

Borlaug LEAP- Past Fellows Directory (2010)

Francis Ngunjiri

Country:
Kenya

University:
Cornell University

Department & Degree:
Nutritional Sciences, PhD

US Mentor institution:
Cornell University

CGIAR Mentor Institution:
International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)

Research:
Causes of Child Stunting in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Email:
fmngure@gmail.com



Borlaug LEAP fellow Dr. Francis M. Ngunjiri received his Ph.D. in Nutrition from Cornell University in August 2012. His dissertation research provides an understanding of the role of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and food safety in predicting stunting in under 5-year old children. Through three successful collaborations that took him back to Kenya, Zimbabwe and Ethiopia, his research experience has provided further interdisciplinary understanding of under-nutrition in children in Sub-Saharan Africa. Dr. Ngunjiri was mentored by Dr. Rebecca Stoltzfus, Professor and Director of International Nutrition and Global Health Programs, Division of Nutritional Sciences, Cornell University.

His Borlaug LEAP Fellowship (2011-2012) provided a great opportunity to study the contextual WASH and nutritional related causes of childhood stunting in Ethiopia, in collaboration with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), East and Southern Africa Regional Office in Addis, Ababa, Ethiopia. At IFPRI, he was mentored by Dr. Purnima Menon. He also worked with Dr. Disha Ali and Dr. Rahul Rawat. Dr. Ngunjiri is currently working as a post-doctoral associate with Dr. Stoltzfus.

Dr. Ngunjiri's research interests have taken an inter-sectorial approach to understanding causes of child under-nutrition, especially the role of mycotoxins co-exposure, WASH, Food and Nutritional Insecurity. After his post-doctoral research, he plans to return to his native Kenya and continue with nutrition research, teaching and mentorship. His vision is to be a leader in inter-sectorial research to provide sustainable nutrition interventions for a healthy and food secure Kenyan population, and low-income countries at large. Dr. Ngunjiri is currently working at the ILRI/BecA Hub Nairobi, Kenya as a researcher.

Rachel Opole

Country:
Kenya

University:
Kansas State University

Department & Degree:
Agronomy, PhD

US Mentor institution:
Kansas State University

CGIAR Mentor Institution:
International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)

Research:
Improving resilience and adaptation of finger millet to climate change.

Email:
opole@kstate.edu

Dr. Opole studied at Kansas State University under the mentorship of P.V. Vara Prasad. Her thesis research focused on determining the effect of environmental stresses and management on finger millet production. She determined that environmental stress during crop growth could have adverse effects on yield, resulting in decreased production. There was the need therefore, to mitigate the potential impacts of high temperature stress on finger millet production.

During her Borlaug LEAP fellowship at the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) in India, she evaluated the finger millet minicore collection for morphological and yield traits which have been found to correlate positively with the ability to withstand environmental stresses such as high temperature stress. The accessions that ranked highly for desirable morphological and yield traits were recommended for inclusion into the national and regional breeding programs to enhance the genetic potential of finger millet. Her CGIAR mentor Dr. Upadhyaya supervised her work in India and Dr. Oduori at the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI), supervised her work in Kenya.

Currently, Dr. Opole is involved in research activities aimed at improving finger millet production, utilization, marketing, and capacity building of the farming communities in 5 counties of western Kenya. Her activities are aimed at developing production and utilization technologies, up-scaling those technologies to improve productivity among finger millet farming communities and to enhance the linkage between the researchers, extension, farmers and various stakeholders in the finger millet value chain.



Senorpe Asem-Hiablie

Country:

Ghana

University:

Pennsylvania State University

Department & Degree:

Agricultural and Biological Engineering, PhD

US Mentor institution:

Pennsylvania State University

CGIAR Mentor Institution:

International Water Management Institute (IWMI)

Research:

Investigations of Human Exposure Risk to Environmental Estrogens through Common Ingestion Pathways.

Email:

Senorpe.Asem-Hiablie@ars.usda.gov

During her time as a Borlaug LEAP fellow, Senorpe Asem-Hiablie pursued a PhD student in Agricultural and Biological Engineering at Pennsylvania State University. Her doctoral research was focused on the risk of human exposure to environmental estrogens through common ingestion pathways, such as eating foods raised by means of wastewater effluent irrigation and aquaculture. Her studies were conducted both in her home country of Ghana and in the United States.

Dr. Asem-Hiablie began her Borlaug LEAP Fellowship in the summer of 2011 and was mentored by Dr. Herschel Elliott at Pennsylvania State University and Dr. Pay Dreschsel, as researcher at the International Water Management Institute (IWMI). As a scientist and engineer in training, Dr. Asem-Hiablie was and continues to be passionate about being involved in partnerships with relevant sectors that will encourage sustainable and eco-friendly economic growth. Her long-range goal is to practice "science without borders" and Dr. Asem-Hiablie is currently a post-doctoral researcher at the USDA-ARS Pasture Systems and Watershed Management Unit where she and her team are performing comprehensive life cycle assessments of beef production and consumption in the United States. Her work contributes to the development and evaluation of process-level relationships in biophysical models for whole farm assessments of the environmental and economic footprints of beef production.



Yaw Boamah Ansah

Country:
Ghana

University:
Virginia Tech

Department & Degree:
Fisheries, Wildlife Sciences, and Conservation, PhD

US Mentor institution:
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

CGIAR Mentor Institution:
International Water Management Institute (IWMI)

Research:
Enhancing the Profitability of Small Aquaculture Operations in Ghana through Improved Resource Management and Environmental Best Management Practices.

Email:
yawb@vt.edu

Borlaug LEAP Fellow Dr. Boamah Yaw Ansah was working towards a PhD in Fisheries, Wildlife Sciences and Conservation at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University during his fellowship period. His doctoral project was entitled "Enhancing Profitability of Small-Scale Aquaculture Farm Operations in Ghana through Resource Management and Environmental Best Management Practices". Based on fieldwork in his native Ghana, Dr. Ansah expecting to show that widespread adoption of best management practices technologies will not only maintain the quality of the natural water environment on which farms depend, but will also make operations more efficient and profitable for farmers, with social benefits in food security and poverty alleviation.

Dr. Ansah began his Borlaug LEAP Fellowship in the summer of 2011. During that time he was mentored by Dr. Regassa Namara at the International Water management Institute (IWMI) in Ghana. In addition, Dr. Ansah also worked with Dr. Emmanuel Frimpong, a professor at Virginia Tech. Dr. Ansah's research was integrated with an AquaFish CRSP project at the time and he aspired to be at the forefront of efforts attempting to combat global hunger and poverty and planned to return to Ghana to teach and do research. Dr. Ansah completed his PhD in 2014 and is currently working as a Trainer and Field Researcher at the West African Regional Fisheries Program in Ghana.

