

CARTA News

The Newsletter of the Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa



Celebrating CARTA's Over 100 Graduates A monumental Milestone

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Message from the RCS Director

Evelyn Gitau - Director, Research Capacity Strengthening at APHRC

CARTA is proud to have surpassed the milestone of 100 PhD graduates just a few months after celebrating our tenth anniversary in 2020.

CARTA has developed a dynamic African academy capable of conducting world-class multidisciplinary research that benefits public and population health. Its goal is to enhance the research environment of African institutions and to assist early career researchers in pursuing PhD and post-doctoral fellowships, in order to become globally known and influential research leaders to society.

The advancement of research excellence best exemplifies CARTA's accomplishments through fellows and graduates who have collectively produced over 1147 published articles in refereed journals. CARTA has sustained a stream of high-quality early-career researchers, and fostered conducive research environments in African partner



Evelyn Gitau

institutions, so as to allow CARTA's innovations to be mainstreamed.

Many of our program's graduates have proceeded to achieve distinguished careers in academia

and research. In commemorating CARTA's 100 Graduates, we highlight their positive impact in their professions, while contributing to the improvement of public and population health in Africa.

In this newsletter we shine a light on the CARTA graduates, with stories relating to their journey through the fellowship programs; their triumphs, accomplishments and tribulations they have undergone; and the significance of receiving effective mentorship and supervision in their success, until they themselves may become good mentors to others. Many fellows and other aspiring PhD students can certainly learn a great deal from their experiences and obtain some invaluable insights from them. Also learn more about the latest resource from CARTA; the CARTA Evidence website as told by Jude Igumbor.

I hope you will enjoy the read.

Becoming a CARTA Graduate: What Does it Take to Get There?

By Alexander Kagaha, cohort seven, Makerere University, Uganda

Becoming a CARTA graduate is a journey of resilience. The PhD journey requires developing competences in critical reading, thinking and writing, and these are acquired through tasks assigned by supervisors, and mastered through literature review and manuscript writing. This can be very annoying, frustrating and tempting to withdraw. Equally, thesis writing and publishing manuscripts in journals is challenging, with turn-downs. Navigating this terrain requires a positive mind in order to turn challenges into learning points. The PhD journey involves lots of sacrifice. Important refinements of ideas come in dreams, and easily fade from minds very fast after sleep. I thus learnt the value of having a notebook and a pen whenever; in a taxi, urinal and everywhere. However, sleep deprivation is the worst enemy a PhD student can have. Managing mental stress requires supportive supervisors to understand your concerns, and friends to share with. There is value in sharing experiences, both good and bad. Above all, having flexible and innovative institutions allows students to overcome macro challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic. CARTA funding for academic writing retreats allowed me to get block time for writing my thesis and manuscripts for publication.



Alexander Kagaha

What is difference about CARTA as compared to other programs such as this?

Unlike other PhD fellowship programmes, CARTA fellowship involved interviews, the mechanism through which CARTA determined who was to be considered for the fellowship or not. Those who qualified were invited for a full month's Joint Advanced Seminar 1 (JAS1) workshop. In addition, CARTA Fellowship involves special capacity empowering programmes, the Joint Advanced Seminars (JASs), carefully designed to expose fellows to relevant materials, theoretical and philosophical tools at the different levels of the PhD journey. CARTA has special training in academic writing, one of the most critical

skills for every PhD journey. CARTA partners with experienced and technically competent institutions like ESE:O to mentor the fellows in academic writing, with hands-on guidance and assessments. What is more interesting is that during the training, fellows are also empowered to assess their colleagues work and so, consolidating the awareness of the indicators for good academic essays. Another very important component is that CARTA sets milestones for fellows and on which, it tags a stipend. This works as an incentive to keep fellows on course.

What are the benefits being a CARTA fellow and now graduate?

CARTA fellows are privileged to have a diversity of faculties for technical guidance during the JASes, and are supported to attend international conferences, and to publish in any open journal of international acclaim at any cost. CARTA fellows are also supported with other capacity building in research grant writing, and are linked to funding opportunities within and outside the carta. CARTA keeps track of its fellows, avails opportunities for postdoctoral fellowships and career growth. These benefits are rare in Africa, only unique to CARTA Fellowship.

The Journey Towards Graduation in CARTA

By Gloria Chemutai, CARTA Communications Officer

CARTA aims to produce a critical mass of high-quality graduates trained to address the complex issues surrounding health and development in Africa, retain them in the region, and provide them with a vibrant intellectual environment, as well as viable and challenging research and growth opportunities.

The CARTA PhD program since inception has been open to staff of participating institutions who are interested in conducting their PhD research on topics relevant to the broad fields of public and population health. Applications are welcome from any discipline, such as public health, demography,

anthropology, communication, and economics, among others, as long as the research question aims to contribute to public and population health issues in Africa. So what does the process look like?



Peeking at the Realm of Postdoctoral Supervision

By Lenore Manderson, Professor of Public Health and Medical Anthropology at the University of the Witwatersrand



Lenore Manderson

With a long list of postdoctoral supervisions, Lenore Manderson, a distinguished Professor of Public Health and Medical Anthropology at the University of the Witwatersrand and one of the facilitators at CARTA, delves into the relationship between the supervisor and the student. In this conversation with CARTA Communications Officer, Gloria Chemutai, she serves up advice on what the two ought to do and not do. Can a supervisor be a mentor? Read on to find out whether you can find both in the same person and the importance of having one.

Do you have any advice on what effort effective supervision takes, and how do you create successful supervisory relationships with great structure for both the supervisor and the supervisee?

Supervisors draw on their own experience as a supervisee, whether to emulate a good relationship, or to change course to avoid disappointment or frustration. Reflect on that relationship, and consider both what worked, and what did not. Be clear about what you expect as a supervisor. Some of the responsibilities in this relationship are implicit: not only guiding the supervisee's research, but also building their confidence, maintaining enthusiasm, nurturing critical thinking, and supporting their development in a career. Remember, too, it is in your interest that the supervisee does well.

A contract between a supervisor and supervisee should help both meet their obligations. But respect is also important. From the standpoint of the supervisee, this includes the academic experience that the supervisor brings both as a researcher and in terms of their familiarity with the processes; on the other hand, supervisors need to respect the life experiences of their students. Good supervision takes time, and respecting each others' time is critical. Supervisors may work with several people and have many other duties and responsibilities, and it is unreasonable to ask them to respond overnight to a manuscript for publication, to read a literature review, or to respond to ethics questions, and be ready for a meeting the next day. Respect the requirements of specific tasks and meet obligations as agreed. Allow reasonable time for feedback on written work, a response to a query, or to seek an appointment. On the other hand, supervisors also need to respect and acknowledge time constraints, and ensure they return written material in a timely manner. Supervisors should provide supportive and clear feedback.

Early career researchers (ECRs) require guidance from people who can lead them in the right direction but also freedom to

develop as independent scientists. How can they find a mentor at that stage in their career who will understand their needs?

Mentors and supervisors were all once early career researchers, but finding the right person is not straightforward. One way for an ECR to find somebody who might provide some support and guidance is to learn a bit about them first. Do your own homework – check their profile on their academic website or their LinkedIn profile, for instance, to check whether their experience is relevant. Then email them, and ask to meet. You can ask them how they became a senior researcher, and encourage them to talk about their experiences. This will give you an idea of who they are and whether you find it easy to talk to them, before checking if they are willing to mentor you on an ongoing basis. If there's enough in their experience that is relevant and inspiring, then perhaps you found the right person.

What are the best practices and key ingredients to successful supervision?

Respect each other's time. If you are asked to submit a 10 page summary of their work, then please don't send a 40 page document with attachments and expect these to be read. And don't submit the 10 pages a few hours before you're going to meet. Both supervisor and supervisee should be prepared for meetings and keep notes about what you want to ask or explain. Keep to meeting times and topics, and don't make assumptions. You can always ask to raise another question, but cover everything that you have already identified as important first. Confirm if you can raise other questions. Be supportive, even if critical, so that the supervisee is open to learning; destructive comments lead to downhill spirals and undermine relationships. And respect boundaries – a supervisory relationship is a professional relationship, not a friendship.

Beyond formal supervision, ECRs often need more general guidance in their careers. Should the supervisor play the

role of a mentor as well? Is it better to keep it separate? Is there a recipe for success when it comes to combining both?

Sometimes the supervisor and mentor can be the one person, but the tasks are different – a supervisor is responsible for a specified work or study task, for example, undertaking masters or doctoral research. In contrast, a mentor works with you in relation to your broad goals and aims, and is there for you to talk to when you want general advice – how to put together an interdisciplinary team, which research grants to write, whether to seek promotion or apply for a new job, and so on. A mentor can be a very helpful person to have on side, if the supervisor – supervisee relationship is in trouble, for instance. A supervisor can be a mentor, particularly if they are senior and have the experience and connections to provide the mentee with general career guidance. But there is always value in having a second (or third or more) person to assist, guide and encourage a mentee.

How would you say mentorship contributes to the professional growth of ECRs and doctoral students? Can one grow without a mentor?

Most of us have had mentors, even through fleeting relationships, to occasionally provide some guidance, direction and support. All of us have benefited from other people keeping us in mind, connecting us or introducing us to other people, promoting us without being asked to, and acting in ways that allow us to model our own behavior. And a mentor can sometimes ask tough questions which might provide the ECR with clarity: Do you really want to be a researcher? Where do you want to be in a decade? They can help guide you and provide you with a few useful strategies. It helps to find someone who inspires you, with whom you can talk – they may not be able to take you on as a mentee, but they may be able to refer you to someone else, and you've already now made a good academic contact that will serve you well in the future.

Postdoctoral Mentorship: A magical Duo!

By Kikelemo Mbanda, Cohort Five, Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria



I had career goals and desired to ultimately achieve my dream of becoming a strong voice in maternal and child health policy research; a dream I had begun to cherish once I clinched the CARTA PhD fellowship. Before long, it dawned on me that desire alone could not deliver on this dream; I had to act. Yes, I wanted to take off promising myself to give my best to achieve my dream but I barely could appreciate the ground on which to place my feet or the next steps on the journey to 'there'. With a background in political science and hardly anyone with similar training and interest in my country, I had quietly feared for myself and the adventure I was going to undertake. In retrospect, I am grateful to CARTA for providing much needed support which enabled me to confidently make it to important junctures such as getting a PhD, on the journey to 'there'.

Just as I breathed a sigh of relief after the PhD came another call; the CARTA Re-entry. This time I eagerly embraced the call to apply for two major reasons: i) I considered that the Re-entry was an opportunity to consolidate learning and application in health policy research; ii) I was assured that I would again enjoy requisite support as the Re-entry application form required applicants to propose two mentors who would support them through the one-year research journey. I participated in the mandatory CARTA postgraduate workshop which afforded applicants for the Re-entry grant, the rare opportunity to interact with and choose mentors from a pool of experienced facilitators from diverse research fields. Prof Violet Naanyu of Moi University, Kenya, was one of the facilitators who struck a chord with me. Her teaching philosophy and demonstrated competence in areas where I struggled attracted her to me. With encouragement from a CARTA staff, I proposed to her to be my mentor on the Re-entry journey and she kindly obliged and immediately began to support me in preparing my proposal. Happily, I was selected. For many months after the commencement of the Re-entry, I consulted with my internal mentor, Professor Femi Mimiko, and scarcely involved Prof. Naanyu except on a few

occasions when I sent hello messages and informed her about progress on the research. Little did I know that I was missing so much by not allowing her to play her role as mentor.

The Re-entry required me to exchange visits with the External Mentor but when the time for the visits drew close, I envisaged that the visits would not be feasible due to COVID-19 restrictions. Somehow, I communicated my intention to visit her on a very short notice and was pleasantly surprised that she obliged and thought the visits would be possible. She immediately began to make plans and prepare and the visits did happen! Pressed for time and ignorant about the benefits of mentorship, I just wanted to fulfill a scheduled activity (visit my External Mentor) but I got a full plate! Prof. Naanyu put in time and effort to ensure that my visit to Kenya from September 21st to October 1st 2021 was the most fruitful. She prepared the most focused schedule of activities for my visit which included time for writing and co-analysis with her, opportunities to watch her present at a conference, showcase my current research titled 'Service Structure for Maternal Healthcare Governance in IDP Camps in Nigeria' at the Center of Excellence in Women & Child Health, Aga Khan University, the University of Nairobi, Reproductive Health – Grand Rounds, and the Special Brown Bag organized by the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC). Also, she planned one-on-one meetings with Dr. Richard Ayah and Prof. Marleen Temmerman, experts in Health Governance and Maternal & Child Health respectively from whom I received very useful feedback on my research. As well, she organized meetings where I shared research tips with a younger CARTA fellow. We spent time together at dinners and travelled to see places and at these times, Prof. Naanyu shared with me her experiences of successes and failures from which I drew lessons for work and family life as a female academic.

Prof. Violet Naanyu visited Obafemi Awolowo University from October 5th to 11th, 2021. In this period, she singlehandedly facilitated a 4-day

research seminar attended by over a hundred postgraduate students and faculties from the Departments of Political Science, Economics, Psychology, Sociology, Demography & Social Statistics, Geography, Medical Rehabilitation, Nursing Science, Community Health, Institute of Public Health, and the Faculties of Dentistry and Education in the University. Participants gained from her broad experience in qualitative inquiry and approaches as she taught on the scope of responsible conduct of research, characteristics of qualitative research, qualitative & quantitative sampling techniques, protection of human research participants in research, introduction to transcription and qualitative data analysis, writing qualitative manuscripts for publication, peer review and responsible publication practices, and development of policy briefs. Also, Prof. Naanyu had one-on-one session with some staff and postgraduate students to offer guidance on their research. In particular, I was happy that some of my postgraduate supervisees had the chance to discuss their ongoing research and receive useful feedback from her. The planning and execution of the seminar alongside Prof. Naanyu honed my problem-solving skills and strengthened my confidence to take on new and challenging tasks.

Indeed, I am convinced that PhDs and Postdocs can be sufficiently guided on what are the best decisions and find inspiration and empowerment to pursue them if they take advantage of mentorship opportunities and commit to them early in their pursuits. Undoubtedly, I benefitted from knowledge sharing, problem solving and advice on the mentorship journey with Prof. Naanyu. The experience helped me to pick up pace and to continue on the Re-entry, and I am well on my way to the finishing line with a cultivated heart and improved hands.



Kikelemo Mbanda and her mentor Violet Naanyu.

The Use of Bibliometric Data in Research of Public and Population Health: A Chat with Jude Igumbor



Jude Igumbor

It is impossible to ignore the increasing digitalization and proliferation of data sources and repositories. This development broadens the prospects for integrating and sharing public and population health data. **Jude Igumbor**, CARTA Focal Person from the University of the Witwatersrand, embarked on a project dubbed 'CARTA Evidence Website' that will offer a comprehensive list of publicly funded published and unpublished data and facilitate amassing of data to promote accurate monitoring of population health and inform the precision of healthcare policy and innovations. He spoke to the CARTA Communications Officer, **Gloria Chemutai**. Read on.

Tell us about the CARTA Evidence website. What did you wish to accomplish with the project?

The CARTA Evidence project aims to demonstrate the impact of the CARTA network by collating, analyzing, synthesizing, improving visibility, and facilitating the uptake of empirical and theoretical evidence it produces. The project seeks to identify and showcase human capacity and synergies within and outside the network to drive opportunities, operational efficiencies, and discovery.

The project will create a collaborative environment of African scientists and non-scientist consumers of open research working in communities of practice and across boundaries and disciplines. Building on available information technology, the project will increase access to data and speed of discovery and scientific advancement.

This project will offer a comprehensive list of publicly funded published and unpublished data and facilitate amassing of data to promote accurate monitoring of public and population health and inform the precision of healthcare policy and innovations.

How did you arrive at developing the idea? And what do you hope will be the impact of your work?

In CARTA's ten years, a lot of evidence for change has been generated by its fellows. Managing the increasing volume of inter-related multidisciplinary evidence is manually daunting and inefficient or downright unreliable and impossible. With this challenge in mind, we started exploring ways of managing and making the evidence visible and available to relevant stakeholders.

We started with the basic use of Microsoft Excel to pivot tables and gradually grew into using artificial intelligence tools and methods. The leaps were in an attempt to be more accurate in our processing of

evidence, creating an agile and integrated workflow. These multi-stages of data management start with verifying fellows' credentials to information acquisition across multiple databases, tables, and online platforms, sorting, and presentation. The project's evolution was also driven by the need to be timely and routinized in terms of backend technical operation and frontend user customization to meet diverse permutations of information needs.

Among other things, we hope that the CARTA Evidence website will promote the obvious efficient evidence management, contribute to policy and planning, human capital development, and enable human capital and data findability and possible analysis to inform the resolution of simple to complex public and population health challenges.

What do you say about CARTA fellows' research outputs? What more can they do to take their research findings closer to their intended audiences?

The fellows have made a lot of progress in terms of their research studies' scope and geographic reach. Their work covers priority research needs in the region, as outlined in regional vision statements and strategic plans. They are conducting research in more countries than where CARTA partner institutions are sited. This is due to cross-border collaboration and/or their ability to harness secondary data to cover cogent research gaps.

Also emerging organically and through CARTA's deliberate development approach is the

The screenshot shows the CARTA Evidence website's Bibliometric Dashboard. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for HOME, THE PROJECT, BIBLIOMETRIC DASHBOARD, RESOURCES, and CONTACT US. Below the navigation is a large image of two people, a man and a woman, looking at a tablet displaying a data visualization. The text 'Coalition of African Academy of Research-oriented' is overlaid on the image. Below the image, the text 'BIBLIOMETRIC DASHBOARD' is displayed. At the bottom, there is a search bar and filters for Home Institution, Host Institution, Gender, and Cohort.

interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary synergy of research conducted by individual fellows. When you look at all the fellows' combined research output, a complimentary continuum of knowledge on various topics and population groups begins to take shape. Together, the fellows are addressing public and population health research needs holistically on multiple topics.

To bring the research closer to the intended audience, the CARTA Evidence website will host well-curated and easy-to-use plain language summaries and policy briefs of research conducted by fellows to enable public engagement and advocacy for change. Quarterly summaries of this information

will be shared through the website, quarterly newsletter and mailing list. In the future, we will host online and live public engagements, town hall meetings, and co-creation events between global topic leaders and relevant stakeholders, including civil society groups and individuals.

We are now at over 100 CARTA graduates; what do you wish CARTA fellows will accomplish in their research and academic journeys?

I hope that the CARTA Evidence website will stimulate greater collaboration among CARTA fellows towards creating the envisaged critical mass of highly skilled change makers. I am hoping that this will

spur communities of practice and the emergence of research leaders who are able to multiply themselves by mentoring others in various research priority areas. This target will help sustain the CARTA vision beyond its life span. I also wish to see greater technology adoption to enhance research mentorship and professional development of early-career researchers. Besides, I hope to also see the development of CARTA fellows' capacity to use cutting-edge and increasingly accessible technology to increase the speed of science and discovery, evidence translation and stakeholder engagement, policy impact monitoring, and efficient response to future epidemics.

carta-evidence.org

'African Researchers are on the Move!'

Cadmus Eniola is a CARTA Cohort Seven Graduate and a lecturer at the Department of Community Medicine, College of Medicine, University of Ibadan. CARTA Communications Officer, **Gloria Chemutai**, caught up with her to learn of her experience at CARTA, her aspirations and the future of African research. She retraced her journey at CARTA and viewed CARTA's over 100 graduates milestone as a promisory of wonderful things to come. Read on...



Cadmus Eniola

What was your journey and experience as a doctoral student like? Besides, what does it take to succeed while at it?

My journey as a doctoral student was a good one, mostly because CARTA provided an enabling environment. The constant prodding and pushing were very helpful. Being a member of a cohort also helped. If not, it would have been a long and lonely walk to freedom! I think the most priceless quality for success is determination and resilience. Once you make up your mind to get the PhD, then the battle is half won.

Do you think there are particular characteristics that you must have to succeed as a doctoral student?

I think important characteristics needed as a doctoral student include discipline, tenacity, resilience and optimism. The task may seem daunting at first, but with hard work, perseverance and God's grace, any candidate can make it.

What advice can you offer women who wish to pursue their PhDs.? And what do you think can set them back?

I think women are special because it takes a lot to fulfil the various roles we have. My advice to women is to

decide early enough and start the process. There will never be a perfect time; the husband will always need you, the children never grow up all at once, and your other family members will always need you. The perfect time to embark on a PhD will never arise. The right time to start is immediately! I think nothing can set us back except the walls we mount up for ourselves due to our insecurities and perhaps fear of failure. My advice is to be resolute in your decision to get a PhD. Once you believe that you can make it, with God's favour, you will.

CARTA is celebrating surpassing 100 graduates this year; how do you see doctoral training growing in Africa in the years to come?

The CARTA programme has been awesome. Attaining the milestone of 100 graduates is just the beginning of so many wonderful things to come. World, watch out; African researchers are on the move!

What lessons have you drawn as a CARTA fellow that you can share with others in the journey?

I have learnt so many lessons as a CARTA Fellow. Pay attention to all the tools you will be taught, and

by all means, teach as many people as you can. The world can only be a better place if we share the competencies gained. As a Fellow, I have learnt how to multitask and the judicious use of my time. I have also had the opportunity and pleasure of mentoring others. This was indeed very fulfilling.

Tell us about what you wish to achieve after this and what you want to accomplish in your area of research

I wish to advance relevant, acceptable, affordable and practical solutions for the challenges faced by older persons. I hope to be among the top experts in the field. My dream is to develop community-based care options for older persons in Nigeria that are applicable to other countries with similar social and economic settings in the sub-region and globally.

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My advice is to be resolute in your decision to get a PhD. Once you believe that you can make it, with God's favour, you will.
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Graduates Have Their Say



CARTA gave me a voice, skills and instilled confidence in me to strengthen my research profile. Over the years, CARTA has supported my growth as an academican through trainings in grants writing and supervision of students – Alinane Linda, Cohort Two Graduate, University of Malawi



I am honored to be part of the CARTA family. Through the CARTA PhD program, I had the rare opportunity to be exposed to high quality and remarkable public health research which tremendously contributed to my career – Herbert Longwe, Cohort Two Graduate University of Malawi



The CARTA PhD program, especially the Joint Advanced Seminars (JASes) was a unique opportunity to build my skills in scientific writing, research designing, data analysis, working with and in teams, grant writing, and networking, among others. These skills are key in advancing my capacity in teaching, research, and community service – Chrispus Mayora, Cohort Four Graduate, Makerere University



My four years in the CARTA PhD fellowship were great and a memory I will cherish for a lifetime. It has been full of learning and allowed me to meet different facilitators, whom I learned a lot from. I am thankful to all, and it is now time for me to share the academic gains that CARTA invested in me – Emmanuel Kaindoa, Cohort Five Graduate, Ifakara Health Institute



The CARTA fellowship has been an awesome experience for me. It has greatly broadened my horizons in all spheres of academic life. Some of the benefits I have gained include significant improvement in my capacity to conduct interdisciplinary research and to network with colleagues as well as consolidation of my writing and pedagogical skills – Bolutife Olusanya, Cohort Four Graduate, University of Ibadan



CARTA has been immensely supportive and contributed greatly to my PhD training. I have grown both as an independent researcher and as a teacher. CARTA's support served as my springboard to conduct high-quality and impactful research, shape postgraduate training in my institution and serve as a leader in my field – Sunday Ayamolowo, Cohort Four Graduate, Obafemi Awolowo University



I see it as a very rare privilege to be a CARTA PhD graduate. This experience of a lifetime has given me the opportunity to become a research leader in my career and a mentor to upcoming ones in the field – Olufunmilola Banjo, Cohort Three Graduate, Obafemi Awolowo University



CARTA has positioned itself as a role model in the production of a critical mass of quality PhD holders that are globally competitive in teaching and knowledge production. Upon graduation from the CARTA PhD program, I have published journal articles, won research grants and participated in university wide research capacity building with fellow CARTA graduates and academic mentors – Olufemi Adetutu, Cohort Seven Graduate, Obafemi Awolowo University



The CARTA training experience increased my skills and competencies in conducting empirical research across different thematic areas in the field of public health. The platform created invaluable networking opportunities and long-lasting relationships with colleagues across Africa. I am also grateful for the mentorship from more skilled researchers and for the scholarship opportunities to present at conferences and to publish articles – Modupe Taiwo, Cohort Four Graduate, Obafemi Awolowo University

The CARTA PhD program has been instrumental in my research career. The support for my PhD opened many doors including my current postdoc fellowship through National Institute of Health, Forgyat International Center. My career in research is really shaping up and my interest in HIV and the aging population is continuing to grow – Jepchirchir Kiplagat, Cohort Five Graduate, Moi University



CARTA provided a platform for me to develop critical thinking and research skills as a young researcher. It opened up a large network that I benefit from and serves me well in my role as a Research and Policy Analyst. I am also grateful for the lifelong relationships I have established with my peers – Tumaini Malenga, Cohort Four Graduate, Malawi University

The CARTA program placed me at a vantage point in research conversations. My research network opened, courtesy of the preparatory seminars and PhD funding from CARTA. I currently have four research projects with different teams across the globe, and they all focus on changing health and fitness for all ages – Karani Magutah, Cohort Four Graduate, Moi University



CARTA was instrumental in providing me with the tools and confidence I needed to complete my PhD on infant feeding in South Africa. Since then, I have been invited to write book chapters and collaborate on a number of exciting research initiatives linked to this topic – Sara Nieuwoudt, Cohort Four Graduate, University of the Witwatersrand

The CARTA seminars and workshops greatly enhanced my research abilities and enabled me to complete my PhD on time. Now I am in active research, collaborating both in the continent and internationally. Besides, I am engaged in the capacity building of students and colleagues at my institution. The CARTA experience has been truly transformative for me – Oluwaseun Obasola, Cohort Three Graduate, University of Ibadan



My CARTA experience was not only about obtaining a PhD! It was also about developing myself in the field of academics and, most importantly, getting equipped with the confidence to contribute to strengthening oral health community programs in Gauteng, South Africa – Mpho Molete, Cohort Six Graduate, University of the Witwatersrand.

Being a CARTA fellow was a highlight in my academic career. The experience of sharing and learning from people of diverse backgrounds enhanced my learning experience and outlook of health beyond the confines of a clinic or operating room. Today, I look at ear and hearing care wholesomely – Kaitesi Batamuliza, Cohort Four Graduate, University of Rwanda.



My PhD Journey: A Tale of Grit

By Dieudonne Uwizeye, Cohort One, University of Rwanda

CARTA awarded me the doctoral fellowship as a cohort fellow (2010/2011) from the University of Rwanda when I was a fresh Master's graduate, still struggling with research methodology skills, with no single publication, and broken oral and written skills in English. It was a few years after the University had shifted from using the French language to English as a medium of instruction. However, CARTA has a unique pedagogical approach that prepares for excellence in teaching, research, and academic leadership. It prepared me for various positions and promotions after my graduation for the PhD in 2015.

During the doctoral program, CARTA has a deliberate structure of encouraging interactions between CARTA fellows and CARTA facilitators, who are exceptionally experienced researchers from both Africa and beyond Africa during the Joint Advanced Seminars (JASes). These seminars were instrumental to my professional development in research and academic leadership due to the focused content and individualized support given to fellows. Among these, I want to mention the language support framed within JAS and pre-JAS activities through the ESE:O methodology,



Dieudonne Uwizeye

which enabled me to develop my academic writing capacity in English.

With this support, I completed my PhD in time with four publications, including two from my PhD thesis. This happened while the host University, the University of Dar es Salaam, required a PhD monograph only for graduation.

After my PhD, I remained connected with the professional networks introduced to me during the CARTA doctoral fellowship. This professional relationship was nurtured during my CARTA

postdoctoral fellowship conducted at the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) in January-December 2019. Again, the CARTA postdoc was an opportunity to strengthen my research capacity through the interactions with an excellent research team at APHRC. During my stay at APHRC, I wrote six manuscripts, of which I was the lead author in three, and all of them were published in the subsequent year. Also, after my CARTA Postdoc, I won a competitive research grant which added to two other research grants I had won after PhD graduation. These achievements qualified me for the promotion of Senior Lecturer, a position I took in October 2021.

Besides, I was appointed Director for Research and Innovation for the College of Arts and Social sciences. I plan to keep my publication momentum; through strengthening the professional networks built during the CARTA fellowships and utilizing the research and grant writing capacity acquired during my fellowship. I can see that the strategies are already producing positive results as I have had three publications in the year (January-November, 2021).

Indeed, the role of the CARTA fellowship in my career development as a teacher, researcher, and academic leader is incomparable.

From Sweden with a Message of Collaboration in Health Research

By Emma Bergstedt, former CARTA coordinator for Non-African partners

After more than six years working for CARTA as the Non-African Partners' Coordinator, I am now embarking on my own PhD journey. I have met many inspiring people during these years, among them lots of enthusiastic CARTA fellows. My impression is that the CARTA research training is an excellent way to develop skills, knowledge and experience, and it has inspired me to try to pursue a research career myself. One of the interesting aspects of the CARTA training is the multidisciplinary approach with the mixture of the fellows' topics and educational backgrounds. In that respect I think I will get a similar experience at the National Centre for Priority Setting in Healthcare, at Linköping University in Sweden where I am doing the PhD.

My research topic is in healthcare governance and more specifically politicians' role in priority setting in health care. I'm focusing on health care governance in Sweden, but in the future I think it would be very interesting with a more global focus.



Emma Bergstedt

I would like to eventually aim for a collaborative project with researchers in the African CARTA partners (if you read this and are interested in my topic, contact me 😊).

One of my hopes for CARTA is that CARTA can become the number one network for equal and reciprocal partnerships, between researchers

and universities in and outside Africa. The network can facilitate long lasting global collaborations that prevail after CARTA's existence. CARTA has a very good potential to change many people's perspectives and attitudes.

I think that the activities that CARTA is currently planning for improving the research infrastructure can be interesting new African-centered configurations for working together. I hope that many people in the partners will actively seek out more opportunities for exchange and collaboration between the African and the Non-african partners.

We often have the same ultimate aim, to improve population health in our countries and beyond, but we have different ways of handling issues. Collaboration is of mutual benefit since it can provide more depth to our perspectives. Together we could develop new interesting ideas that can translate into actions to build capacity both in and outside Africa.

CARTA Graduates by Country



Most Graduates fall under these research areas:



Celebrating 125 graduates as of December 2021



Graduates by gender



48%
Male



52%
Female



1351 Total of peer reviewed publications



External grants raised by fellows: **\$23,186,280**

Editorial Team:

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