

IITA

Research to Nourish Africa



CGIAR

Human Resources **Annual Report 2014**



IITA Human Resources
Annual Report 2014

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Introduction

Our hands have been on the plough, no going back, no relenting. The pace of activities in 2014 did not diminish because the Institute maintained its momentum in the delivery of its mission of increasing agricultural production, food security, and income in the tropics, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, and in accomplishing its vision to be the leading research partner facilitating agricultural solutions for hunger and poverty in the tropics.

The Human Resource Services (HRS) thus continued its mission of providing innovative and responsive human resource services to support the achievement of IITA's vision of success as enshrined in the Refreshed Strategy 2012–2020 to:

- Raise over 11 million Africans out of poverty.
- Redirect 7.5 million hectares of degraded lands to sustainable use.

The year 2014 was therefore dedicated not only to meeting the needs of the Institute and the various emerging projects and partnerships, but also to consolidating the various interventions initiated since 2012.

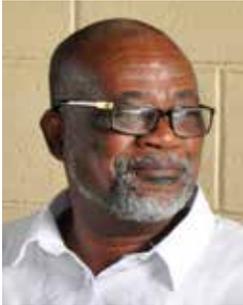
HRS, despite increasing staffing levels and expanding R4D activities, rose to the challenge of meeting the Institute's human resource needs and ensuring employee retention, keeping employee turnover at very low rates.

Staffing activities peaked at high levels in comparison to preceding years. The HR policies for internationally recruited staff (IRS) and nationally recruited staff (NRS) were re-written, while the short-term employment contract and casual labor policies finalized in 2013 were implemented effective 1 January 2014. Regular work–life balance programs and activities were sustained.

As in previous years, the HR Annual Report 2014 presents the programs and activities that enabled effective people management including: talent acquisition, performance management, reward management, employee database management, internal communication, employee health and wellness, and employee relations.



Message from the Deputy Director General, Corporate Services



Kwame Akuffo-Akoto

HRS remained one of the strong units under the Corporate Services Directorate. Its unique role of ensuring the availability of appropriate and competent people to drive the research-for-development agenda of the Institute places it in a strategic position within the Institute. Its responsibility was not limited to attracting the right people in the right numbers and expertise, but it had to support, enable, and inspire people to stay committed to IITA and to operate in an environment that is both conducive and stimulating for research and other research support operations.

As the Institute expanded, it is noteworthy that the HRS team responded to the growing needs, endeavoring to satisfy all stakeholders. The HR team's support to newly hired international staff in adapting successfully to their new environment ensured the retention of all the newly hired staff in 2014. The effort of the team in supporting the effectiveness of Hub administration is also commendable and it is expected that this will be sustained in order to meet the Institute's objective of an efficient, decentralized system.

Coordinating the management of the most valuable asset of the Institute, the HR team supported Management efforts in moving forward the execution of the IITA's Refreshed Strategy and, in particular, the effective execution of new partnerships and projects. Effective project execution was top priority for the Institute and the Directorate in 2014 and HRS contributed to the successful organization of the workshop on improving project execution, and subsequently in promoting team orientation through its teambuilding programs.

All internal stakeholders—the Board of Trustees, the Management Team, the Directors, the scientists and all staff—will continue to look up to HRS to make IITA the best place to work and to support sustainability and growth of the Institute, enabling it to be the leading research partner facilitating agricultural solutions for hunger and poverty in the tropics. Therefore, while efforts in 2014 are appreciated, more is expected of the HR team in 2015!

Message from the Head of Human Resources



Lilian Mendoza

The year 2014 was yet another year of opportunities to contribute to the effective delivery of IITA's mission and the steady progress towards the accomplishment of its goal. There is no gainsaying the fact that one of the top enablers of the IITA Refreshed Strategy 2012–2020 is its most valuable resource—its people, rich in diversity and competencies, strong in commitment and passion.

Inspired by a leadership that is totally people oriented, HRS was able to forge ahead with programs and activities that continued to motivate staff and sustain an enabling work environment. Meeting staff expectations in a way that kept the engagement level high was a priority. Providing effective support to IITA scientists and other staff was the focus of the Unit's programs and activities in 2014. Thus, considerable time was dedicated to attracting competent staff in the right numbers (47 IRS, 145 international consultants, and 178 NRS at the Headquarters and in the Hubs) for the various new and extended research projects and attendant support services. As at the end of the year, available human resources of all categories included 192 IRS, 988 NRS, and 794 short-term staff.

Also effectively pursued was the development of in-house HR management systems that will hopefully integrate fully with the other IT platforms in the Institute and which will enhance the effective management of human resources not only at the Headquarters, but also throughout the Hubs. The new Recruitment module was completed while the development of the Employee Information Management module commenced before the end of the year. The HR Portal on the Intranet was also rebranded with updated information with a view to enhancing internal communication throughout the Institute.

Hub administration continued to enjoy support from HRS and the presence of HR at the Directors' meeting, visits to some of the Stations, holding of town hall meetings, facilitation at teambuilding programs, supporting effective project execution, promoting gender mainstreaming and supporting the Women Empowerment Platform, stimulating health and safety awareness, organizing staff events that promote bonding amongst staff and bring management closer to the staff, implementation of recognition and reward programs including the new IRS Grading Structure, and the NRS compensation survey outcomes were some of the activities that kept the fire burning and sustained high engagement levels.

The year's program of activities in all facets—R4D, Partnerships and Capacity Development, and Corporate Services—almost derailed with the incursion of the deadly Ebola virus into Nigeria. Proactive steps taken by a Task Team led by HRS ensured the safety of all staff and their families, though some very important meetings had to be postponed, including the annual R4D Week.

In spite of the challenges, improving on and sustaining the rebranded and rejuvenated Institute remained our focus. HRS committed to maintaining IITA as a great place to work where its entire people passionately commit to the effective execution of the R4D agenda, and particularly the achievement of the Refreshed Strategy 2012-2020. The key to greater success for IITA is keeping an engaged and empowered workforce and HRS is keen on building on the foundation that has been laid for this.

The IITA People Management Team

HR services are provided at Headquarters by a team of 17 staff, managing both IRS and NRS. Management of the NRS in the Hubs is handled by the Regional/Station Administrators, with backstopping provided from Headquarters.

Apart from the HR team, the Head of Human Resources also supervises staff of the Community Resource Center (CRC) and the IITA Clinic comprising two family physicians, nurses, a pharmacist, a laboratory services officer, a clinic administrator, and other support staff.



The HRS Team (HQ) in a group photograph with the DDG-Corporate Services, Kwame Akuffo-Akoto (in striped shirt, front row) during its work planning retreat, 2014.

Our mission

To provide innovative and responsive human resource services to support the achievement of IITA's goals

Our vision

To be a world class support service provider in human resources management

Our core values

- Professionalism
- Integrity
- Excellence
- Respect
- Collaboration
- Equity

Stepping up talent acquisition for IITA

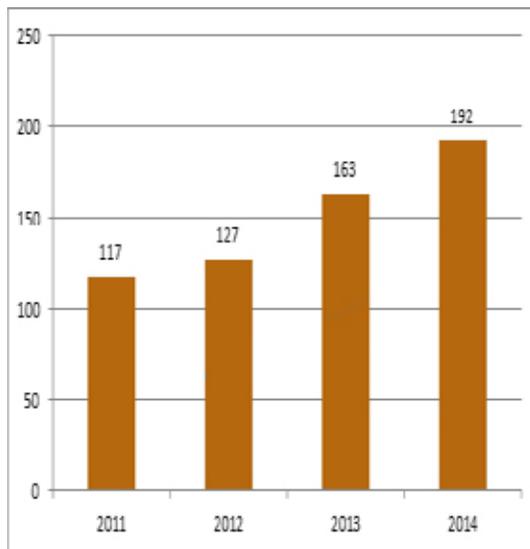
The Institute's research activities kept expanding as the leadership continued to attract increased donor confidence, opening greater re-engagement with traditional and non-traditional donors especially, and attracting more partners nationally and internationally. The implication for HR was the need to attract the talent that would effectively execute these projects to the satisfaction of all stakeholders, especially the investors. In this connection, a total of 47 scientists and other international specialists were hired at Headquarters and in the Hubs. NRS recruitment levels at the Headquarters and in the Hubs were as follows:

Location	NRS hired
HQ/Western Africa Hub	95
Central Africa Hub	26
Eastern Africa Hub	37
Southern Africa Hub	20

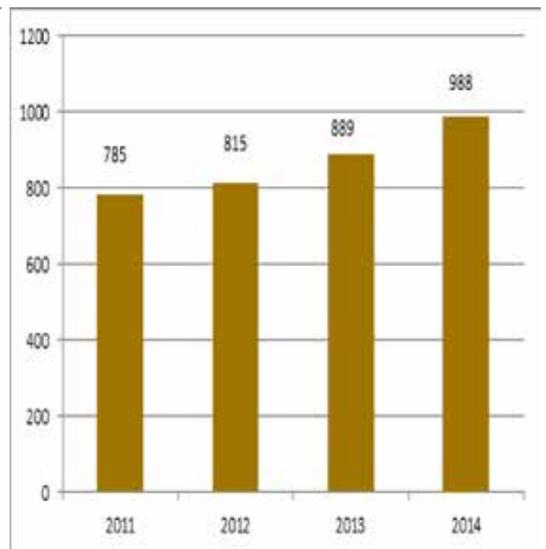
Staff continued to grow in numbers and diversity

As research activities and corresponding support services expanded at HQ and in the Hubs, the number of staff continued to grow. The charts below show the growth for IRS and NRS (regular staff only) over a period of four years (2011–2014), reflecting tremendous growth since the present leadership came on board—64% for IRS and more than 25% growth for NRS.

IRS: 2011–2014



NRS: 2011–2014



In addition to the regular staff indicated above, the Unit processed the hiring of other employees on short-term contracts (local short-term staff and national and international consultants) to support the expanding research operations in the Institute. During the year under review, a total of 145 international consultants were hired at different times. Nationally, the recruited short-term staff monthly average stood at 606 as against 520 in 2013 (Ibadan campus only). Other contingent workers, usually referred to as casual workers were hired, especially for field maintenance operations. The average monthly number of casual workers hired in 2014 at Ibadan campus was 605.

Commitment to gender equality in staffing levels was sustained. All vacancy announcements for nationally recruited staff as usual included a statement affirming the Institute’s promotion of equal employment opportunity and encouraging women to apply. The table below shows staff distribution by location and by gender.

Staff distribution by location as at 31 December 2014

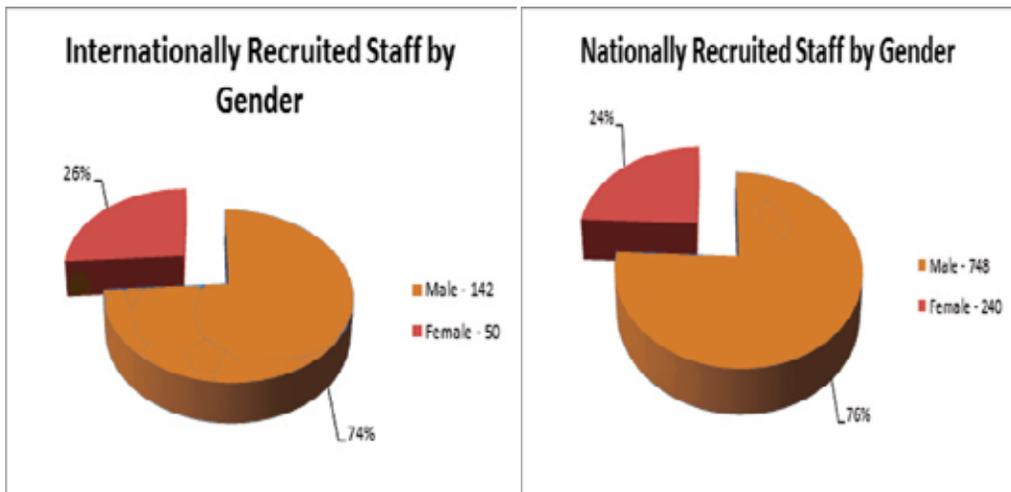
Location	IRS			NRS		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Abuja, Nigeria	3	1	4	11	0	11
Benin Republic*	7	1	8	19	2	21
Burundi	3	0	3	3	1	4
Cameroon	2	0	2	19	7	26
DR Congo	9	2	11	42	12	54
Ghana	10	0	10	11	2	13
Ibadan, Nigeria	61	23	84	471	147	618
Kano, Nigeria	7	0	7	37	4	41
Kenya (CAH)*	6	4	10	6	3	9
Kenya*	4	3	7	4	7	11
Liberia	1	0	1	0	0	0
Malawi	2	0	2	15	4	19
Mali	1	0	1	0	0	0
Mozambique	3	1	4	18	8	26
Rwanda	0	0	0	1	1	2
Sierra Leone	2	0	2	10	2	12
Tanzania	12	6	18	33	17	50
Uganda	3	4	7	28	13	41
USA	0	1	1	0	0	0
Zambia	6	4	10	20	10	30
Total	142	50	192	748	240	988

**NRS in IITA-Benin are managed by AfricaRice, NRS in IITA-Kenya are managed by ILRI, while NRS for the Central Africa Hub Office based in Nairobi are managed by CIAT.*

Distribution by Hub is as follows:

Location	IRS (no.)			NRS (no.)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Western and HQ	92	25	117	559	157	716
Central	20	6	26	71	24	95
Eastern	19	13	32	65	37	102
Southern	11	5	16	53	22	75
Outside the Hub	0	1	1	0	0	0
Total	142	50	192	748	240	988

The gender distribution of both IRS and NRS improved slightly in 2014, compared to the preceding year. NRS female representation shifted marginally from 22% in 2013 to 24% in 2014. In the case of IRS, while more women were hired in 2014, female representation dropped from 27% in 2013 to 26% because the male numbers also went up marginally.



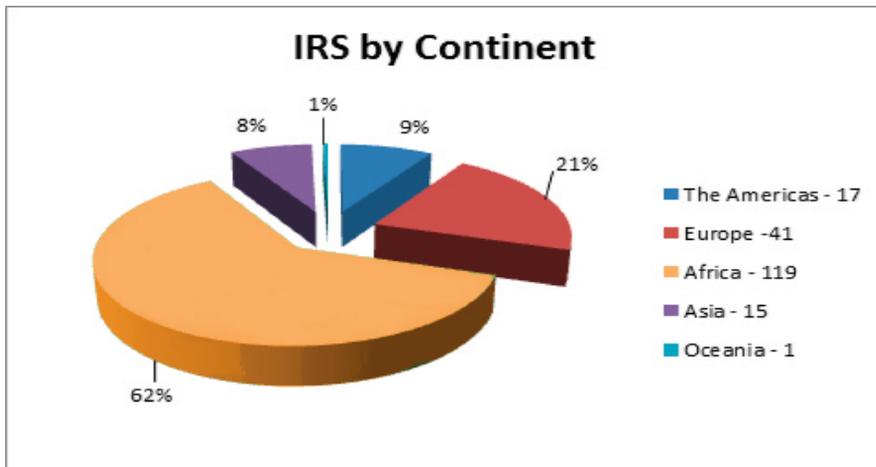
A geographically and culturally diverse workforce

HRS continued to grow IITA’s diverse workforce, upholding the Institute’s value of multiculturalism. International staff were recruited and hired from six continents in the world—Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, South America, and Oceania.

IRS by nationality

	Nationality	IRS (no.)		Nationality	IRS (no.)
1.	Australia	1	23.	The Netherlands	9
2.	Belgium	5	24.	Nicaragua	1
3.	Benin Republic	3	25.	Niger	2
4.	Brazil	2	26.	Nigeria	18
5.	Burkina Faso	4	27.	Philippines	4
6.	Cameroon	11	28.	Rwanda	3
7.	Canada	4	29.	Senegal	2
8.	Czech Republic	1	30.	Sierra Leone	3
9.	Colombia	1	31.	South Africa	1
10.	Denmark	1	32.	South Sudan	1
11.	DR Congo	4	33.	Sudan	1
12.	Egypt	1	34.	Swaziland	1
13.	Ethiopia	6	35.	Sweden	4
14.	France	1	36.	Switzerland	3
15.	Germany	8	37.	Tanzania	2
16.	Ghana	18	38.	Togo	3
17.	India	7	39.	Uganda	10
18.	Japan	2	40.	United Kingdom	11
19.	Kenya	11	41.	United States	9
20.	Malawi	2	42.	Zambia	3
21.	Mali	2	43.	Zimbabwe	4
22.	Mozambique	2			

The graphical representation is as follows:



IITA also managed staff of other institutions

While the NRS of two IITA country offices are managed by other CGIAR Centers (IITA-Kenya by ILRI and IITA-Benin by AfricaRice) and a Hub Office by CIAT, IITA at various locations also effectively managed the staff of the country offices of some of the CGIAR Centers. The table below shows the CGIAR Centers and other institutions whose staff were managed by IITA in 2014:

NRS of other institutions managed by IITA as at 31 December 2014

Guest institution	Staff (no.)	Host
AfricaRice, Nigeria Country Office	24	IITA Nigeria
ILRI, Nigeria Country Office	6	IITA Nigeria
HarvestPlus Nigeria Country Office	2	IITA Nigeria
CIP, Abuja Office	2	IITA Nigeria
AGRA-Tanzania	2	IITA-Tanzania
IRRI-Tanzania	3	IITA-Tanzania
ILRI-Tanzania	5	IITA-Tanzania
CIP-Tanzania	2	IITA-Tanzania
AVRDC-Uganda	1	IITA-Uganda
<i>icipe</i> -Uganda	8	IITA-Uganda
IFDC	4	IITA-Zambia
ILRI-Mozambique	4	IITA-Mozambique
IFPRI-Malawi	8	IITA-Malawi
CIAT-HarvestPlus	5	IITA-DRC, Kinshasa
AVRDC-Cameroon	6	IITA-Cameroon
Total hosted staff	82	

A more welcoming on-boarding program

A new video on “Living and Working in IITA” was produced during the year. This further facilitated the integration of new staff, especially IRS. HRS also collaborated effectively with the Capacity Development Office (CDO) in delivering the biannual in-person orientation program for all new hires. As usual, the leadership of the Institute—the Director General, and the DDGs—graced both occasions and gave inspiring speeches. A total of 24 attended the first round held in January 2014 while 30 participated in the second round held in July.

Sustaining staff retention

HRS continued to contribute to sustaining the retention of all categories of staff. Newly hired employees were still willing to stay with IITA while the older ones are staying till retirement age. A few NRS left upon attaining the retirement age of 60 years and a few others resigned for family reasons. The tables below show employees by years of service:

IRS by tenure

Years of service	IRS (no.)
<1 year	61
1 – 5 years	75
6 – 10 years	28
11 – 15 years	12
>15 years	16
Total IRS	192

NRS by tenure

Years of service	NRS (no.)
<1 year	178
1 – 5 years	295
6 – 10 years	169
11 – 15 years	84
>15 years	262
Total NRS	988

Staff turnover rate for IRS in 2014 was 5.2% while for NRS, it was 6.3%.

Improving staff learning and development

HRS maintained its collaborative effort with the Capacity Development Office (CDO), the Institute's unit responsible for staff learning and development. Early in the year, HRS compiled and submitted to CDO a proposal on the focus for staff training in 2014. HRS also partnered with CDO in administering the implementation of the Talent Development Initiative. Beneficiaries of the initiative included all categories of NRS cut across the Headquarters and the four Hubs, with 7 of the 36 beneficiaries coming from the Hubs. Individual beneficiaries were supported with a training/study grant of up to US\$4,000. Two HRS staff members at HQ were beneficiaries of the talent grant and were able to attend training programs on Resource Management, Recruitment and Talent Planning and Global Talent Management. With funding support from Management, the HR Manager-NRS attended the AWARD Women's Leadership and Management Course held in the USA while the Head of Human Resources attended Belbin Team Role accreditation training in the United Kingdom.

As in preceding years, the HR Learning Sessions continued to boost the personal development of the HR staff. Quarterly HR Learning Sessions were held as follows:

- “Monitoring and Evaluation” – Thomas Wobill, M & E Specialist, 20 February 2014

- “Gender Mainstreaming: A Strategic Tool for Talent Retention” – Helen Adeniji, Organization Development Manager, 1 August 2014
- “Resource Management, Recruitment and Talent Planning” – Folake Babatunde-Lawal, Senior HR Officer, 30 October 2014
- “From Acquisition to Succession Planning” – Ibukun Shodeinde, Recruitment Officer, 30 October 2014

In addition to the HR Learning Sessions, the Unit sustained the practice of sourcing and sharing articles on current human resource management practices. The Organization Development Manager shared articles on “HR as Change Warriors NOT Change Agents”; “Workplace Evolution and Future Focus for HR Professionals”; “Leadership and Succession Planning Strategy”; “Organizational Efficiency: The Building Block of Organizational Effectiveness”; “Managing Multiple Roles and Maintaining a Healthy Work-life Balance”; “Career Development, Training and Work Requirements: A Synergy for Organizational Goals”; “Making IITA a World-Class Organization: The HR Factor”.

The HRS resource center stocked with books and journals on HR management, including monthly subscription of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) magazines served to assist HRS staff in their routine operations and special projects.

HRS staff made progress on their various personal development programs including an MSc in Human Resource Management and International Development, an MSc in Industrial and Organizational Psychology, a Diploma in Business Administration, and professional membership of the Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria. Staff also attended the annual conferences of relevant professional associations.

The Unit also provided opportunities for the development of the capacity of Interns that were admitted during the year. Four of them pursuing studies in Computer Science, Business Administration, and Psychology were taken at the HRS at HQ.

Staff advancement

Management kept its promise of eradicating stagnation and boosted staff morale with another round of a general upgrade conducted in 2014. A total of 67 NRS were upgraded throughout the Institute. The reduced numbers in 2014 as against a total of 242 in 2013 showed that the problem of stagnation was being effectively dealt with. Some other staff whose terms of reference (TOR) significantly increased were also upgraded.

Identifying with staff achievements

The Institute recognized the outstanding achievements of deserving staff during the year. The Head of HRS coordinated the annual Board Awards for Excellence and at the end of the process, the following were recognized as:

- Outstanding scientist - Leena Tripathi, Plant Biotechnologist, IITA-Kenya
- Outstanding support staff - Obinna Ajuonu, Research Associate, IITA-Benin
- Outstanding team - Communication Office

They were announced during the November meeting of the Board of Trustees held in Kampala. However, HRS did not have the usual privilege of presenting the awards due to the fact that the Board Meeting was not held in Ibadan.

Compensation and benefits management

The general remuneration increases for NRS (between 6.5% and 13%) awarded in all locations effective 1 January 2014 helped to bridge some of the gaps identified in the compensation survey conducted late 2013. It is anticipated that the planned increases for 2015 will further close the gap and in some cases take us beyond the 50th percentile of the market.

In addition to the adjustment to pay levels, a firm decision was taken to implement medical insurance schemes at locations where medical care is currently a cash benefit to staff paid as a monthly allowance. The cash payment will cease effective January 2016 and the medical insurance scheme will cover the employee, the spouse, and up to four eligible child dependents. Stations that are affected by this include Mozambique, Tanzania, and Uganda.

For subsequent determination of the Institute's position in the market, data from the Birches Group from Local NGO surveys will be used. Through an initiative of the CGIAR Consortium, the Institute has signed up for participation along with some other CG Centers. The levels of employee benefits were maintained as in the previous year.

Pension schemes for national staff were maintained in compliance with the respective host country legislation. In the case of IRS, the Institute resumed its membership of the AIARC for the IRS retirement scheme.

Assistance was promptly provided to staff (NRS & IRS) in terms of their benefit claims. The major revision to IRS benefits was the review of the housing policy for implementation in 2015.

Promoting teamwork and developing teams

HRS continued to promote the value of collaboration, one of the core values of IITA. To also underscore the critical relevance of team spirit to organizational effectiveness, promoting team orientation was one of the listed priorities for action at the end of the workshop. Some of the objectives at each teambuilding program were: to build experience that enhances relationships, promote trust and communication amongst the staff and between the staff and their leaders; promote renewed commitment to the achievement of the Institute's mission; and promote the development of a positive mindset, service orientation, collaboration, and friendly climate.

The four teambuilding programs organized were for:

HarvestPlus Nigeria Country Office & Partners

3 May 2014
Ibadan, Nigeria

**Theme: From competition, through
cooperation to collaboration**

Southern Africa Hub Retreat

20-25 July 2014
Lilongwe, Malawi

**Theme: Collaborating to deliver the
R4D Agenda for Southern Africa Africa**

IITA Plant Health Group (Ibadan)

6 September 2014
Ibadan, Nigeria

**Theme: One Team, One Goal: To Safe-
guard Plant Health for Farmer's Wealth**

Finance Directorate (Ibadan)

6 December 2014
Ibadan, Nigeria

**Theme: Together We Are
Stronger**

HarvestPlus Nigeria Country Office teambuilding

On 3 May 2014, the HRS team facilitated a teambuilding workshop for HarvestPlus with the theme: *“Evolving from Competition, through Cooperation to Collaboration”* (a CG center hosted by IITA). The Country Manager Dr Paul Ilona and his team were full of accolades for the HRS team, as they were reenergized and psychologically and emotionally committed to the goal of HarvestPlus.



The HRS Team with the HarvestPlus Nigeria Country Office and some of their Partners

Southern Africa Hub teambuilding

July 20–25, the Southern Africa Regional and Administrative Hub (SARAH) had a retreat in Malawi, and requested the HRS team to spice up each day with teambuilding activities. The last day, Friday 25 July was dedicated to a teambuilding workshop for all categories of staff. A total of 51 participants attended with the theme: *“Collaborating to deliver the R4D Agenda for Southern Africa”*.



The SARAH Group in one of the sessions during their Annual Retreat in Lilongwe, Malawi



The Southern Africa Hub Research and Administrative Staff in an indoor learning session during their Retreat in July in Malawi

Plant Health teambuilding

On 6 September 2014, HRS facilitated a teambuilding workshop for the IITA Plant Health Group (Ibadan). A total of 106 participants from the various staff categories and temporary workers participated, with the theme: “*One Team, One Goal: To Safeguard Plant Health for Farmer’s Wealth*”. Participants were able to appreciate the essence and power of team work and the importance of individual roles in achieving set goals.



HRS with the entire IITA Plant Health Group (Ibadan) during the Teambuilding Workshop

Finance Directorate teambuilding

Just before the year closed, HRS on 6 December 2014 organized a teambuilding program for the Finance Directorate. It was a really transforming experience for the Finance Team members. This was a remarkable achievement because the teambuilding workshop had long been in the pipeline.



HRS Team with staff of the Finance Directorate

The following are some of the comments from participants who attended the four teambuilding programs organized by HRS during the year:

- I would like to be a part of this program. I would like to partner and also train others. I would also like to thank you guys for a job well done. I was motivated and empowered. This program is life changing. God bless you guys!
- I appreciate the effort of the HR team and strongly advise that every other unit in IITA be made to go through this.
- Very, very informative and an eye opener which has changed me entirely relative to what I think a team is.
- It is timely and very educating. I certainly cannot be the same again. The facilitators are wonderful.

- This should be organized as frequently as possible until this culture is well internalized.
- This is a really inspiring and practical program and it has affected my opinion about teambuilding and has taught me practical ways of being great team leader.
- It's a life changing experience.
- This has happened in 2014, it should not die!

- Well organized, educative, and challenging, it should be a bi-annual event.
- Informative and transformative.
- There was a sense of belongingness.

- There is need to have this meeting frequently so as to make IITA a family to belong to.
- Involvement of all cadres of staff from the lowest to the highest was very good and a good start in teambuilding.
- Well planned and effectively delivered; it was superb.

Each teambuilding program always ended with a demonstrable commitment by team members to transfer the learning to their work relationships and attitudes. Team members and their leaders never remained the same. It was no surprise therefore for calls to organize similar programs for work teams throughout the Institute and to organize not just as a one-off, but annually, if not bi-annually.

Promoting internal communication

In addition to the regular town hall meetings and publication of a monthly newsletter, *Talking Drums*, the Unit sought further engagement with staff through other channels of enhancing internal communication. An innovation in the course of the year was the celebration of employee milestones through birthday anniversary greetings. Staff feel recognized and appreciated as they wake up to an SMS message on their mobile phones and an email. The bulk SMS and email message was rolled out in Nigeria effective 1 July 2014.

In addition to the above, HRS rebranded the HR portal with a view to reaching many more staff through information uploaded to the Intranet. Updated policies, forms, and other instruments for managing employee information and other HR processes were uploaded. The image below is the new face of the HR portal on the new IITA Intranet. This served to reduce/prevent misinformation and also facilitate access to issues of interest to staff.





As part of its social information dissemination platform, the Unit sustained the monthly publication of *Talking Drums* in collaboration with the Communication Office. Monthly editions presented staff updates and general information of interest to staff. Special editions in June–August featured the series on the “IITA Woman”; while the August and September issues featured information on Ebola Virus Disease prevention and updates.

Town hall meetings were held not only in Ibadan, but also in Abuja, Kano, and a few IITA Stations outside Nigeria. Specifically, Lilian Mendoza, Head of HRS who was on mission to Burundi and Malawi held meetings with staff. A total of 10 town hall meetings were held in Nigeria. The following photographs were taken during meetings with staff:



Head of HR, Mrs Lilian Mendoza in a group photograph with IITA-Burundi staff, during the Directors Retreat. Also with the staff are the DDG, Partnerships and Capacity Development, Dr Ken Dashiell, Director for Central Africa Hub, Dr Bernard Vanlauwe and the Regional Administrator for Central Africa Hub, Ms Jacqueline Musiimenta



HRS with staff of IITA-Kano, Nigeria on the occasion of the Town Hall Meeting 2014



With Abuja Station staff after the session on Town Hall Meeting 2014

During the meetings, Management decisions were communicated to staff and clarification was offered where necessary, following in the footsteps of the Director General, who regularly held staff briefing sessions, carrying them along in all areas of IITA's strategic direction.

HRS also published, in collaboration with the Telecoms Unit and the Communication Office, a revised Telephone Directory capturing all new hires and all staff movements. This facilitated interaction and business operations, keeping staff connected.

Supporting a community that cares

HRS continued to support programs that keep campus residents happy and united. Two major tools of keeping the residents together and maintaining open communication are the IITA Women's Group (WG) and the IITA Community Resource Center (CRC). Administrative support was provided for the activities of the Women's Group, especially regarding scholarship awards to children of staff in the General Staff category throughout the Hubs. The Head of HR sits on the CRC Advisory Committee, making a contribution to sustaining the well-being of IITA staff and their families on Ibadan campus. The CRC as usual organized summer classes, in addition to the all-year-round after-school club, supporting the work–life balance.



The CRC organized a summer class for children of staff. The children display their artwork.

Networking with the CGIAR community of practice

The Head of Human Resources joined HR Directors of the other CGIAR Centers at the 2014 meeting of the HR Community of Practice (CoP) of the CGIAR Consortium, the umbrella body for 15 international agricultural research centers. HR CoP is one of the various CGIAR Communities of Practice (CoP).

The HR Heads of all CG centers meet every year to share best practices, and address common HR issues as well as share current and emerging HR trends. The HR CoP also makes CG-wide HR decisions. The 2014 meeting was held at the Consortium HQ in Montpellier, France.

Review of policies and other HR documentation

The HR policies for IRS and NRS were re-written and updated. Drafts, with guidance provided by the DDG, Corporate Services, were prepared by the HRS teams (one for NRS and another for IRS). The drafts, submitted during the year were expected to be finalized and approved for implementation in 2015.

HRS also completed work on a revision of the Position Classification for R4D NRS. The draft will be finalized after feedback from scientists.

IRS job grading and classification system

The recommendations of the IRS job grading and classification system which was finalized by the Birches Consulting Group in 2013 were broadly implemented in 2014.

An improved performance management system

Following on from the online access extended to staff in the General Staff category at HQ in 2013, online access was also extended to all NRS in the stations. Paper appraisal was finally abandoned throughout the Institute and it was also easier to have a centrally managed appraisal exercise.

Prior to conducting the appraisal session, the Unit conducted a Performance Management seminar and the webinar facility was extended to staff outside Headquarters. The PowerPoint presentation was also made available on the HR Portal for ease of access to staff that missed the seminar. The impact of this was that the incidents of conflict/dispute between supervisors and staff drastically reduced.

Towards the end of the year, HRS commenced work on the application of a 360° feedback for Directors and this should be implemented in 2015. Additionally, preliminary work commenced on the review of the appraisal instrument for scientists in order to ensure a more quantitative performance evaluation.

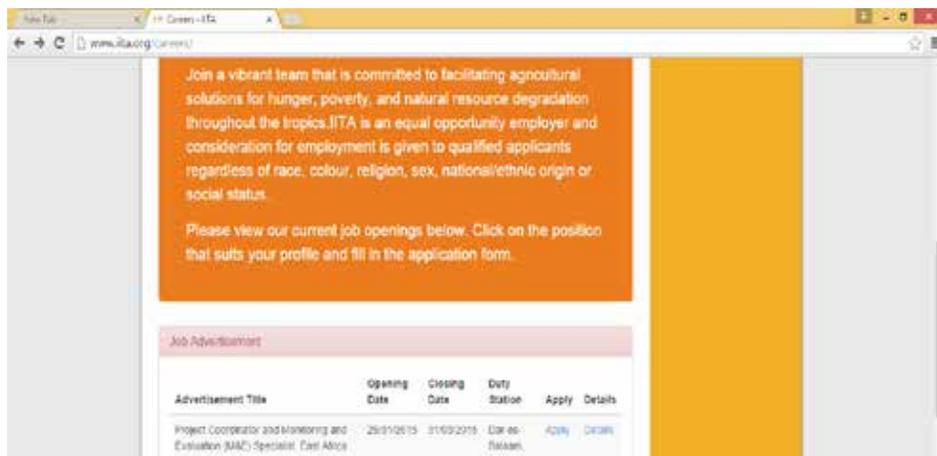
From HR4U to HURIX, exploring a new HR solution

Concerted efforts were made to scale up the use of HR4U at Headquarters and in the Hubs. A simple user manual for log in, leave applications, leave cancellation, and leave approval in HR4U was developed to assist both new and existing staff. This went a long way in removing the bottlenecks in employee leave management. The Leave Management module was about the only one working effectively under the HR4U application. Other staff data and information were managed using an old application, Paypers that had been used concurrently with HR4U.

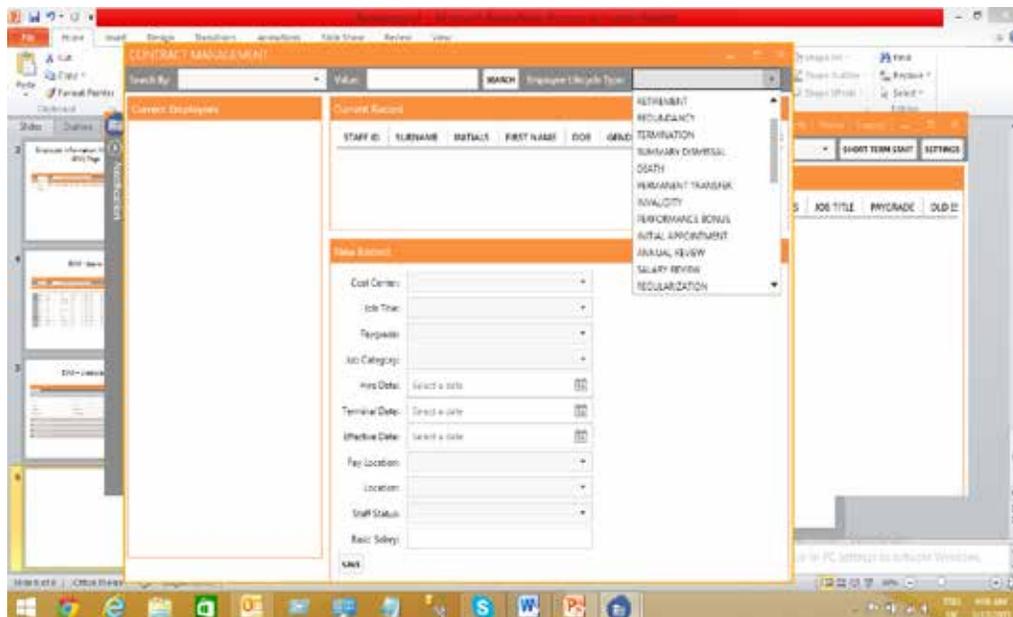
However, HR could only put up for so long with the HR4U application being used for the human resource management system. The software was technologically deficient and technical support by the provider was limited and inconsistent. Accordingly, the Unit decided to consult the Institute's in-house expertise and thus the IT Systems and Applications Unit commenced the development of a new HR solution named HURIX. By the end of the year, the Recruitment Module and the Employee Information Management (EIM) Module had been fully developed and deployed. The IITA Career page on the website was enhanced and made more attractive to prospective applicants. The recruitment administrative work was also significantly facilitated, gaining more efficiency in the recruitment activity of the Unit, both for IRS and NRS.

The HURIX application will be fully developed and deployed in 2015. Some screenshots are presented below:

IITA new Careers Web Page



Part of the new EIM settings



Gender mainstreaming

The Institute continued in its efforts to make gender perspectives more entrenched in the workplace, and in all its operations from the development and implementation of R4D projects, partnerships, and capacity development activities to overall organizational policies, processes, procedures, and practices.

In this direction, a survey was conducted in October 2014 to elicit information on staff's understanding and awareness. The survey fielded a total of 58 questions, covering six strategic areas namely:

1. Organizational Culture
2. Recruitment/Selection/Retention/Recognition
3. Partners and Staff Capacity Development
4. Communication/ Awareness/Promotion
5. Project Development and Execution / R4D
6. Policies

A total of 472 out of 1,168 regular staff (IRS and NRS) participated in the survey. The results have been analyzed and the outcome would lead the Institute to the following steps:

- Development of a plan of action for gender mainstreaming in the workplace and in R4D and partnership programs and activities.
- Development of a realistic capacity development plan for gender mainstreaming for IITA.
- Development of an Affirmative Action plan.
- Development of a monitoring and evaluation plan for measuring progress of the institutionalization of gender perspectives.

Gender mainstreaming will be given priority by IITA Management in 2015 and in subsequent years until gender perspectives are fully integrated in research and operations and reflected in the mindset of the Institute's leadership, staff, and R4D partners. Other practical steps taken to promote gender equality include:

- The IITA Women's Empowerment Platform (WEP) initiated by the DG in March 2014, and it has forged ahead in developing an agenda for enhancing the capacity and well-being of IITA women. The focus areas being promoted include capacity development, work-life balance, health and safety, and other welfare matters that projects IITA as a gender-responsive work environment. In 2014, the WEP organized its first training program which focused on Effective Time Management and was facilitated by the HR Manager-NRS. WEP also worked on the strategy document for the empowerment of IITA women. Management took steps to provide necessary resource allocation to support the promotion of women's empowerment not only among the workforce, but also in R4D operations and partnerships.
- Workplace Policies: Some existing policies aim to assist in promoting an equal workplace, free of discriminatory practices. These policies include: maternity and paternity leave, compassionate leave, the new harassment and discrimination policy, and the whistleblowing policy.
- Recruitment: The Unit worked towards achieving gender balance within the workforce. Hiring decisions took into account gender and diversity issues and this is how female IRS grew from 44 in 2013 to 50 in 2014 and female NRS representation rose from 22% to 24%. Advertisements already include a statement encouraging women to apply. Interview panels also consciously included women members.

- **Learning Opportunities:** The professional development of all staff was given attention regardless of gender. The Talent Development Grant awarded during the year demonstrated this commitment. Out of 36 beneficiaries in 2014, 12 were women (33.3%) as against 2 women out of 15 beneficiaries in 2013 (15.4%).

Employee health and the big fight to prevent Ebola Virus Disease

The upgraded IITA Clinic continued to provide quality medical services to IITA staff and eligible family members based in Ibadan. The efforts are complemented by a number of accredited private, mission, and government-owned teaching hospitals across the country. There were twelve of such in 2014. At locations outside Nigeria, staff were on medical insurance with satisfactory services offered by the various providers through the designated hospitals. IRS are covered under the Cigna international health insurance scheme.

For the first time in the Institute, biennial medical screening conducted by the IITA Clinic in collaboration with reputable local laboratory service providers, was extended to all staff. Previously, this was limited to IRS and NRS management staff, food handlers, laboratory staff, and other selected categories of staff.

The medical team in Ibadan joined other members of a Task Force led by the Head of HR, working tirelessly to prevent the spread of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD). It was a trying time and it affected IITA's operations to the point that the R4D Planning Week had to be shelved, the November meeting of the Board of Trustees was relocated to Kampala, Uganda, and the meeting and training of Station Administrators was postponed to 2015. In addition, staff travel was affected while some staff on missions were unduly delayed at airports. Other proactive steps taken by the Institute included the early evacuation of staff in Liberia, organization of an awareness session, information campaigns which included some local government offices, the production and distribution of information and education fliers, the provision of hand sanitizers, temperature checking at the gate and entrance to the IITA Clinic, and setting up of an isolation center near the Clinic. The isolation center was intended for suspected cases of high temperature pending further investigations. Fortunately, no EVD was detected.



IITA Clinic Staff, with the Head of IITA Clinic, Dr Samson Adeleke (in the middle at the back row)



Space specially created for checking staff's temperature as part of steps in the prevention of EVD

Safety awareness

The Safety Committee of the Institute, supervised by the Head of HRS organized the Safety Week, raising awareness and demonstrating through various activities that industrial safety is a joint responsibility of both the employer and the employees. The response was encouraging and the week-long activity began on Day 1 with a sensitization at the entrance into the Institute and closed on Day 5 with a safety walk and address by the DDG, Corporate Services.



Organized by the Institutional Safety Committee

EXCEPTION
Monday, 20 October 2014, 0715-1815.
Flag-off by DDG-ICS, IITA Main Gate
Facilitators: SC & HR Unit
Activity Schedule

Day/Date	Session 1 (10:00-11:00am) Theme and activity	Facilitator	Session 2 (2:00-4:00pm) Theme and activity	Facilitator
Monday 20 Oct 14	Building 400, Dike Tower Workshop <i>Workshop: Awareness</i>	Mr. Oke S. Mr. J.I. Yam	Building 400, Landscape Centre <i>Threats to The Field</i>	Mr. M. Akintola & Mr. J. Akintoye
Tuesday 21 Oct 14	HR Faculty/Staff	Mr. Wole	HORTAFRIDS <i>How Safety Concerns Affect Us</i>	Mr. J. Akintoye
Wednesday 22 Oct 14	Field Conferences Health Safety	Mr. Akintola	Field Safety <i>Building IITA's Resilience Building Resilience</i>	Dr. Akintola S. J. Folake Tiami
Thursday 23 Oct 14	Conference Centre Safety Walk Practical Session	Mr. Wole	HORTAFRIDS <i>Emergency Conferences</i>	Mr. Akintola S. Mr. J. Akintoye
Friday 24 Oct 14	Field (Abokun/Agribase) Sensitization <i>Expanding Production Sensitization / Awareness Building 200 Touring Building 200 Safe Working of Pests Harvest Losses</i>	Mr. J. Akintola Engineer Kunlewa	Safety Walk <i>Practical Session Landscape Centre</i>	HR Unit

CLOSURE
Friday, 24 October 2014, 1800 hrs.
Conference Centre
Closing Remarks by management
Facilitators: SC & HR team



A staff member demonstrating bravery in the use of fire extinguisher at IITA-Ibadan Campus

Safety awareness in IITA-Kalambo



Safety training activities in IITA-Kalambo, DRC

In support of work-life balance

Participation in Sportsfest and monthly fitness walk programs were sustained. It is noteworthy that participation in fitness walks rose from a mere 24 in 2013 to 577 in 2014. Indeed, the fitness walks, following popular demand, are now organized bi-monthly effective July 2014. Top Management lends its support through active participation.

The Wellness Center (with a Gym) commissioned in November 2013 is still accessible to all staff and residents of IITA Ibadan campus. Similarly, the recreation centers at Ibadan campus were readily accessible.

The expanded Crèche continues to cater for the needs of members of the workforce who are nursing babies and have pre-school children. Some of the male members of the staff also use the facility. The monthly average number of babies and toddlers cared for at the Crèche rose to 25 during the year. The Community Resource Center also provided a facility for after-school care.

The granting of paternity leave is being considered throughout the Institute to ease the stress that usually attends caring required of a male colleague during the time of the confinement of his wife.

Bi-monthly fitness walk

It did not take long before the monthly fitness walk developed into a bi-monthly fitness walk, as staff appreciated the health benefits of the 5-kilometer walk. The Ibadan campus provides a suitable environment for this. IITA Stations are being encouraged to find a way of instituting similar programs as much as possible.



The monthly fitness walk is taken seriously and with enthusiasm by all staff categories, with the DG himself setting a good example as in the picture above.

Sportsfest 2014

Sportsfest has remained a veritable work–life balance program held at the Ibadan campus annually since 2011. The 2014 Sportsfest kicked off on 14 March 2014, and was witnessed by the IITA alumni. The event as usual featured 13 games—Badminton, Lawn Tennis, Table Tennis, Scrabble, Chess, Swimming, Dance, Volleyball, Monopoly, Walk, Football, Ayo Olopon, and Draughts—which were keenly contested for by the six teams namely, Green, Yellow, Orange, Blue, White, and Red.

The table below shows how the teams performed at the end of the competition which successfully came to a close on 27 May 2014.

Medals won by the six teams at the 2014 Sportsfest				
Team	Gold Medal	Silver Medal	Bronze Medal	Position
Green	6	2	4	1st
Orange	3	6	4	2nd
Yellow	3	1	0	3rd
Blue	1	2	3	4th
Red	1	2	0	5th
White	0	1	3	6th



Members of the Green Team celebrating their winning the first place.



The final soccer match – Blue Team versus White Team



A female soccer player in the midst of men!



The DG, Nteranya Sanginga, decorating the soccer champions (The Blue Team) during the Grand Finale of the Sportsfest

The Sportsfest is still usually organized only in Ibadan being the only IITA location which affords the required facility for such events. Nevertheless, efforts are being made to have it on a low key in the Hubs to promote bonding and wellness.

Open Day 2014

HRS led the organization of the 2014 Open Day with active involvement of other units, including some R4D Units, the Hotel and Catering (HotCat) Unit, Facility Management Services (FMS), the Security Unit, the Supply Chain, the Youth Agripreneurs, and the Communication Office under the overall guidance of the Head of Human Resources. The Open Day, held on 15 November 2014, is an annual mega event during which staff and their families visit and get to know more about the Institute, have fun, and feast. Many staff volunteered to support operations on the day.

The IITA Women's Group Scholarship Awards for 2014 were announced during the occasion and many of the children of the NRS who had competed and were successful won support for their education at varying levels.



A cross-section of staff and families at the Open Day in Ibadan



The DG, members of the Management Team, and others watching a presentation



The Open Day 2014 in Ibadan also featured a Children's Corner offering much fun for children of staff aged 4 to 12 years

Long service awards

The year's edition of the Long Service Awards ceremony was also held during the Open Day. On this occasion, 14 staff members were honored for 10 years service, 19 for 20 years, and 2 for 30 years service. Eligible staff members in the Hubs were also duly recognized. Among them were 5 staff members for 10 years service and 1 staff member for 20 years service.

Retirees' reception

The Institute's employees, regardless of status, remain its treasure. Thus, the retirees' reception was also held during Open Day. Retired staff and their spouses were recognized and honored. The 12 retirees in Nigeria who were honored on that day also planted commemorative trees at the designated area in the Ibadan campus. The reception imprinted on the minds of retired staff beautiful memories of an Institute they had served till retirement age.

Retirees in the Hubs were also duly recognized at their respective locations. A retired Regional Administrator for Central Africa Hub who also doubled as Station Administrator for IITA-Cameroon was appreciated at a reception held

in his honor at IITA-Cameroon. Mr Yacoubou Aboubakar had served IITA for a total of 16 years before his retirement in December 2013. He volunteered to stay on for a couple of months early in 2014 to facilitate the integration of the new Station Administrator for IITA-Cameroon. The reception in March 2014 coincided with the occasion of a working visit of the DDG, Corporate Services, Kwame Akuffo-Akoto.



One of the retirees, Mr Stephen Tunde Obasemola, Compensation Officer, Human Resource Services, receiving his certificate and an appreciation plaque from the DG, Dr Nteranya Sanginga



Kwame Akuffo-Akoto in a warm handshake with Yacoubou Aboubakar as other staff cheered on the occasion

Special staff events in the Hubs

The Hubs also organized various activities that served to bring staff and families together.



Family Fun Day/End-of-the-year Party at IITA-Kalambo



Staff Happy Hour in IITA-DRC, Kinshasa

In IITA-Tanzania, the leadership and staff took time off their busy schedule to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of IITA's operations in the country. They also took time off for staff and family activities.



IITA-Tanzania staff compete in a tug of war during a staff event



Dr Victor Manyong, Director for Eastern Hub and Dr Edward Kanju cut cake to mark 20th Anniversary of IITA in Tanzania



IITA-Tanzania staff members in a beach game

Maintaining a harmonious work environment... and an inclusive workplace

The three levels of staff associations in the Institute namely, the General Staff Association (GSA), the Senior Staff Association (SSA), and the Management Staff Association (MSA) collaborated with HRS in ensuring a harmonious work environment. The executive committees of the three associations, as in the previous years, helped to facilitate internal communication and served as conduits for regular feedback to and from staff.

Management, in response to the perceived needs of casual workers who provided significant support to research operations, provided funds for the expansion and renovation of the “Cappa Canteen” and the construction of a changing room. The “Cloakroom” offered a comfortable facility to change and freshen up after the day’s work. The renovated canteen now attracts not only casual workers, but also senior staff members including international staff. The Director General, some other members of the Management Team, and other senior members of staff including the Head of Human Resources graced the commissioning.

Managing staff exits

In the course of the year, 10 IRS left the Institute, three of them resigned and the contracts of seven others ended. Also a total of 25 NRS (IITA-Nigeria) left the Institute during the year while 34 from the stations in the Hubs left service through various exit channels.

Exiting staff, whether by voluntary resignation or upon attaining the compulsory retirement age or upon the expiration of their contract, were given the necessary support, while HRS also facilitated the prompt settlement of their terminal, end-of-contract benefits.

Supporting other internal operations

Risk management

HRS actively maintained its representation on the Risk Management Committee. HRS was represented by the Employee Services Manager, who is also the secretary of the Committee. The Committee extended its awareness seminars to the Hubs and also set up risk management committees at the respective locations. HRS also made inputs into the Committee’s compilation of the Risk Register and Mitigation document.

E-Research (SOP, Policy, Organogram compilation, and Indexing)

HRS was actively involved in the E-Research taskforce set up by management to ensure proper central database management of all material resources in the Institute. Organ-charts, Policies, and SOPs from all outstations across the hubs were received, except for some within HQ. The indexing of the Institute's SOP is currently ongoing.

Enabling effective project execution

The support provided to the Office of the Deputy Director General for Corporate Services in the design and planning of the workshop on Improving Project Execution was taken forward and the workshop was eventually organized on 13–14 February 2014. HRS, led by Lucy Omidiran, HR Manager-IRS provided the logistics and Secretariat for the Workshop in which the Head of HR and the HR Manager-NRS also participated. The DG sent a strong signal on the importance of improving the level of project execution as he was actively present throughout the duration of the 2-day workshop. The high-level workshop also benefitted from the presence of the Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees, Dr John Griffith, who made a keynote presentation.

The priority areas for action included a portion for HRS to deal with enhancing team orientation. HRS continued to do this through formal teambuilding programs while it has commenced work on the toolkits on teamwork.

Addressing staff satisfaction

Management continued to take steps and initiate programs and activities that address staff concerns in the areas with low satisfaction rates in the staff satisfaction survey that was carried out late 2013. Some of these areas include:

Consultation on important issues and changes

- Town Hall Meetings were successfully organized with a higher level of response by staff.
- Conclusions of the Management Team meetings continued to be cascaded down to staff in their respective Units.

- The DG also regularly updated staff on issues affecting the Institute through email and general briefings.
- Teambuilding activities organized by the HRS were used as opportunities to emphasize the importance of communication and the benefits of sustaining a shared community.

Fair remuneration

- The general remuneration increases ranging from 6.5% to 13% granted to NRS throughout the locations bridged the gaps to a large extent, pending the full analysis and implementation of the NRS compensation survey results.
- For IRS, in addition to the general remuneration increase of 3% granted across the board effective 1 January 2014, the grading structure recommended following the classification exercise was implemented. The full implementation of some aspects of the benefits plan was deferred to 2015.

Work-life balance

- See Page 33.

Access to learning opportunities

- In addition to regular on-site training organized by the Capacity Development Office, a total of 36 NRS at all locations were beneficiaries of the Talent Development Competitive Grant in 2014. The improvement in the number of beneficiaries was as a result of the expanded grant to US\$80,000 as against US\$40,000 provided in 2013.
- Staff are also supported to pursue various personal development programs through flexible leave arrangements and paid examination leave.

Regular and constructive feedback from the supervisor

- A Performance management seminar was organized to reinforce the importance of feedback to staff on their performance. The practice of mid-year performance reviews was also encouraged.
- The Capacity Development Office planned to include in its training schedule programs that strengthen supervisory skills.
- HRS also used the occasion of teambuilding activities to strengthen team leader/member relationships.

The next staff satisfaction survey will be conducted in October 2015.

Looking ahead

The year 2014 lies behind us. Lessons have been learnt on what more we can do to support more efficient and effective achievement of IITA's goal and strategic objectives.

The signal for budget cuts has placed everyone on alert and HRS will ensure the implementation of people management policies, processes, and procedures that support the accomplishment of the desired outcomes.

The priority for 2015 will include full roll out of the new HR solution and complete integration with other platforms in the Institute, stepping up gender mainstreaming activities, and contributing to the entrenchment of a work culture driven by personal and organizational effectiveness to raise the bar of project execution while at the same time improving on work-life balance.

