

## IITA joins the world in celebrating Zero Discrimination Day



*Hiide Koper-Limbourg, DDG-Corporate Services addressing staff*

On 2 March, IITA celebrated Zero Discrimination Day at the Institute's headquarters in Ibadan, Nigeria. This is the first in the series of "Walks for a Purpose" in 2020, with the theme: Promoting equality and empowerment for women and girls.

A refresher seminar was given on the Institute's Discrimination and Harassment Policy as part of the celebration.

World Zero Discrimination Day is a day set aside by the United Nations (UN) and supported by other international organizations to actively promote and celebrate everyone's right to live a full and dignified life,

regardless of age, religion, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and so on.

IITA, being a multinational Institute with zero tolerance for discrimination, approved its policy on Harassment and Discrimination in 2013 to send a strong message about zero tolerance for discrimination and harassment across its operations and locations.

The seminar was aimed at educating as well as reminding employees of what discrimination is, possible ways to avoid discrimination, and disciplinary actions to be taken against offenders. Emphasis was placed on sexual harassment for both men and women and various

approaches to help victims bring offenders to book.

The event ended with a 2-km walk-for-a-purpose as a way of connecting with the global focus on zero discrimination in the workplace and society at large. According to Temilade Oke, Human Resources Manager, "IITA decided to initiate the walk for a purpose as part of IITA's wellness program, using international days as a platform."

There were exhibitions of international flags showcasing all nations represented in the Institute. Staff were also encouraged to dress in their native attire to demonstrate cultural diversity, one of IITA's core values.



*Participants at the walk-for-a-purpose day.*

# IITA Rwanda celebrates Family Day

Happy faces and smiling children in a stress-free, outdoor environment were evident as IITA Rwanda held a Family Day. The annual event was full of fun and memorable moments. It was held on 15 February in Bugesera District, Rwanda. It brought together over 40 participants, including staff and their families, to celebrate achievements and provide families with fun and connection opportunities.

There were many entertainment activities during the event, as the staff and their family members engaged in various games such as football, basketball, swimming, and children's games. The event creates an interactive and networking space for families and strengthens fraternity.

Saddy Hakuziyaremye works for IITA Rwanda as a Clerk and Driver. He came with his two children and wife to join other families for the Family Day. He says that the event offered fabulous moments for his whole family and the IITA team while providing more strength for the work ahead with full family backing.

"My kids, wife, and I were very happy to attend the family day. It is really a very good space, off work, to relax, entertain, and have fun; we got all those. On behalf of my family, I thank IITA Rwanda for organizing this", said Hakuziyaremye.

Delivering his remarks at the colorful event, Marc Schut, IITA Rwanda Country Representative, commended all staff and their families for attending the event,

adding that families' support is always key to staff performance at work.

"Thank you for turning up in high numbers to enjoy together. IITA works as a family and knows the importance of the family. I really thank you for your dedication and contribution to IITA's success," Schut said.

This is the third IITA Rwanda family day. The management has committed to holding such events every year for the betterment of staff families and the IITA family as a get-together, out-of-work space. IITA Rwanda has a young team comprising 25 staff, including interns, consultants, and NRS and IRS staff who implement eight projects. Four new projects have started this year.



IITA Rwanda family in a group photo (above). Staff and family members enjoyed the day with games, lunch, and fellowship (below).



# Spotlight: Mrs Charlotte Sanginga

Charlotte Sanginga, fondly called "Mama C", was born into a large family in Bukavu, the Democratic Republic of Congo, in an area called Camps Morteau—a GRA for Civil Servants. She is the fifth child and the fourth girl in 14 siblings (10 girls and 4 boys).

Her father was a Civil Servant working as a Tax Inspector and Director, while her mother was a versatile entrepreneur. Charlotte's parents ensured that they grew up never lacking anything, and they were taught family values from a young age.

According to her, her parents instilled discipline in them and always counseled them not to take things for granted as some people could not afford one tenth of what she and her siblings had (that was my Mum's principle).

Charlotte's parents were very protective and caring and provided for all they needed starting from school fees to toiletries. According to her: "My father used to say, he does not have wealth to leave for us as an inheritance, but he will leave us with education which nobody can take from us."

She said her father wanted her to become an Accountant, and he advised her to study Business Administration and Accounting from form 3, and later at the university level, which she did. She made her father very happy.

Charlotte's mother was her role model. Hence, she saw every challenge as a stepping stone to success. According to her, "I cannot give up on anything without trying". Her mother was a disciplinarian and a God-fearing woman. She recalled that she and her siblings were not above discipline when they erred, and because she never liked to offend her mother, she avoided being beaten. Over the years, she had made it a part of her way of life not to offend people.

## How do you balance your career and family?

For me everything has its time. I don't mix things or combine: Working hours are in the office. Family and social hours are outside the office. Work, family, social life, and spirituality are different things and should not be mixed. Work should not be carried home. We need to set a boundary. Saying that my Mum was my role model, she never visited my father in the office, yet we lived in the same building. Therefore, I don't visit my husband in his office except if I have an appointment to discuss work-related issues.

We have worked and lived on a campus almost ¾ of our married life. We have been here for 8 years; I have been to his office only twice. Therefore, my work philosophy is: Pray – work – relax. And do not mix things. Separate them.

The first and last time I worked as a full staff was when I was 19 years old, just after high school. And I worked for 2 years before university but I did it as a married woman and mother. Since I got married, I worked full time for a year, and since then, I have always been a consultant, because I always like taking care of my family. Our kids were all brought up by us. I sacrificed my career for my family.

My mum was a businesswoman so that she can be with us and control her home, and she was my role model.

My or our greatest accomplishments are to see all our kids moving on their own professionally.

We are proud of them. We are not talking about material things because those are vanities, but what we gave to them as education being academic or moral is our accomplishment as parents. We could have what we have today or be where we are today, but if they did not succeed, everything would have been a waste.

Our grandchildren are also our accomplishments and our great-grandchildren (Ivy Janette and Miya Charlotte); they are twins from our granddaughter Natasha.

Wherever I am, I make it a welcoming home and place for everybody who would like to come. It should be such a place that when we come in, we feel at peace, relaxed, and peaceful.

## What would you consider your greatest challenge living and working in IITA?

We are all together. You meet diverse people you never thought of meeting in your life. Tradition, culture, behavior, race, religion; that is the beauty of IITA. You learn a lot if you want to.

We are always together. You have to accommodate everybody regardless of age, race, religion, behavior.

## Share with us something (favorite pastime) only your close family/friends know about you that we may never know?

I spend my pastime meditating on the word of God, praising and worshiping God for His goodness unto us. I read a lot of religious books. My favorite writer is Joyce Meyer. Her books inspire me a lot.

I am a lively, warm, and God-fearing woman. I like everyone around me to be happy. Unfortunately, I don't have the material means to help everybody, but I



Mrs. Charlotte Sanginga

pray for everyone around me. I share a lot in a way that I might forget that I need to keep some for tomorrow. I guess I took that from my mum. And people around me know that. I don't like conflicts and don't like to see people sad.

I am not a last-minute person. And I don't like to be compared to somebody, and I don't compare people.

I accept people as they are and move on.

## What three words would you use to describe yourself?

I am me.

## Tell us your favorite slogan!

Life continues after here—I don't stress myself about the present because I know I still have tomorrow to live.

Life does not stop here. I don't try to be like somebody else, I don't deal with the person, but with the situation the person is going through.

## Quotable quote

*"Asking the question 'are we doing enough' regularly and repeatedly is critical."*

- Dr. Maria Van Kerkhove, Technical Lead, WHO, Infectious Disease Epidemiologist

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