



# ARTA

Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa

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## **Empowering Tomorrow's African Research Leaders: CARTA's Post-PhD Support**

**CARTA NEWSLETTER**

## Welcome Note



Rita Karoki, CARTA Project Officer

### Welcome to the January - June 2024 issue of the CARTA Newsletter!

At the halfway of 2024, we take a moment to reflect on the journey of the Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa (CARTA), specifically, support for its fellows after graduation. The post-PhD phase is a critical period for early career researchers (ECRs) as they transition from being students to independent researchers, scholars, and/or professionals.

Since its inception, CARTA has been committed to strengthening the research environment for African institutions to lead globally competitive research. Established in 2008, CARTA initially focused on supporting doctoral training and infrastructure. Recognizing the need to expand support beyond doctoral training, postdoctoral training and institutional support were introduced in the second phase. The aim was to secure the future of CARTA graduates and ensure sustained growth towards research leadership.

In its current strategic phase (III), CARTA has launched research hubs to further strengthen the African research ecosystem by offering a conducive environment for co-designing research agendas and engaging with policymakers. Research hubs will also be a space for our graduates to grow as research leaders.

CARTA continues to enhance its post-PhD support and is currently piloting a structured mentorship program for postdoctoral awardees. The mentorship program will guide the postdoctorals as they navigate their academic and professional journeys. Discussions are ongoing

*“Since its inception, CARTA has been committed to strengthening the research environment for African institutions to lead globally competitive research.”*

about additional ways in which CARTA can support the strengthening of research leadership.

CARTA kicked off the postdoctoral awards in 2016 and cumulatively, the program has awarded 84 postdoctoral awards to 64 fellows, with 47% of the recipients being men and 53% women. In addition to the traditional postdoctoral program, which requires a 12-month tenure at a different institution, CARTA provides options for a split postdoctoral fellowship (with a minimum stay of 3 months) and a re-entry grant (where the awardee stays at their institution of employment). The re-entry grant has been particularly favourable with female fellows who often have family priorities that do not allow them to be away for extended periods. However, male graduates are also increasingly choosing this option, as it allows them to balance their family and community responsibilities.

The CARTA postdoctoral program has recorded notable success, continually evolving to best serve its graduates. This issue spotlights the program's [postdoctoral] impact and the remarkable achievements of our awardees. They share how the awards have enabled them to network and collaborate with colleagues, leading to among others winning grants and advancing their research careers.

As a valued member of the CARTA family, we invite you to explore this newsletter and celebrate the achievements of the dynamic CARTA community. Together, we are shaping a future where African researchers can lead with excellence and innovation. Thank you for being a part of our research capacity-strengthening journey. We have achieved so much because of your continued support.

# Strengthening Research Leadership Beyond Graduation

By Erick Muge, CARTA Communication Officer and Marta Vicente-Crespo, CARTA Program Manager

With each five-year cycle, CARTA continues to evolve to effectively address pertinent issues and strengthen research capacity at the partner institutions while taking into consideration the program's maturity and the lessons learned. CARTA was established to enhance doctoral training and research infrastructure in African universities and phase I of the program laid the foundation through rigorous programs, mentorship, and collaborative networks. In Phase II, CARTA transitioned from PhD training to providing support to the graduates emerging from the program. This support included postdoctoral awards, training on postgraduate supervision, and Graduate Grant Writing Workshops (GGWW). In Phase III, we continue to support our graduates including new elements like a structured mentorship and new training modules. Additionally, the program is rethinking the support that it can provide to graduates.

## Phase I (2011-2015)

Focused on two objectives:

- Strengthening doctoral training through the creation of a collaborative doctoral training program in public and population health; and
- Strengthening research infrastructure and capacity at Africa universities.

## Phase II (2016-2020)

Focused on three objectives:

- Sustaining the production of a critical mass of well-trained African academics at the doctoral level;
- Institutionalization of the CARTA interventions at the African partner universities; and
- Securing the future of CARTA graduates through provision of postdoctoral opportunities.

## Phase III (2021-2025)

Focused on four objectives:

- Maintenance of a pipeline of high quality Early Career Researchers;
- Creation of research hubs in partner institutions;
- Creation of a research supportive environment; and
- Enhancing the engagement of the CARTA community with society.

When it comes to postdoctoral support, CARTA graduates benefit from a dynamic postdoctoral program that allows them to compete for up to one award of each type (fellowship or re-entry grant) for a total of 24 months. Additionally, they can apply for other research grants made available to CARTA graduates and CARTA faculty. During the award, graduates lead their own research project, attend an international conference, develop new networks, and produce scientific manuscripts with the support of their mentors at the host institution and at their institution of employment. CARTA is currently piloting a structured mentorship program that will pair each postdoctoral awardee with a more senior CARTA graduate and a senior CARTA faculty. Since 2016, CARTA has granted 84 postdoctoral awards to its graduates, including 28 postdoctoral fellowships and 56 re-entry grants. Of the 84, 11 **postdoctoral awards**, have been competitively awarded this year (2024) to graduates across partner institutions.

Transitioning into the role of an independent researcher can be challenging for early-career scholars. To support our graduates in this transition, CARTA offers GGWWs that empower researchers to conceptualize their research program and develop successful grant proposals. During these workshops, graduates network with other graduates and facilitators. Graduates are also included in CARTA's supervisors workshop to enhance their capacity to supervise postgraduate students. In addition to the direct support to ECRs in the post-PhD phase of their careers, CARTA has launched a new strategic objective envisioned to create a research-intensive environment conducive to career growth for our graduates, what we call the CARTA Research Hubs. The activities under this objective are beginning to take off and we look forward to seeing how our graduates grow into research leadership within these cross-country collaborative research groups.

CARTA fellows and graduates are CARTA's best ambassadors. Graduates are integrated into the consortium as facilitators, mentors, and focal persons, and they contribute to our governance, curriculum development, and strategic discussions. Through this, CARTA not only aims to strengthen the graduates' research and academic leadership skills but also transfer ownership and leadership of the program to the graduates. As we look to the future, CARTA remains committed to sustaining and expanding these initiatives.

### CARTA offers graduates two types of awards:

- **The postdoctoral fellowship:** A classic 12-month long stay at an institution different to their own, or a "splitpostdoc" in which the fellow visit an external institution for at least 3 consecutive months but can implement part of the work from their home institution; and
- **The re-entry grant:** Allows them to lead a research project while based at their institution and includes a component of external mentorship to ensure some level of exposure to a different environment.



## 11 CARTA Graduates Who Received Postdoctoral Awards in 2024



**Skye Nandi Adams**  
University of the Witwatersrand  
Re-entry Grant



**Christine Minoo Mbindvo**  
University of Nairobi  
Re-entry Grant



**Alex John Ntamatungiro**  
Ifakara Health Institute  
Re-entry Grant



**Catherine Mawia Musyoka**  
University of Nairobi  
Re-entry Grant



**Oyelemi Olaiumoke Oyelade**  
Obafemi Awolowo University  
Re-entry Grant



**Priscille Musabirema**  
University of Rwanda  
Re-entry Grant



**Nanfizat Abiket Alamukii**  
University of Ibadan  
Postdoctoral Fellowship



**Eniola Olubukola Cadmus**  
University of Ibadan  
Re-entry Grant



**Adeyinka Olufolake Adefolarin**  
University of Ibadan  
Postdoctoral Fellowship



**Henry Zakumumpa**  
Makerere University  
Postdoctoral Fellowship



**Blessings Nyasilia  
Kaunda-Khangamwa**  
Kamuzu University of Health Science  
Postdoctoral Fellowship

# The Impact and Evolution of CARTA's Graduate Grant-Writing Workshop

By Susan Bondy, CARTA Facilitator and Associate Professor - Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto



The CARTA **Graduate Grant Writing Workshop** (GGWW) celebrated its 9th year last November. Held in Nairobi, Kenya from October 30 to November, the 2023 GGWW had 24 participants who were CARTA graduates from partner institutions and two observers from other institutions.

The GGWW aims to provide a platform where early career PhD graduates can converge and interact with peers and mentors, enhancing their skills in the research generation process. In this program, participants, who include post-PhD graduates, gain greater competence and confidence in grant writing. Preparation begins several weeks earlier with independent research identifying research gaps and funding opportunities. The main event is a six-day, in-person writing workshop and retreat. A key activity is the expert peer-review process, where participants receive feedback from global experts in their field of study. Scaffolded writing, feedback, and discussion occur at every stage.

The workshop content and approach are heavily inspired by the CARTA philosophy and methodology, forming an integral part of the CARTA curriculum designed for adaptation and application across various settings within the network.

Participants are encouraged to apply the skills emphasized throughout the CARTA PhD training curriculum. These skills include conducting literature reviews, refining research methods, enhancing grant writing abilities, and disseminating knowledge.

The training covers the entire research process from the earliest stages of identifying a research gap and conducting a literature review to the critical selection and refinement of research methods, ethics and budgeting, grant-writing techniques, and knowledge dissemination. The facilitators lead the workshop session. However, the focus remains on the participant's work. Participants and mentors are treated as equals and peers, fostering an environment where the most effective feedback, inspiration, and encouragement arise from conversations among the participants themselves.

The GGWW workshop model continues to evolve through experimentation and refinement of presentations, exercises, and resources. The 2023 workshop was the first time the Moodle platform was used for asynchronous work ahead of the in-person sessions. Participants seemed well prepared and gave good reviews of most of the materials and exercises. In both the Moodle and in-person work, participants demonstrated independence in locating critical reference materials to support their writing, utilizing both standard academic resources and open-access platforms for methods and evidence. Reviews of the new platform also highlighted areas for improvement. As part of the ongoing advancement of the GGWW curriculum, there is an opportunity for further integration with the CARTA curriculum, and the **CARTA Evidence** platforms.

Since its inception in 2015, the GGWWs have positively impacted CARTA graduates and collaborators. For example, at the 2023 workshop, Professor Violet Naanyu led a session where participants shared their research dissemination and engagement activities. These CARTA graduates were deeply engaged with their communities and working directly with stakeholders; returning to the communities that supported their research to ensure that the findings could be applied to change lives and directly impact program and policy implementation.

## Why Mentorship for Graduates Matters

By Ademola J. Ajuwon, CARTA Facilitator and Professor - Department of Health Promotion and Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria



Mentoring is a relationship in which a senior professional with valuable skills, experience, knowledge, and wisdom offers advice, information, guidance, support, or opportunity to a junior professional for that individual's professional development. Mentoring is a personal relationship involving direct interaction between a mentor and mentee, with the former being the person with

greater experience and influence within an organization.

There are three main reasons why mentorship is important for the CARTA program. First, as early career researchers, effective mentorship is essential for personal development, career guidance, and choices. Second, mentorship can positively impact the graduates' retention and research productivity, including publication and grant success. Finally, mentored professionals connect better in their work environment and report higher levels of satisfaction with their academic experience compared to their non-mentored peers.

### The CARTA mentorship program

The program aims to provide graduates with another level of professional guidance from senior professionals to enable them to achieve their career goals. We envisage that mentored graduates will benefit from guidance in work/social life balance, scholarly writing, grant applications, leadership, and networking. The need for linkage into the professional network is important for the CARTA graduate who wants to accelerate his/her career advancement as an independent researcher. There is no structured mentorship scheme in the current CARTA program. Fellows complete their doctoral training but do not benefit from a mentoring scheme organized with clear goals and set targets. CARTA has realized that there are existing human resources within the CARTA partner institutions that can be tapped to provide additional support for graduates to accelerate their career growth and development.

### Piloting CARTA's mentorship program

As we endeavor to provide more effective support during the post-PhD phase, we are implementing a structured mentorship program for the CARTA graduates recently onboarded in the

CARTA postdoctoral awards. A key element for the structured mentorship is to first hear from the graduates what they need. This will be achieved through organizing town hall meetings with postdoctoral fellows.

The first such meeting held in early May 2024, confirmed that the proposed initiative would be helpful for their career development. Second, senior faculty within the CARTA partner institutions willing to serve as mentors will be identified. Third, graduates will be matched with senior scholars in the CARTA community based on their expressed areas of need. To maximize the mentorship program, we are adding a second mentor to the mentor-mentee pair, who will be a CARTA graduate with more postdoctoral experience than the mentee. During the town hall, the graduates expressed that they need peer-to-peer mentoring as well, showing that this initiative is well-directed. Fourth, each mentor-mentee triad will develop a work plan to be implemented within a defined period and will commit to dedicate the needed efforts: the graduate, to take responsibility for their journey, and the mentors, to be responsive and support the mentee in that journey.

### Beyond CARTA's mentorship program

A committee of CARTA partners is discussing different ways in which the experience of our postdoctoral awardees can be improved. We are currently considering not only offering this kind of additional mentorship but also engaging with potential hosts of future postdoctorals to enhance the mentorship and supervision that they will offer to our graduates. This would be implemented through some kind of letter of commitment that will accompany the applications for postdoctoral awards in which the hosts will have to give details of the opportunities, resources, and support that the fellow will have access to during the postdoctoral period. All these initiatives will be presented at the Partners Forum in September to get feedback from other CARTA focal persons and determine the direction that our post-PhD support will take in the coming years.

*Some of the information in this article has been sourced (direct citations) from various publications: Measuring the Effectiveness of Mentoring Relationships (2005); The Impact of Mentoring and Advising At-risk Underrepresented Minority Students on Medical Performance (2001); Making the Most of Mentors: A Guide for Mentees (2009); Innovative Mentoring Programs to Promote Gender Equity in Academic Medicine (2001); and The POD: A New Model for Mentoring Underrepresented Minority Faculty (2006).*



## Research to Advocacy: Impact of CARTA's Re-entry Grant Program

Boladale Mapayi, CARTA Graduate - Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria



In the bustling city of Lagos, where sunlight turns the streets into golden pathways, my journey began with a re-entry grant from CARTA in June 2022. My mission? To unravel the complexities of sexual harassment within Nigerian higher education institutions.

Imagine this: heterosexual students quietly voicing their fears and those in same-sex relationships silently battling their struggles. With determination, I embarked on this journey. I had the opportunity to visit Brown University as the grant opened doors to its halls in Providence, Rhode Island. There, I shared my findings with enthusiastic students and experienced faculty members. Together, we delved into the harassment issues, tracing its origins within academic institutions. Collaboration was key. Alongside fellow researchers, we incorporated resilience into our work. Additionally, my mentor from my home institution accompanied me. Together, we organized the first-ever sexual harassment training for our institution's anti-harassment committee. Their eyes widened as we unveiled stories shared in trembling voices and scars concealed beneath academic attire. Our efforts bore fruit, resulting in two publications and presentations across continents. However, a gap remained — the silence of the sexual minority community. Fueled by the grant's support, we pursued an institutional grant to establish SHIELD — Sexual Harassment, Inclusivity, Equality, and Diversity — a program to safeguard our institutions against prejudice and fear. Research alone did not satisfy our desire for real impact; advocacy became our focus. National agencies sought our expertise, partners sought our counsel, and civil society stood with us. Our work played a pivotal role in shaping policies that brought hope to women and adolescent health. We delved into national HIV prevention standards, meticulously examining documents, leaving our fingerprints etched upon pathways toward a safer tomorrow.

The Gender Mobile Initiative in Nigeria provided invaluable guidance and our collaboration resulted in a systems change vision and strategy document that steered us toward equality. My focus shifted to maternal mental health, leading me to organize the national dialogue, where voices were harmonized to shape safe motherhood strategies prioritizing maternal well-being. I also provided training to emergency response forces across Africa and reviewed health protocols for adolescents in Nigeria. Today, I serve as the chair of the sexual harassment committee at a teaching hospital, dedicated to protecting against harassment. From the re-entry grant by CARTA to SHIELD, my journey continues, making a significant impact. As the sun still paints the streets, hinting at victory, I stand here knowing I am not alone. Together, we are creating a safer world for all.

## Research, Mentorship, and Growth: A CARTA-Fueled Journey of Academic Excellence

Karani Magutha, CARTA Graduate - Moi University



In 2014, I embarked on an incredible journey; I was awarded the esteemed CARTA PhD scholarship (cohort 4). The fellowship enabled me to pursue a doctoral degree in Medical Physiology at the University of Nairobi. Graduating in 2018 was a significant milestone, but it felt like the beginning of a more intricate story.

While my family and friends celebrated my academic achievement, I sensed a quiet urgency. I reflected on what lay beyond obtaining my PhD; and how I could utilize my knowledge to benefit not only myself, but also my scientific community, healthcare providers, and my nation. The transition from being a student to an independent researcher was challenging, especially with the uncertainties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. I grappled with the question, How do I establish myself and navigate the shifting landscape?

Amidst the chaos, CARTA remained a guiding light. Their follow-up emails encouraged me to consider a postdoctoral opportunity. It was an invitation to explore uncharted waters, and with determination as my compass, I applied for a split postdoctoral grant. The University of Auckland in New Zealand offered an exciting opportunity, where established exercise and sports medicine researchers awaited. Upon arriving in Auckland, I was welcomed into an exercise physiology laboratory filled with possibilities. Under the guidance of my mentor, Dr. Rebecca Meiring, I delved into evidence-based exercise prescriptions, mastering the art of tailoring recommendations for diverse genders, age groups, and chronic conditions. I also embraced new tools such as Physical Analysis Logging (PAL) analysis software and accelerometry to analyze data effectively. However, it was not solely about equations and protocols. It was about shaping a healthier future. I collaborated with local experts to craft personalized exercise prescriptions in the exercise and health clinics, blending science with empathy. Witnessing the transformative power of exercise, I realized its potential to improve physical and mental well-being. In addition to my research, I contributed to a sports medicine postgraduate curriculum, shaping syllabi and fostering curiosity among future practitioners. Our proposal to the Global Engagement Fund showed promise, motivating us to refine our approach and aim higher.

During my postdoctoral journey, I authored several publications, reflecting the collaborative efforts across borders. I expanded my network, connecting with individuals from Auckland, Ethiopia, Minnesota to Nairobi. Through these interactions, I discovered my passion for mentoring and guiding others towards their success. Now, as a researcher with diverse skills, I serve as a mentor and guide to those who look up to me. I have learned that growth is continuous and that settling is an illusion. As I strive for personal growth, I also extend my hand to support others in their journey. My journey remains ongoing — an interplay of curiosity, resilience, and mentorship. The scholarship marked the beginning, and the postdoctoral served as a vital bridge. Looking ahead, I anticipate creating a symphony — an ever-evolving composition where science intersects with the soul.



## Maria Teresa Bejarano - Outgoing Senior Research Adviser at the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

By Topistar Karani, Communications Officer, Research and Related Capacity Strengthening Division, APHRC



*“One of my favorite CARTA characteristics is the importance placed on addressing gender issues at all levels, both in its programmatic efforts and in gendering the research. CARTA has been a champion in this respect.”*

**Q** Tell us a little about yourself and how you joined the funding landscape.

**A** My journey began in Colombia, where I studied medicine. After completing my studies and fulfilling my obligatory social service as a medical doctor, I was accepted as a PhD student at the Department of Tumor Biology at Karolinska Institutet (KI), in Sweden. My research focused on immune responses to the Epstein-Barr virus (EBV), which is implicated in the genesis of Burkitt's lymphoma — the most common pediatric cancer in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The Department of Tumor Biology at KI was a melting pot of diversity, with more than 76 nationalities represented. This rich international environment fueled my interest in cross-cultural collaboration and deepened my eagerness to learn about other cultures — a hallmark of my professional work.

After spending 20 years at KI in Stockholm as a Researcher in Immunology and Tumor Biology, I moved to the Department of Research Cooperation at the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) in 2001. At that time, there was a specific need for someone with a health background, particularly someone fluent in Spanish. This need arose because Sida had plans to establish research cooperation with Honduras and health research collaboration with Bolivia. Upon joining Sida, I took charge of these tasks.

**Q** Can you share some highlights of your experience as the Sida officer overseeing CARTA?

**A** Upon my return from Tanzania in 2009, where I was the Coordinator of Swedish support to research cooperation and donor support to the education sector, I was offered the portfolio of CARTA and replaced Dr. Hannah Akuffo as Officer in charge of the program.

I had the opportunity and privilege to participate in the planning discussions of CARTA that took place in Bellagio in 2014. Participation of funders at this important meeting was pivotal in understanding CARTA's functioning, aspirations, and future. I have also participated in various occasions at the Joint Advanced Seminars (JASes) in Uganda, Kenya, and South Africa. These were great and enriching experiences that allowed Sida to understand further the concept and mode of operation of the program and follow up on the development of students and their rich interaction.

**Q** What achievements are you most proud of during your tenure?

**A** Participation in the evaluation of the JASes and funding of the program was of great value and provided Sida with greater understanding and justification for continuing to support the program.



**Q** What lessons can you draw from working with initiatives like CARTA?

**A** Support for research and higher education in Sub-Saharan Africa requires collaboration across the continent. This involves leveraging the comparative advantages of participating institutions and fostering partnerships that will drive development agendas at national, continental, and global levels.

The participation of university leadership has assisted in the adoption and institutionalization of the values and working ways of CARTA. The pandemic and its consequences required the digitalization of the content of many courses, and CARTA was well-prepared and equipped to contribute to this change in a timely manner.

Now that the understanding of the importance of support to local research training has become more visible, the CARTA model provides a good example of ways to fill the gap that the region has in terms of local research for Africa by Africans. In a time of global challenges that touch much on health, climate change/environment, and demography among others, CARTA provides a unique opportunity for interaction with global programs and the shaping of the global health agenda.

One of my favorite CARTA characteristics is the importance placed on addressing gender issues at all levels, both in its programmatic efforts and in gendering the research. CARTA has been a champion in this respect.

**Q** What are some of the highlights of your career that have shaped your views on global health and research?

**A** During my PhD training, I realized the big differences in how research was carried out in various regions of the world and the great inequalities in care and health among regions and within countries. My work on Burkitt's Lymphoma (BL) was an eye-opener in that respect. The first time I came in contact with a patient at the Uganda Cancer Institute, Joshua, a five-year-old boy with a deforming jaw tumor, I realized that the context in which disease happens is decisive for the health outcome.

The treatment of BL is among the least expensive cancer treatments, yet there were no financial, logistical, or adequate human resources to provide it. The work and views of my husband, a malaria researcher, have also contributed to how I see global health research.

While at Sida, I was in charge of, and coordinated the support for health research, which included serving on the Board of the three special health research UN programs hosted at WHO: Reproductive Health (HRP), Tropical Diseases Research (TDR), and the Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research. Active participation in these important programs has played an important role and helped shape my views on global health.

The work at Sida, where global health issues are addressed and the interaction between support to health and health research programs is considered, has helped shape my views on global health as a priority in improving health and achieving equity in health for all people worldwide.

**Q** Looking ahead, how do you envision Sida's continued support impacting the CARTA program and future initiatives?

**A** Sida is currently undergoing a restructuring that obeys the Government's views on aid. The CARTA model provides an opportunity to reconsider ways to support research training where bilateral research programs could not be funded.

## A New Milestone: Enrolling Cohort 11

By Marta Vicente-Crespo, CARTA Program Manager and Florah Karimi, CARTA Program Manager and Head of the Research and Related Capacity Strengthening Division, APHRC

Over the past decade, CARTA has successfully implemented initiatives to strengthen research capacity and enhance PhD training and research across the African continent. These initiatives have strengthened the research environment at our partner institutions and are aligned with CARTA's **Theory of Change (ToC)**, which aims to develop a critical mass of high-quality researchers who can drive change within their institutions.

CARTA has been enrolling cohorts of 20 – 25 PhD fellows each year, with the first cohort starting in 2011. In the latest newsletter, we celebrated the completion of CARTA PhD training by most of the cohort 10 fellows in 2023.

Due to changes in funding, the program had not been able to enroll more cohorts. However, with the support of Sida, we are now in the process of selecting 17 **cohort 11** fellows, who will begin their training in March 2025. The new grant includes a key aspect where CARTA institutions will act as mentors to other participating institutions.

Additionally, we are expanding our initiative to include researchers from fragile states.

We are thankful to Sida for this opportunity, which will allow us to bring in more fellows, institutions, and countries to the CARTA community. The fellowship doors also remain open to institutions interested in funding additional PhD fellows to strengthen the research ecosystem in the African region.

**ADDITIONAL NEWS:** *As we prepared this newsletter, we received confirmation from the OAK Foundation (a new funder to CARTA) that they will support three more PhD fellows for cohort 11. These fellows will undertake studies in the field of Prevention of Sexual Violence Against Children. We are excited to partner with this new funder to nurture African research talent in this important area of research.*

## Enhance PhD Training, Use the CARTA Digitized Curricula!

By Marta Vicente-Crespo, CARTA Program Manager, and Cavens Kithinji, CARTA Program Coordinator



During the CARTA Conference held in September 2023 in collaboration with the University of the Witwatersrand, we launched our digitized CARTA curricula. We are happy to announce that the first phase of digitization (reference materials for facilitation) has been completed and all the materials and videos are available **online**. With this effort, CARTA shares with the world the rationale and the how-to of the CARTA training interventions to strengthen PhD training, supervisory skills, institutional support for research and research training, and grant writing. These resources improve PhD training, build university systems to support research and research training, and provide support for future research leaders.

Together, the four curricula can create a conducive environment for research excellence: (1) PhD Training (2) Supervision (3) Institutional Support (4) Graduate Grant-writing

The curricula material includes several videos that explain how we teach and why:

- Why use the CARTA Curricula?
- What are the CARTA Curricula and how do I use them?
- CARTA: An overview of the approach to teaching and learning
- More videos on how to run some of the key activities

The journey has only started. We continue to look for resources to enhance these efforts by adding more teaching materials that can make it easier for CARTA and non-CARTA academics to implement training inspired in our program.

**You are invited to adapt CARTA ideas to meet your needs.**

## Fellows Say

Since 2016, CARTA has offered postdoctoral awards, which comprise postdoctoral fellowships and re-entry grants. In 2024, CARTA has awarded 11 graduates postdoctoral fellowships (4) and re-entry grants (7). Some of the awardees shared their reactions upon receiving the news of the awards.



**Alex John Ntamatungiro | Cohort 9, Ifakara Health Institute**

Receiving a postdoctoral award is an incredible honour that validates my dedication and hard work in academia. When I received the news, I felt joy, gratitude, and a sense of validation for my research. This award recognizes my efforts and the support and mentorship I have received. With it, I intend to further my research and contribute meaningfully to my field. I appreciate CARTA for the support and belief in my endeavors.



**Christine Minoo Mbindyo | Cohort 8, University of Nairobi**

The news of winning the postdoctoral award feels like a dream come true! With this support, I intend to work towards reducing foodborne illnesses and Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) in rural Kenya. I am deeply grateful to CARTA for the continued support in advancing my career.



**Oyeyemi Olajumoke Oyelade | Cohort 8, Obafemi Awolowo University**

Receiving the CARTA postdoctoral award was incredibly exciting! CARTA's support was vital to my PhD success. I am committed to empowering individuals with mental illness, who often face abuse that hinders their recovery. Thanks to CARTA, I can now pursue this dream. CARTA truly cares for the forgotten and stigmatized. Thank you, CARTA, for this opportunity and for amplifying the voices of the neglected.



**Priscille Musabirema | Cohort 9, University of Rwanda**

I am grateful to CARTA for this incredible opportunity to research reducing maternal and neonatal mortality. The mentorship in academia, grant writing, research, and biostatistics has been invaluable. This support helps postdoctoral fellows grow their scholarly profiles and enrich the research environment at the University of Rwanda and across Africa. Thank you, CARTA, and the University of Rwanda for your unwavering support.



**Adeyinka Olufolake Adefolarin | Cohort 3, University of Ibadan**

CARTA is more than a fellowship — it's a career builder. Receiving a postdoctoral fellowship is a game-changer, especially in a region where funds are scarce for ECRs. Thanks to CARTA's sustained support, I can now make meaningful impact in youth mental health.



**Alamukii Nanfizat Abiket | Cohort 9, University of Ibadan**

When I received the CARTA postdoctoral award, I was overjoyed and could not wait to share the news with my family. It felt just as incredible as when I received the CARTA doctoral award. I am deeply grateful to CARTA for this rare opportunity to advance my career. My goal is to make a significant impact on public health research in Nigeria and Africa, particularly in the field of breast cancer research.



**Henry Zakumumpa | Cohort 4, Makerere University**

The email informing me that I had received the CARTA postdoctoral award was the best news ever since completing my PhD. Even though I had previously won a re-entry grant in 2019, I knew that the competition for this award was fierce. I now have the opportunity to shift my focus from HIV research to addressing non-communicable diseases, which is something I have been eagerly anticipating. CARTA grants provide real independence to pursue scientific passions. Since completing my PhD, CARTA has been my most valuable relationship. It is truly a blessing.



**Skye Adams | Cohort 9, University of the Witwatersrand**

Receiving the CARTA postdoctoral award is an incredibly validating and exciting experience. With this award, I plan to further my research on managing feeding difficulties in children with autism in Africa, specifically focusing on m-health solutions for families in South and East Africa. The support provided by CARTA is invaluable; offering not only financial backing but also mentorship and networking opportunities. This award reinforces my commitment to making a tangible difference in the lives of children with autism and their families. I am eager to begin this next phase of my research, thanks to CARTA's support.



## Fellows News Graduations and PhD Completions



**Adebolajo Adeyemo**  
Cohort 2, University of  
Ibadan



**Alex John  
Ntamatungiro**  
Cohort 9, Ifakara Health  
Institute



**Celestin Banamwana**  
Cohort 7, University of  
Rwanda



**Ernest Yamie Moya**  
Cohort 9, University of  
Malawi



**Julienne Murererehe**  
Cohort 8, University of  
Rwanda



**Kirsty Van Stormbroek**  
Cohort 9, University of the  
Witwatersrand



**Olindah Mkhonto  
Silaule**  
Cohort 9, University of the  
Witwatersrand



**Tutu Said Mzee**  
Cohort 6, Ifakara Health  
Institute

## Promotions



**Sulaimon Adedokun**  
Cohort 1, Obafemi Awolowo  
University  
Promoted to the rank of Associate  
Professor of Demography and  
Social Statistics on April 24, 2024.  
Until his promotion, he was serving  
as a Senior Lecturer, a role he  
assumed in January 2019.



**Nomfundo Moroe**  
Cohort 6, University of the  
Witwatersrand  
Promoted to the rank of Assistant Dean  
for Postgraduate Studies (Humanities) on  
April 1, 2024. Until the promotion, she was  
serving as the department's Postgraduate  
Studies Coordinator, a role she assumed in  
January 2022.

## Appointments



**Nkosiyazi Dube** | Cohort 6, University of the Witwatersrand  
Appointed Head of Department (Social Work) in the School of Human and Community Development, effective January 1, 2024. Nkosiyazi was the Deputy Head of Department (Social Work) from January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2022. He also coordinated a Masters Programme in the field of Social Development from January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2023.



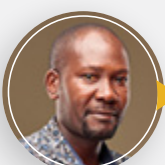
**Temitope Ilori** | Cohort 9, University of Ibadan  
Appointed the new Director-General of the National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA) by President Bola Tinubu on March 14, 2024. The appointment was announced in a statement signed by President Tinubu's media aide, Ajuri Ngelale. Temitope is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Community Medicine at the College of Medicine, University of Ibadan.



**Alice Muhayimana** | Cohort 10, University of Rwanda  
Appointed as Vice Chair of Local and International Partnerships at the School of Nursing and Midwifery on May 9, 2024. She will serve as in the role for two years, from May 2024 to May 2026.



**Caroline Sawe**  
Cohort 4, Moi University  
Appointed Chair of the Department  
of Health Policy, Management and  
Human Nutrition.

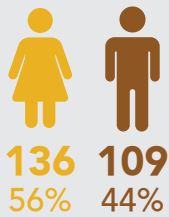


**Fredrick Okaka**  
Cohort 3, Moi University  
Appointed Chairperson of the Department  
of Geography and Environmental Studies in  
February 2024.

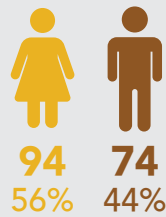
# CARTA in Numbers

## A Early Career Researchers

### Fellows by Gender



### Graduates by Gender



### External Grants Raised by Fellows



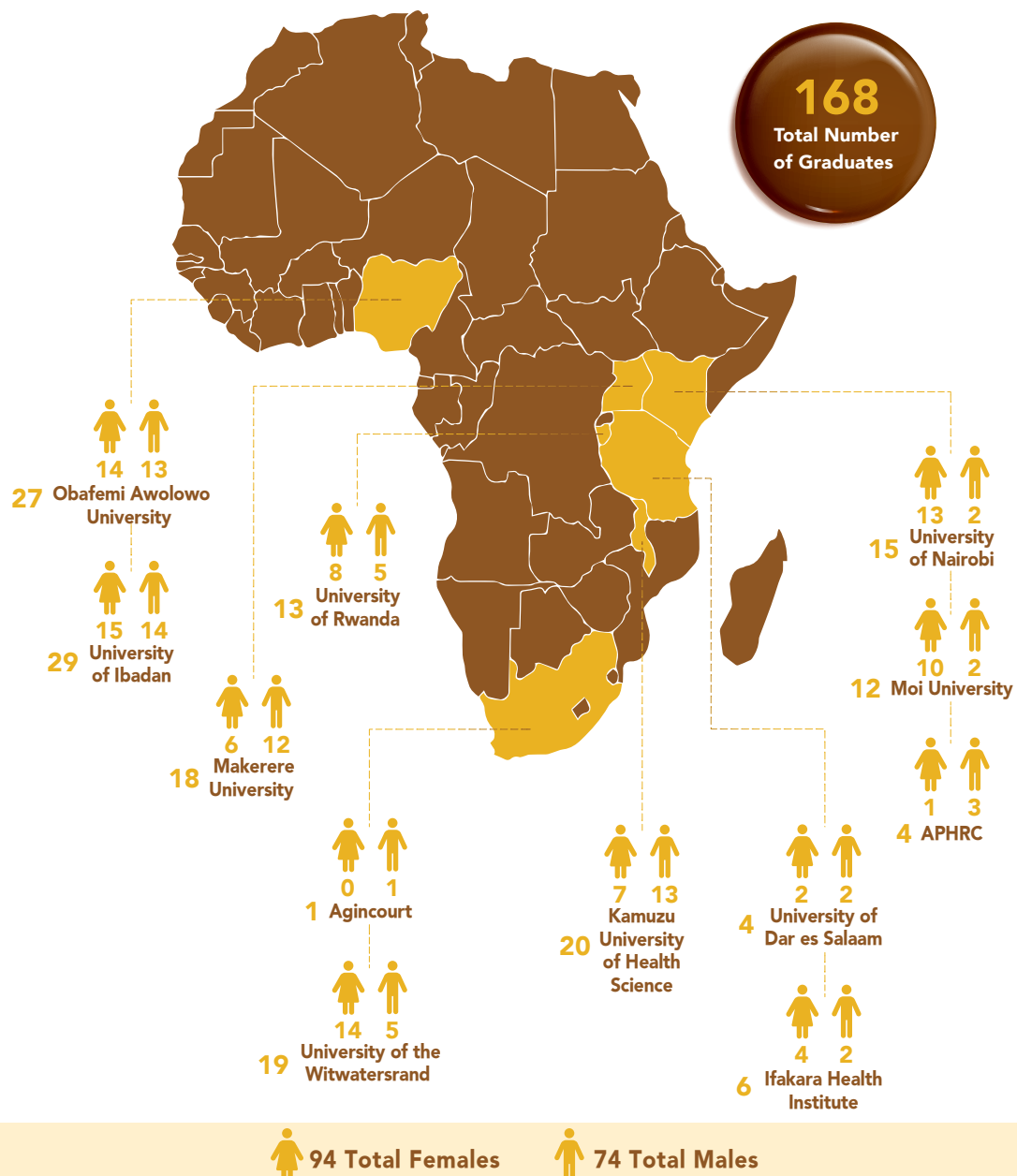
Source: Fellow's Self-Reports

### Total Peer-Reviewed Publications






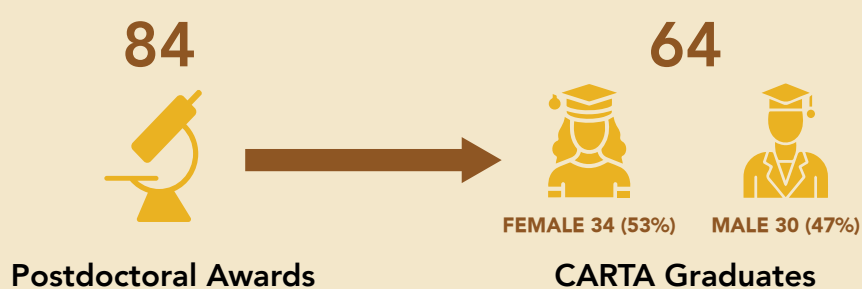
Source: CARTA Evidence platform

## Distribution of CARTA Graduates (Cumulative)



## Distribution of CARTA Postdoctoral Awards by Institution of Employment (Cumulative)

Home institution	 Female	 Male	 Grand Total
African Population and Health Research Center	0	1	1
Ifakara Health Institute	0	3	3
Makerere University	2	8	10
Moi University	4	3	7
Obafemi Awolowo University	9	10	19
University of Dar es Salaam	2	2	4
University of Ibadan	9	8	17
Kamuzu University of Health Science	3	4	7
University of Nairobi	5	0	5
University of Rwanda	1	2	3
University of the Witwatersrand	4	2	6
Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology	2	0	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>84</b>



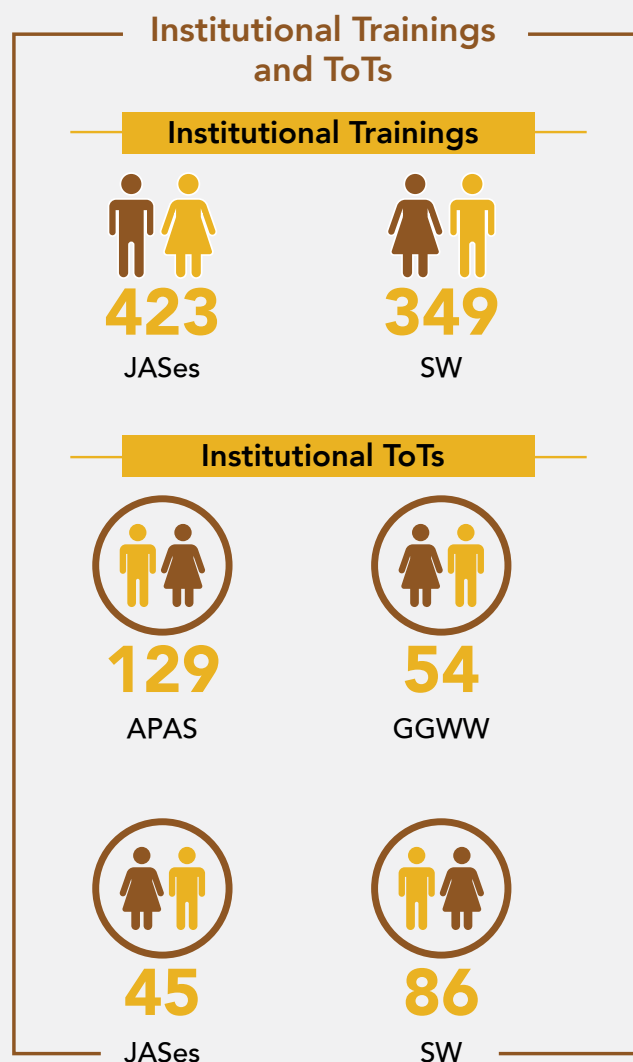
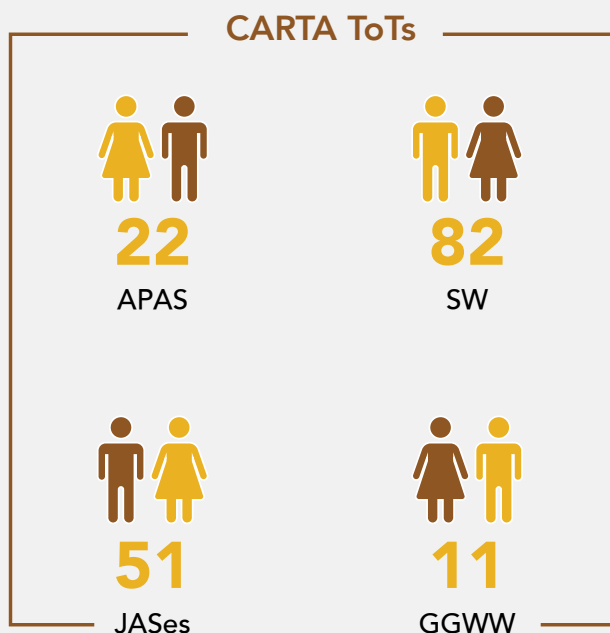
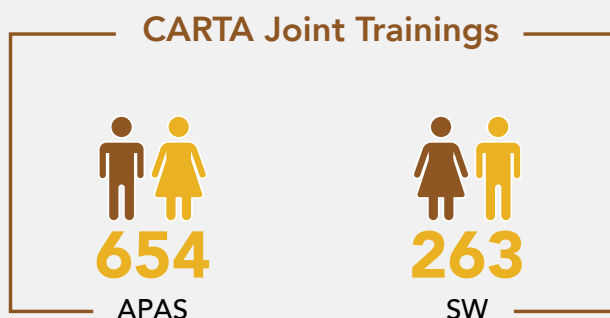


## B Institutionalization Indicators

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 **Joint Advanced Seminars - JASes**), **Supervisors Workshop (SW)**, **Graduate Grant Writing Workshop (GGWW)**, and **Academic, Professional, and Administrative Staff (APAS)** workshops.

As part of the rigorous mainstreaming efforts, the program has also been supporting its partner institutions to hold trainings and ToTs for their faculty members (referred to as **Institutional Trainings and ToTs**). 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 PhD training and have been or are in the process of being approved by the relevant governing bodies at these institutions.



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Marta Vicente-Crespo | Ann Waithaka  
Florah Karimi | Cavens Kithinji

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African Population and  
Health Research Center



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