



Position

Student Researcher

Institution

Faculty of Sciences (FDS -
Faculté des Sciences) at the
University of Lomé

Country

Togo

Education

BSc, Phytotechnology

Mentor

Dr Adjonou Kossi, Teacher-
researcher, University of
Lomé

Research Area

Planning, Silviculture and
Climate Change

Essè Ayiga

2019 One Planet Laureate Candidate

Born in 1988 in Libreville, Gabon, Essè Ayiga was just one year old when his parents relocated the family to Lomé in Togo.

There, the young Ayiga had moments of real family happiness with his sister and his three brothers.

This happiness was short-lived following the death of his father in 2000. His mother, unemployed and without income, had to take care of her young children by herself.

It is with much emotion that Ayiga talks about his difficult childhood with his mother who, prematurely widowed, began making home-made cakes to support the needs of her little family.

Although the children were very young, they had to help their mother with this activity, the only source of income, to optimise its profitability.

Education being the priority, school needs were covered, leaving nothing for them to eat.

Ayiga still remembers. Despite the financial difficulties, his mother's unwavering love and support would be a determining factor in his academic success.

A very good student at both primary and secondary level, he obtained his Baccalaureate C in 2009.

According to him, agriculture being the driving force of economic revival for any African country, he dreamt of working in the field of agronomy.

He, therefore, enrolled to take a degree in phytotechnology degree at the Higher School of Agronomy (ESA - Ecole Supérieure d'Agronomie) at the University of Lomé, the year he obtained his Baccalaureate.

In 2014, having still not completed his degree and facing growing financial difficulties, he stopped his studies to do a short training course in marketing and management.

Completing this professional training in 2015 allowed him to do odd jobs and finance his degree studies at the same time, which he resumed and finished in 2017.

In 2018, he completed an internship at Togo's Office of Development and Exploitation of Forests (ODEF - Office de Développement et d'Exploitation des Forêts).

It was during this course that he noticed that *Pterocarpus erinaceus*, a precious wood species that is very popular on the tropical market, is one of the endangered species in his country and the subregion.

He then prepared a preliminary project on vegetative regeneration techniques of this species and was admitted to a Master's degree course entitled "Forests and Climate Change" at the Faculty of Sciences at the University of Lomé.

The characterization of forest ecosystems and silvicultural management practices conducive to the production of wood and the preservation of forest biodiversity are, among others, research topics that he intends to continue to develop as part of a doctoral thesis.

Close to the farmers with whom he interacts during his field research visits, Ayiga envisages the creation of a network of farmers in rural areas to transmit his knowledge on vegetative selection and multiplication.

Ayiga envisages the creation of a network of farmers in rural areas to pass on his knowledge of plant breeding and propagation. The aim is to help these farmers to improve the productivity of their farms and consequently their living conditions.

The aim is to help these farmers to improve productivity on their farms and consequently their living conditions. Fighting and reducing poverty in rural areas remains one of his key motivations.

Essè Ayiga is one of the growing number of candidates selected to participate in the One Planet Fellowship. The One Planet Fellowship is a career development initiative that is building a robust pipeline of highly connected, inter-generational scientists equipped to use a gender lens to help Africa's smallholder farmers cope with climate change. The One Planet Fellowship is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the BNP Paribas Foundation, the European Union and Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC). African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) and Agropolis Fondation are jointly implementing the Fellowship.

Do you have any further questions? Send an email to: oneplanet.award@cgiar.org

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