

Understanding the new 2019 Performance Appraisal tool

As it is the usual practice, the Human Resources unit facilitated an Institute-wide performance appraisal seminar on 4 November 2019. This year's PAR seminar was unique because of the introduction and presentation of the revised performance appraisal tool, which had been earlier shared with the Supervisory and Management staff categories for input and clarification.

The objectives of the performance appraisal tool were to ensure that staff have a proper understanding of the importance of performance management; understand the changes to the performance management system with the aim of achieving increased objectivity and fairness; know how to evaluate performance using the standardized tool for IRS professionals and all NRS; learn how to give and receive feedback; and contribute effectively to the 2019 performance appraisal exercise.

Performance appraisal, or performance evaluation or performance review is:

NOT a fault-finding session or time to be vindictive

NOT only about pay raises. A merit increase which results in a pay raise is just one of the outcomes of performance appraisal.

NOT just an annual ritual or mere paperwork.



Performance appraisal

Steps taken to improve objectivity and fairness:

- Review the performance factors and the weight
- Revise the appraisal rating rubric
- Request a more robust justification for an extreme rating
- Formalize the mid-year performance review

Other new additions to the performance management system:

- Administrative action
- Alignment to probationary evaluation
- Mid-year performance review

Timelines for the 2019 appraisal exercise

- Performance management seminar - **4 November 2019**
- Posting of appraisal links - **5 November 2019**
- 2019 appraisal and 2020 workplan discussions - **5 November 2019**
- Deadline for completion of online PAR, including uploading of 2020 agreed work plan - **10 December 2019**
- Deadline for submission of signed appraisal forms to HR/Station Administrator - **13 December 2019**
- Communication of PAR outcomes and reward to individual staff - **22 January 2020**
- Appeals processing - 1–29 February 2020

Official opening of the Forest School Adventure Playground

Towards achieving its goal of recovering degraded land in Africa, IITA, officially opened a Forest School Adventure Playground on 12 November. The playground is situated in the IITA Tree Heritage Park and funded by the US Consulate General Lagos and the AG Leventis Foundation.

The 10-ha park, which is the first in Nigeria, is a repository of genetic resources of native trees as over 100 species have so far been planted in the area. In addition to the adventure playground, the Forest School has other facilities such as a campsite,



Children at the forest school playground

underground natural history gallery, hide and boardwalk, and forest classroom, all of which will aid conservation education, especially among visiting school children and family groups.

The Forest school aims to attract pupils from within and outside Ibadan so that

they can have hands-on learning about natural environments and contribute to biodiversity protection.

During the opening event, the IITA International School students presented songs that emphasized the need to protect natural environments, especially trees, and the fourth graders

demonstrated the safe use of the facilities.

The design of the playground was contested by fourth graders, and Fisayo Ifaturoti emerged the winner.

The Forest School is managed by the Forest Center, Hospitality and Travel Services, and the International School.

Learning at The International School of IITA

Do you sometimes wonder how educators can prepare students for an unknown future? Wonder no more! At the International School of IITA, we have a team of educators who are skilled in preparing tomorrow's leaders for a world that even they can only imagine. We achieve this through the implementation of the Primary Years Program [PYP].

The PYP is an inquiry-based method of teaching that nurtures the natural curiosity of children. One of the major roles of educators at The International School of IITA is not just to act as an authority, transmitting knowledge but eliciting questions from students by activating students' critical thinking skills. We organize learning opportunities to allow students to achieve autonomy and become active constructors of knowledge. The content of the PYP is purposeful, integrative, and grounded in a range of disciplines which we call Unit of Inquiry. This means that our students develop new understanding by learning across and beyond disciplines when studying one unit. For example, while looking at a unit on indigenous cultures, which is a topic that another school may have



Learning at IITA Int'l School

taught as social studies or history unit; students of The International School of IITA will study this unit through different lenses. They can make a mathematical connection by taking a survey of cultures around our school community, analyzing data and plotting a graph to show all the cultures represented in our school.

Similarly, a connection to geography can be made by studying maps to identify regions, continents, or countries that these cultures come from. We can make a connection to science by investigating indigenous plants that are used for medicinal purposes in these cultures.

IITA Community Resources Center pledges to continue offering great services to IITA staff

IITA Community Resources Center (CRC) appreciates the cooperation of IITA staff who have partnered with them in 2019, while also encouraging others to patronize their child-care services, as well as their language and computer trainings in the coming year.

IITA CRC has been in existence since 1993. According to Charlotte Sanginga, wife of IITA Director General, "CRC was created by male and female accompanying spouses to solve unemployment issues among them. It started as a center for learning languages, especially English and French, as well as computer training." Currently, most of the beneficiaries are staff of Pay Grades 1-9.

In an interview, Amina Abdoulaye, CRC Liaison Officer, shared the services rendered by the center. "CRC is here to help IITA staff who have young children, because it might be challenging to drop their children far from the work area, it is



Mrs. Tahirou, staff and children of IITA CRS Crèche and pre-school

particularly easy for nursing mothers to come and breastfeed their babies, and return to work as soon possible", she said.

Currently, academic activities for children at CRC are spread through the crèche, play group, nursery, and pre-kindergarten sections. Extracurricular activities include swimming, music, cookery, and farming.

During school holidays, CRC receives children of IITA staff for a token. The children are engaged in a series of physical, academic, and vocational training and activities that can keep them mentally bright during their holidays.

There is positive feedback from IITA staff and other users of CRC. Peter Iroagbalachi, IITA Web Designer, commends the services of CRC care

givers. He says, "the standard here is different from what obtains elsewhere. I have seen an improvement in my child's comportment and speaking since I enrolled her at CRC."

Maria Egwakhide, Field Supervisor, Agronomy Unit, attributes her child's sharp mind to sound education at CRC. She says, "My child is learning a lot, and doing well academically."

Apart from child care, CRC also renders year-round services such as computer training and language classes (English, French, Spanish) for IITA staff, their children, and other interested persons. Abdoulaye calls on IITA heads of units to send their staff to CRC for computer and language training. The center is run with a budget from IITA, but a bit of fund

raising is done to support the budget, through extra services rendered.

IITA CRC makes a call to IITA national staff, from PG 1 to PG 9, to enroll their children. The center receives children from about 40 days old.

Contract Reviews: August–November 2019

Name: Ms. Lilian Mendoza

Designation: Head of Human Resources

Location: HQ-Ibadan, Nigeria

Seminar Topic: *Who moved my cheese?*

Date: 6 August 2019



Name: Dr Beatrice Aighewi

Designation: Yam Seed System Specialist

Location: Abuja, Nigeria

Seminar Topic: *Producing yam for seed and seed for yam: New opportunities*

Date: 25 September 2019



Name: Dr Takawira Fumhe

Designation: Head of Internal Audit

Location: Ibadan, Nigeria

Seminar Topic: *Staying relevant in a constantly changing risk landscape*

Date: 18 November 2019



Name: Dennis Mulenga

Designation: Finance Controller

Location: HQ-Ibadan, Nigeria

Seminar Topic: *Decentralization and automation of financial services*

Date: 4 September 2019



Name: Dr Djana Mignouna

Designation: Project Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist (YIIFSWA)

Location: Cotonou, Benin

Seminar Topic: *Support to YIIFSWA-II Project with results-based evidence*

Date: 27 September 2019



Name: Dr Friday Ekeleme

Designation: Principal Investigator - SWMT for Cassava Systems in Nigeria

Location: Ibadan, Nigeria

Seminar Topic: *Enhancing cassava productivity through appropriate weed management*

Date: 22 November 2019



Name: Dr Melaku Gedil

Designation: Molecular Geneticist

Location: Ibadan, Nigeria

Seminar Topic: *Genomics-based enhancement of productivity, stress resilience, and nutritional quality in maize*

Date: 3 October 2019



Name: Dr Busie Maziya-Dixon

Designation: Food and Nutrition Scientist

Location: Ibadan, Nigeria

Seminar Topic: *Mainstreaming food and nutrition science in agricultural research: Success and challenges*

Date: 4 October 2019



Quotable quote

Wishing you a magical and blissful holiday! Have a merry Christmas and prosperous New Year!

Name: Dr Adebola Patrick

Designation: Project Leader (Africa Yam)

Location: Abuja, Nigeria

Seminar Topic: *Enhancing yam breeding in West Africa for increased productivity and improved quality (AfricaYam): Achievements, challenges, and future prospects*

Date: 23 September 2019



Name: Dr Pheneas Ntawuruhunga

Designation: Cassava Breeder

Location: Lusaka, Zambia

Seminar Topic: *Cassava research for development in the Southern Africa Region: Achievements, challenges, and lessons learned*

Date: 28 October 2019



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