

Press release

Dr. Léa Paré Toé, researcher at the Health Sciences Research Institute and Target Malaria member, elevated to the rank of Knight of the Academic Palms

OUAGADOUGOU, Burkina Faso, January 16, 2025 /African Media Agency (AMA)/ - Dr. Léa Paré Toé, a socio-anthropologist at the Health Sciences Research Institute (IRSS) and stakeholder engagement lead for Target Malaria Burkina Faso, was elevated to the rank of Knight of the Academic Palms during the country's independence day celebrations in December 2024.

As the stakeholder engagement lead for Target Malaria Burkina Faso, Dr. Paré promotes a community-centered research approach, paving the way for a mutually beneficial relationship between stakeholders and scientists.

"I receive this honor from my peers and my country with immense pride and humility. I hope it will also serve as an invitation and encouragement for our youth, particularly girls who might want to pursue a scientific career. The fields of science and research need women, and this is particularly true in Africa, where women's leadership must be encouraged in all areas of social and economic life" said Dr. Paré Toé

A scientific excellence journey

After obtaining her doctorate in anthropology and sociology from Aix-Marseille University in France, Dr. Paré Toé built a remarkable career in socio-anthropological analysis of health issues in Africa. Specialised in vector-transmitted diseases, she developed a unique expertise that transcends traditional scientific research boundaries.

An author of multiple publications since 2000, she distinguished herself through an innovative approach that integrates social perspectives in understanding and developing health solutions. Her work has consistently highlighted the importance of understanding population perceptions and expectations in research strategy development.

Recognition of African scientific leadership

A pioneer in studying genetic technologies from local community perspectives, she received the "Women in Vector Control" excellence award in 2022, marking the first step in recognising her exceptional work. Her Academic Palms distinction confirms the significant impact of her research and commitment.

Dr. Paré Toé developed a dynamic community engagement approach based on diverse participatory methods: leading community meetings, educational workshops, and platforms like the video series "Voices from the field". She uses adapted terminology, visual aids, creative tools such as community theater, and educational resources in local languages to transmit advanced scientific concepts to communities with low literacy rates. Her objective is to empower communities to make informed decisions and influence how research is conducted.

These initiatives allow local populations in the communities with whom Target Malaria partners in Bobo-Dioulasso, Bana, and Souroukoudinga to directly dialogue with researchers, follow their work's progress, and understand the potential of innovations like gene drive in the fight against malaria.

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Distributed by African Media Agency (AMA) for Target Malaria.

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About Target Malaria

Target Malaria is a not-for-profit research consortium that aims to develop and share new, cost-effective and sustainable genetic technologies to modify mosquitoes and reduce malaria transmission. Our vision is to contribute to a world free of malaria. We aim to achieve excellence in all areas of our work, creating a path for responsible research and development of genetic technologies, such as gene drive.

www.targetmalaria.org

Target Malaria receives core funding by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Open Philanthropy. The lead grantee organization is Imperial College London with partners in Africa, Europe and North America.