

## Women Winning: The history & future of the International Centre for Environmental and Nuclear Sciences.

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Annually, February 11th is celebrated as The International Day for Women and Girls in Science and is geared towards providing opportunities for equal access to the field of science. Locally, the event is marked by recognizing not only the pioneers in the field but also to inspire the next generation in a bid to ensure that Jamaica's 2030 sustainable development goals of achieving world class education and training is attained through STEM.

The International Centre for Environmental & Nuclear Sciences (ICENS) has been the premier nuclear institution in the English speaking Caribbean since the commissioning of the JM-1 SLOWPOKE reactor in 1984. Women have always played a leading, and in fact pioneering role, in the development of the Centre and indeed the nuclear field in Jamaica. Founded by Professor, the Honourable Gerald Lalor, as the Centre for Nuclear Sciences, the first Centre Coordinator was a woman, Dr. Hilary Robotham Westmeier, and a specialist in nuclear analytical techniques.

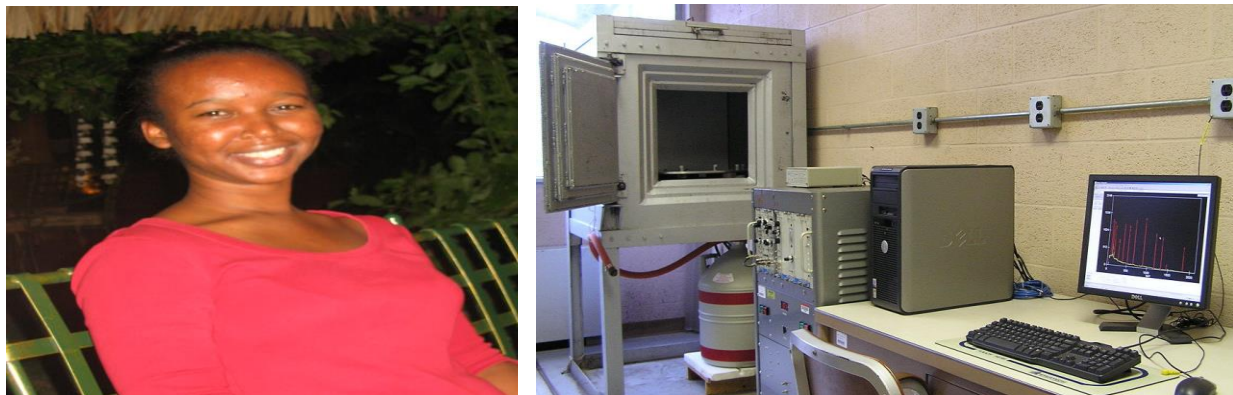


A renowned chemist, Dr. Robotham also served as Chief Scientist whilst managing the activities of the Centre's multi-disciplinary research projects.

The first radiation safety officer and chief thermoluminescent dosimetry (TLD) operator was Mrs. Joan Thomas who served for 28 years. Mrs. Thomas expertly guided the fledging radiation monitoring programme and contributed to many publications and training for members of staff. Today, the unit services over two thousand clients within Jamaica and across the region.



In 2004, Ms. Andrea Howe who served in the nuclear analytical laboratory became the first Jamaican trained through the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) Safeguards Traineeship Programme.



Since then, women have continued to play an integral role in ICENS' achieving its mandate. More female staff members are actively involved in the nuclear field: neutron activation analysis, reactor maintenance, and nuclear information and knowledge management. This extended to key roles in radiation protection and



quality assurance for the core conversion of the reactor from highly enriched to low enriched uranium in 2015.



The inclusive policy at the ICENS has seen opportunities for women working outside of the nuclear analytical laboratory: female scientists and non-scientist being involved in IAEA projects, safeguards and non-proliferation training, communication, and nuclear and radiation security.





The history and achievements of ICENS are highlighted by the contributions of its women. As the Centre strives to meet its potential through reactor research and the provision of radiation services, the contribution of its female technocrats will continue to be integral in the future of this small nuclear institution with big goals.



International Centre for Environmental and Nuclear Sciences (ICENS), an agency of the Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology, leading the way by creating opportunities for women in science.

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