievements underscore the transformative power of targeted training and mentorship.

To address obstacles such as initial resistance from senior administrators in the mainstreaming of CARTA interventions, KUHeS has involved top-level leadership - Vice Chancellors, Deans, and Department Heads - in championing the adoption of CARTA's best practices. This strategy has ensured a seamless integration of new systems and paved the way for long-term sustainability.

The collaboration with CARTA has not only enhanced the quality of PhD programs at KUHeS but also established a legacy of academic rigor, leadership, and innovation. As KUHeS looks to the future, the university remains committed to embedding CARTA's principles within its institutional fabric. Plans are underway to expand the adoption of the CARTA JASes and other transformative models. Furthermore, the university has encouraged departments to allocate resources in their budgets to sustain CARTA-inspired initiatives beyond the funding period. The partnership is a powerful example of how strategic collaborations can drive impactful change, fostering a research ecosystem that benefits both students and faculty.

Propelling Makerere to Global Heights

Authored with contributions from **John Bosco Isunju** - Senior Lecturer, Department of Disease Control and Environmental Health & **Robert Wamala** - Associate Professor, School of Statistics and Planning | Chief, Directorate of Research, Innovations and Partnerships, both CARTA Focal Persons, Makerere University

When discussing the strides Makerere University has taken in postgraduate education and research, one cannot overlook the critical role played by CARTA. Makerere offers diverse research and taught PhD programs, across fields such as health sciences, education, social sciences, economics, and engineering. The programs attract an estimated 150 - 200 PhD candidates yearly, many of whom are drawn to its strong reputation for research and its collaborations with international institutions.

Long celebrated as Uganda's leading institution and one of Africa's premier universities, Makerere has seen its doctoral programs and research culture reach new heights, thanks to CARTA's institutional interventions. This collaboration has not only addressed foundational challenges in postgraduate training but also ushered in sustainable systems that amplify Makerere's reputation on the global stage.



Participants during an Academic, Professional, and Administrative Staff (APAS) workshop held in July 2023 at Makerere University, Uganda

Overcoming Challenges in Doctoral Training and Strengthening Research Capacity

Makerere has faced challenges typical of many African universities: low doctoral completion rates, limited supervision quality, and insufficient interdisciplinary training. These issues have threatened the university's ability to produce globally competitive researchers and contribute to addressing complex societal challenges. CARTA's partnership has been a pivotal point, offering solutions through a structured and innovative PhD training program.

Through its structured PhD fellowship, CARTA has supported 25 (10 Women; 15 men) junior faculty at Makerere to attain doctoral degrees. These faculty

members are growing into university ranks, and some have taken over positions in leadership as change agents. Others are attracting grant funds to build the university. The CARTA-trained fellows are leaving indelible marks on research and leadership at the university. Kato Charles Drago, a distinguished graduate, has secured multimillion-dollar grants to establish biomarker research facilities for COVID-19 and other infectious diseases. Similarly, Flavia Matovu Kiweewa's work in maternal and child health has shaped health policies in Uganda and beyond.

Further, Makerere is one of the two CARTA partner institutions where CARTA research hubs are being established. Competitively selected and led by CARTA graduates, The Emerging and Re-emerging Infectious Diseases (TERID) Research Hub at Makerere seeks to address critical public health challenges in Uganda and the region. These and other graduate milestones exemplify the transformative potential of CARTA's training. Their achievements contribute to Makerere's reputation while addressing critical societal challenges.

Since 2012, CARTA has introduced transformative approaches to doctoral education at Makerere. Over 200 PhD candidates of university have benefited from enhanced curricula, mentorship programs, and supervision guidelines supported by CARTA. These achievements have been realized through the mentorship of CARTA graduates, cross-cutting PhD courses, and the training of facilitators, doctoral supervisors, professional staff, and administrators to improve graduate training and the broader research ecosystem.

As the host of CARTA's JAS 1 and 4, held during the first and fourth years of doctoral training respectively, Makerere provides CARTA ECRs with multidisciplinary platforms to develop critical skills. These seminars equip the fellows with expertise in research methodologies, scholarly writing, and ethics, ensuring they conduct high-quality, context-specific research while progressing through their studies on schedule. The structured approach has inspired Makerere to adopt similar frameworks in its doctoral programs.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Makerere played a pivotal role in adapting CARTA's activities to virtual platforms, ensuring continuity in training and governance. The transition underscored the potential of digital technologies in

sustaining collaborative academic initiatives and highlighted the importance of institutional adaptability. Key lessons included the need for investment in digital infrastructure, flexibility in program delivery, and leveraging technology to enhance learning outcomes.

Institutional Reforms Inspired by CARTA

CARTA's influence extends beyond individual PhD students to institutional reforms at Makerere. The collaboration has inspired the development of mentorship structures, and various guidelines such as supervision guidelines, graduate handbook, and grant and financial management guidelines. These reforms have streamlined not only PhD training but also related support, supervision, and financial practices.

Another notable milestone has been the introduction of the cohort system for the research doctoral programs. This was partially informed by the structured approach of the CARTA JASes in terms of timing, content, and mode of delivery. The intakes are bi-annual, and the cross-cutting courses carry a credit load. This ensures that the doctoral fellows acquire competence promptly and enhances progress monitoring along the PhD journey.

The pedagogy used by CARTA for its capacity-building programs has had a profound influence on the teaching approaches used at Makerere. The impact is evident in the design and delivery of PhD cross-cutting courses and continuous professional development initiatives. On December 11, 2024, Makerere held a pedagogy and professionalism training for academic staff that was supported by the office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs. The training emphasized progressive teaching principles, including fostering an inclusive and student-centered environment, breaking traditional hierarchical barriers, and avoiding judgment or moralization of students.

The Makerere-CARTA partnership has fostered regional and international collaborations, further amplifying its impact. Through CARTA, Makerere has hosted fellows from institutions across Africa, facilitating knowledge exchange and joint research projects. In CARTA's eleventh cohort that will commence their fellowship in March 2025, two doctoral fellows from the Somalia National University (SNU) will

pursue CARTA-supported PhDs at Makerere. This is part of CARTA's efforts to expand its research capacity strengthening reach within the African region. The SNU fellows will benefit from mentorship provided through Makerere.

While the focus of the Makerere-CARTA collaboration spans the entire university, the Makerere School of Public Health (MakSPH) stands out as a key beneficiary and contributor. CARTA's support has enriched MakSPH's programs, enabling the school to pioneer the taught PhD program in Public Health and integrate CARTA's training components into its curriculum. MakSPH, which celebrated 70 years of leadership in public health in 2024, has leveraged this partnership to strengthen its academic and research offerings. Notably, MakSPH has been granted autonomy to operate at the level of a college, effective January 2024.

Challenges, Lessons Learned, and Sustaining Gains

Implementing CARTA's interventions has not been without hurdles. Makerere has faced resistance, particularly from senior faculty accustomed to traditional methods of doctoral training. Financial sustainability has also posed challenges, as donor funding has often dictated program priorities. However, consistent stakeholder engagement, transparent communication, and strategic leadership have helped overcome these obstacles.

The Makerere-CARTA partnership has established a solid foundation for sustainable doctoral education, embedding CARTA's principles into the university's academic policies and institutional culture to ensure lasting impact. Its strategic vision, aligned with CARTA's mission to nurture scholars driving Africa's development, focuses on deepening interdisciplinary collaborations, expanding mentorship networks, and leveraging technology for innovative training.

These efforts have positioned Makerere as Uganda's top university and one of Africa's leading institutions, reflected in its improved rankings and recognition in the Times Higher Education University Impact Rankings for addressing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As Makerere continues to advance, it stands poised to remain a leader in higher education and research across the continent.



Meet Our Focal Persons

Focal persons are the backbone of CARTA's success, playing a vital role in driving and fostering buy-in for the program's initiatives at partner institutions. These individuals are champions of research capacity strengthening, bridging the gap between the CARTA Secretariat and their institutions to ensure the seamless execution of CARTA programs.

From coordinating activities, mentoring fellows, and mainstreaming CARTA interventions, to fostering collaboration and innovation, their contributions are integral to transforming research ecosystems in Africa. We are pleased to feature the dedicated individuals from CARTA's African and non-African partner institutions, celebrating their efforts and leadership in driving sustainable institutional growth.

African Partner Universities

Kamuzu University of Health Sciences, Malawi



Adamson S. Muula
Professor & Head of
Community and Environmental
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Fanuel Lampiao
Professor, Department
of Biological Sciences
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John Bosco Isunju
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Robert Wamala
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**Christopher Odhiambo**

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**Anne Nangulu**

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African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC), Kenya



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Dickson Wilson Lwetoijera

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Soledad Falabella
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Thorkild Tylleskär
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Associate Professor, Warwick
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Global Health, Warwick Medical
School



Frances Griffiths
Professor, Warwick Applied Health
and Centre for Global Health,
Warwick Medical School

University of Warwick, UK



Göran Bondjers
Professor, School of
Public Health



Håkan Billig
Professor, Department
of Physiology

Fellows News

The July - December 2024 period witnessed remarkable milestones with 13 CARTA fellows (7 women; 6 men) completing their PhD programs across various disciplines and contributing valuable research to global health and development.

Graduations and PhD Completions



Abimbola Margaret Obimakinde

Cohort 9
University of Ibadan

PhD in Family Medicine



Justin Kumala

Cohort 6
Kamuzu University of Health Sciences

PhD in Virology



Alice Muhayimana

Cohort 10
University of Rwanda

PhD in Nursing Education



Kganetsso Sekome

Cohort 10
University of the Witwatersrand

PhD in Public Health



Foluso Ayobami

Cohort 8
University of Ibadan

PhD in Anatomical Sciences



Lebogang Maseko

Cohort 8
University of the Witwatersrand

PhD in Occupational Therapy



James Kangethe

Cohort 10
University of Nairobi

PhD in Tropical and Infectious Diseases



Martha Makwero

Cohort 7
Kamuzu University of Health Sciences

PhD in Public Health



Jean de la Croix Allen Ingabire

Cohort 10
University of Rwanda

PhD in Rehabilitation Sciences



Shakeerah Olaide Gbadebo

Cohort 10
University of Ibadan

PhD in Dentistry



Siphamandla Gumebe
Cohort 8
University of the Witwatersrand

PhD in Internal Medicine



Valens Mbarushimana
Cohort 6
University of Rwanda

PhD in Public Health



Wilfred Eneku
Cohort 9
Makerere University

PhD in Veterinary Medicine

Promotions and Appointments

CARTA fellows continue to make significant strides in leadership and scholarly influence with eight of our fellows securing notable appointments and promotions during this period, as highlighted below. CARTA celebrates these achievements as testaments to the dedication and excellence of its fellows in transforming research, policy, and practice across Africa

Promotions



Celestin Banamwana
Cohort 7
University of Rwanda
Promoted to **Senior Lecturer** of Environmental Health Sciences from Assistant Lecturer



Dieudonne Uwizeye
Cohort 1
University of Rwanda
Promoted to **Associate Professor** of Demography and Population Studies from Senior Lecturer



François Niragire
Cohort 1
University of Rwanda
Promoted to **Professor** from Associate Professor of Applied Statistics from Associate Professor



Sunday Adedini
Cohort 1
Federal University Oye-Ekiti
Promoted to **Professor** of Demography and Social Statistics from Associate Professor

Appointments



Enock Chisati

Cohort 7
Kamuzu University of Health Sciences

Appointed an **Associate Fellow** of interRAI, a collaborative network of researchers in over 35 countries committed to improving health care for vulnerable populations with complex needs.



Godwin Anywar

Cohort 6
Makerere University

Appointed to the **editorial board** of Discover Molecules—Springer Nature. The journal aims to be a resource for researchers, policymakers, and the general public on recent advances in molecular science and its uses in research development and society.



Olusola Olawoye

Cohort 7
University of Ibadan

Elected **Chairperson** of the Glaucoma Society of Nigeria (GSN). The GSN is an integral and robust part of the Ophthalmological Society of Nigeria, set up with the following Mission and Focus to propel Glaucoma care in Nigeria to the optimal levels.



Alice Muhayimana

Cohort 10
University of Rwanda

Appointed to the position of **Track Leader** for the master's program in Neonatal Nursing at the School of Nursing and Midwifery, University of Rwanda.

CARTA in Numbers

A. Early Career Researchers

A. Graduates by Gender

181

Female - 99 (55%)
Male - 82 (45%)

B. Fellows by Gender

245

Female - 136 (56%)
Male - 109 (44%)

C. External Grants Raised by Fellows

\$43M

Source: Fellow's Self-Reports

D. Peer-Reviewed Publications

4174

Source: CARTA Evidence Website

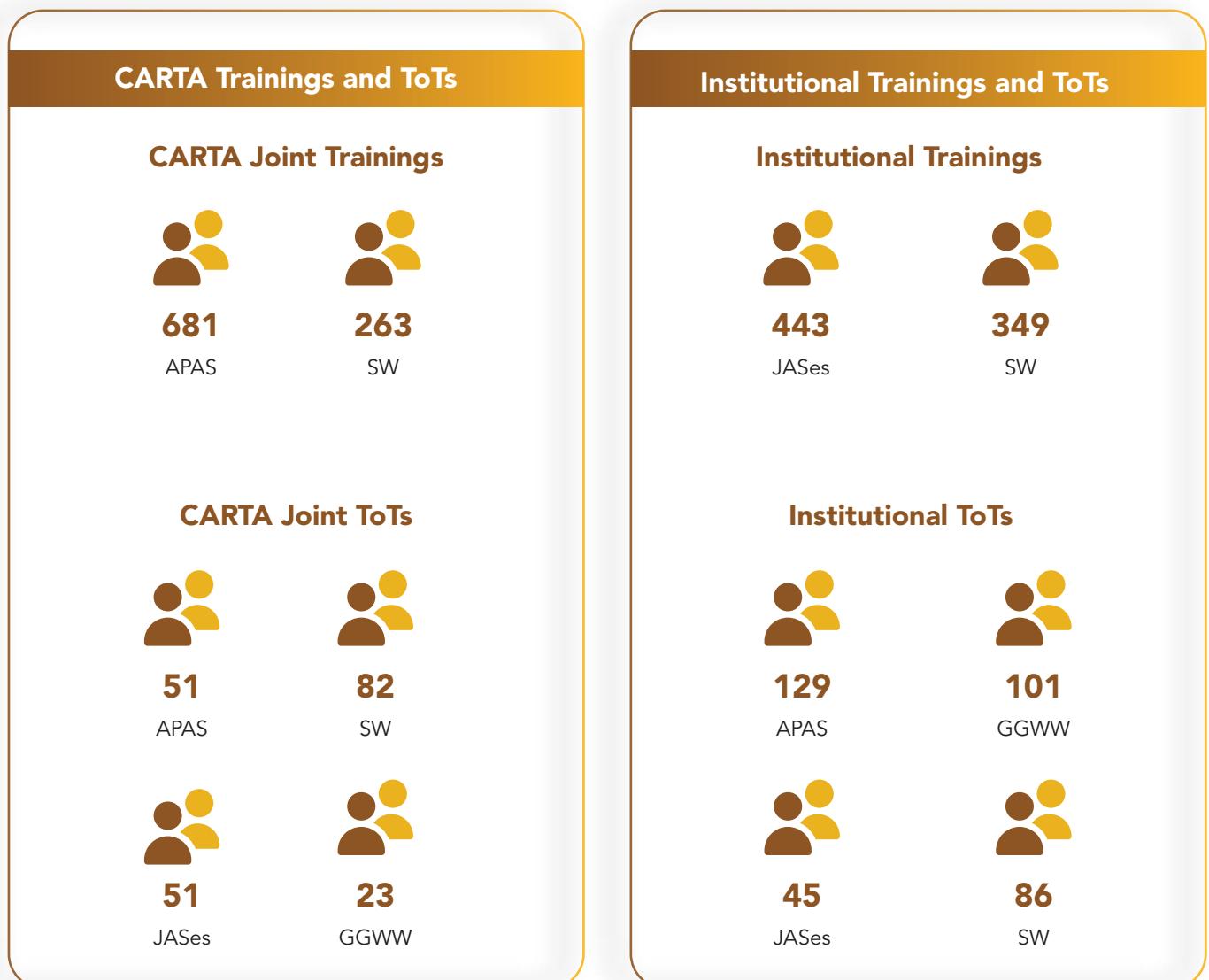
Distribution of CARTA Fellows (2011 - 2024)

Agincourt	 0	 1	01
African Population and Health Research Center	 1	 4	05
Ifakara Health Institute	 5	 3	08
Makerere University	 10	 15	25
Moi University	 15	 5	20
Obafemi Awolowo University	 16	 15	21
University of Dar es Salaam	 3	 3	06
University of Ibadan	 21	 15	36
Kamuzu University of Health Science	 12	 18	30
University of Nairobi	 21	 6	27
University of Rwanda	 10	 15	25
University of the Witwatersrand	 22	 09	31
Grand Total	 136	 109	245

B. Institutionalization Indicators

CARTA's commitment to sustainability and scalability has yielded notable outcomes over the years as a result of the capacity-building interventions in its African partner universities. To ensure its interventions are integrated into institutional practices, CARTA has organized workshops in its partner institutions (referred to as **CARTA Joint Trainings**) as well as Trainer of Trainers (referred to as **CARTA Joint ToTs**) targeting faculty members in the institutions. These interventions include the PhD Training (referred to as JASes), Supervisors Workshops (SW), Graduate Grant Writing Workshops (GGWW), and Academic, Professional, and Administrative Staff (APAS) workshops.

The program has also been supporting its partner institutions to hold trainings (referred to as **Institutional Trainings**) and ToTs (referred to as **Institutional ToTs**) for their faculty members in efforts to mainstream its interventions. Over 2000 individuals have participated in the various workshops as broken down below. **Six institutions** have successfully integrated aspects of CARTA curricula into their research training programs and PhD training practices. These components are now included in their doctoral training programs and have been or are in the process of being approved by the relevant governing bodies at these institutions.



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Ann Waithaka (Editor-in-Chief) | Cavens Kithinji | Topistar Karani |
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**African Population and
Health Research Center**

Transforming lives in Africa through research.

UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG



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