

IITA Abuja staff dependant receives IITA Women’s Group scholarship

The daughter of Paul Eke, a member of staff at I-House, IITA Abuja, has received an educational scholarship from the IITA Women’s Group based in Ibadan. The scholarship worth of 108,000 Naira was presented to 16-year-old Faith Chinyere Eke by the Head of Station, Gbassey Tarawali alongside scientists of the Abuja Station during the staff 2017 end-of-year party.

Flanked by her father, the visibly excited awardee thanked the IITA Women’s Group for their magnanimity, which “will take care of the burden of junior WAEC off my dad’s shoulders, I am excited and motivated to work harder.”

Unable to hide his joy, Paul Eke said, “I feel very happy that IITA Women’s Group has initiated the Scholarship scheme, which is a great support to parents, I am happy and proud of my daughter.”



Faith Chinyere Eke scholarship recipient flanked by her father Paul Eke and Gbassey Tarawali (Head of Abuja Station)

Gbassey Tarawali also expressed gratitude to the IITA Women’s Group for considering Abuja station for the first time. He congratulated the

awardee and encouraged other eligible staff to apply for the next round of awards.

IITA Onne staff get enlightened on safety and security

A 3-day course on Security and safety awareness for 30 selected IITA Onne staff was held from 7 to 9 March 2018. The aim of the training was to develop a positive security and safety culture at the station. The training was conducted by the Security Unit in collaboration with the Capacity Development Unit of

IITA, Ibadan and facilitated by James Adedayo (IITA Security Superintendent) and Emmanuel Onuh (IITA Security Assistant).

Richardson Okechukwu (Head of Station, IITA Onne) represented by Francis Adunoye (Farm Manager) made the opening remarks on the

first day of the training. He advised staff to seize the opportunity to imbibe a culture of preventive security and disseminate timely credible information to designated security officers for proper securing of lives and property.

Taking the participants on the crucial role of security on the first day of the training, Adedayo stated that the Security Unit exists to safeguard IITA staff and assets from harm whilst providing a conducive work environment for staff, collaborators, and clients. He went further to explain the purpose of Access Control, the policies and measures put in place to checkmate the crime rate in an organization, the consequences of a breach in access control, and the necessity of cooperation between the security personnel and staff in promoting access control in IITA. He also enlightened staff on work place violence and its prevention, precautions when driving IITA official vehicles,



Practical fire safety demonstration by Onne staff

response to robberies, and how to handle emergency security situations in and outside the campus.

Speaking on Safety Awareness, Adedayo stated that 99.5% of accidents are caused by unsafe acts leading to unsafe conditions: created by negligence, inattention, and inaction when hazards are spotted. All that is left is to identify as many errors and correct them through trainings, process changes, quick

modifications, and any other way to ensure we all go home safe at the end of the day. He expatiated on fire safety, other work place hazards and the proper use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as a preventive measure designed for staff safety as "there is no safety device like a careful worker."

The training involved class work, the use of illustrative videos, and hands-

on practical sessions for the participants where they had to translate theory into action. This included a fire safety demonstration by Onuh, and performing Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and the Recovery Position. Staff were also given a basic understanding of Emergency First Aid at Work (EFAW) so they could respond appropriately to work place emergencies.

Talk-to-HR

As part of the efforts of Human Resources (HR) to sustain the culture of giving a voice to staff members, the Head of HR, Lilian Mendoza had announced in 2016, the opening of another convenient channel for IITA staff to express their views—whether suggestions, concerns, comments, enquiries.

On this platform, staff from all locations can directly approach the leadership of HR on talktoIITA-HR@cgiar.org

HR welcomes:

- Feedback on our various HR programs and activities.
- Suggestions on how we can improve on our services.



- Requests for clarification on policies, processes, and procedures.
- Expression of concerns over workplace issues that may be affecting performance and productivity, and personal well-being.

- Ideas on how we can maintain an environment where our people can thrive, grow, and engage in fulfilling work.

HR sincerely appreciates staff members who have availed themselves the opportunity created by the platform and welcome more interaction with staff via the medium.

Let's all feel free to send constructive messages and be assured that you will receive a response within 24 hours.

Let's keep talking to each other. We are one big IITA Team!

IITA Cameroon mourns the loss of its Station Administrator



Late Mr. Jean Bosco Takam Fogang

It is with extreme distress that IITA-Cameroon staff learned of the tragic death of its administrator Mr Jean

Bosco Fogang Takam, age 35, who passed away on 4 March 2018 after an aggravated assault perpetrated by unknown assailants. IITA received the information of Mr Fogang's death in the late afternoon of Sunday 5 March. A delegation from IITA made up of Rachid Hanna, Masso Cargele, Aboubakar Yacoubou, and Tegantchouang Monique visited the family on Sunday evening. The medical examiner pronounced multiple stab wounds as the preliminary cause of death. We are all in extreme shock.

Mr Fogang was recruited as Station Administrator of IITA Cameroon on 4 September 2017. Before his

recruitment, he worked in Cameroon for the UN Center for Human Rights and Democracy and CARE International. In the short time he was IITA Cameroon administrator he displayed enormous energy and motivation and was very dynamic and well liked by all. There was a lot of promise in his style of administration. His biological family and his IITA family will miss him dearly. May his gentle soul rest in perfect peace.

Mr Fogang is survived by his 6-year-old boy and a fiancé, his mother and father, a sister and brother, as well a large extended family.

Quotable quote: *"Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future." - John F. Kennedy*

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Cancer

World Cancer Day is marked on 4 February. The subject of cancer is a wide one, but here is some general information you need to know about cancer.

Definition: Cancer cells are abnormal cells that multiply out of control. There are different types of cancer; some grow and spread more quickly, are difficult to treat, and have a poor outcome, while others spread slowly and are easier to treat, particularly if diagnosed at an early stage.

How cancers develop: The body is made up from millions of tiny cells. Most cells have a center called the nucleus, that contains thousands of genes. The genes are like codes which control the functions of the cell. Certain genes control when the cell should multiply, while others control when the cell should die. Most cells in the body divide and multiply from time to time. As old cells wear out or become damaged, new cells are formed to replace them. Some cells multiply quickly, but some don't. Sometimes a cell becomes abnormal when one gene (or more) in the cell becomes damaged or altered. These abnormal cells may then multiply, but do not know when to stop multiplying. Such abnormal cells may lead to cancer.

Common cancers: Examples of common cancers include breast, cervical, lung, liver, prostate, gastric (stomach), and colon.

Causes of cancer: Many cancers seem to develop for no apparent reason. However, the following risk factors have been linked with different cancers:

1. Carcinogens

Carcinogens are substances (chemical, radiation, etc), which can damage a cell and make it more likely to turn into a cancerous cell. The more the exposure to a carcinogen, the greater the risk. Well-known examples include:

- **Tobacco**, can lead to cancers of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, and pancreas.
- **Workplace chemicals** such as asbestos, benzene, formaldehyde, etc.
- **Radiation**, large doses of radioactive materials can increase the risk of some cancers. The risk from small doses, such as from a single X-ray test, is however very small.

2. Age

The likelihood of developing cancer increases with old age. This is probably due to damage to cells over time. Also,

the body's defense and resistance against abnormal cells may diminish with old age. Most cancers develop in older people.

3. Lifestyle factors

Diet and other lifestyle factors (and, as mentioned, smoking) can increase or decrease the risk of developing cancer. For example:

- Consumption of a lot of fruit and vegetables reduces the risk of developing certain cancers. These foods are rich in vitamins, minerals, and contain chemicals called antioxidants, which may protect against damaging chemicals that get into the body.
- Eating too much fatty food increases the risk of developing certain cancers as well as obesity, lack of regular exercise, drinking too much alcohol, and eating a lot of red meat .

4. Infection

Some germs (viruses and bacteria) are linked to certain cancers:

- Persistent infection with hepatitis B or C viruses increases the risk of developing cancer of the liver.
- There is a link between the human papillomavirus (HPV) and cervical cancer.
- Helicobacter pylori, a bacterium that can affect the stomach is linked to stomach cancer.

5. Immune system

People with a poor immune system have an increased risk of developing certain cancers, e.g., people with HIV on immunosuppressive therapy.

6. Genetic makeup

Some cancers have a strong genetic link.

Most cancers are probably due to a combination of factors

Not everybody who has contact with a potential cancer-causing substance (carcinogen) or has an unhealthy lifestyle will develop cancer, hence it is likely that there is a combination of factors (such as genetic makeup, exposure to a carcinogen, age, diet, the state of your immune system, etc).

Symptoms of cancer

Cancer symptoms vary according to the type of cancer and how far the cancer has grown. There are some symptoms that are common to many cancers. These include:

- Weight loss.
- Loss of appetite.



- Pale skin due to a low blood count (anaemia).
- Visible loss of blood from the body orifices.
- Any unexplained lumps or bumps

Specific features, depending on which underlying cancer is suspected include the following:

- Breast cancer: Breast lump, abnormal nipple discharge, change in skin.
- Bowel cancer: Blood in stools or after passing stool, pain in rectum.
- Lung cancer: Persistent cough, blood in sputum, chest pain.
- Brain cancer: Unexplained headaches; headache present on waking.

Prevention and control of cancer

We cannot control all the risk factors of cancers but we can:

1. Adopt a life style that reduces the risk of cancer such as:
 - Eating a healthy diet as highlighted above.
 - Engaging in regular exercise.
 - Using personal protective devices to prevent or minimize exposure to carcinogenic chemicals.
 - Avoid smoking tobacco
 - Avoid heavy alcohol intake.
2. Have regular medical examination for early detection of cancer: Regularly examining your breasts on your own (and breast examination by medical expert when any abnormality is suspected).
3. Participate in routine medical screening exercises for cervical, prostate, breast evaluation, and others as organized by the Institute's medical unit at intervals.
4. Seek medical help for early diagnosis and treatment if you think you might have cancer.
5. Care for and support cancer patients.