



Florence Chibuye Kunda

2019 One Planet Laureate Candidate

Position

Lecturer and Researcher

Institution

University of Zambia
(UNZA)

Country

Zambia

Education

MSc, Environmental
Management

Mentor

Bridget Bwalya, Lecturer
and Researcher, University
of Zambia (UNZA)

Research Area

Climate change and
sustainable agriculture

She says her friends would describe her as hardworking and a go getter. "When I believe something will bring good to me, I focus on it and make sure it becomes a reality," she says.

She is the only daughter in a family seven children. At 34, Florence teaches natural resources management at the University of Zambia (UNZA). What she loves most about her job is the interaction with students from different backgrounds.

Her interactions with communities in rural areas while conducting field research exposed her to the dire situation facing smallholders. Agricultural productivity has reduced considerably, and she believes climate change is a contributing factor.

She is convinced that farmers need applied solutions and not theories, and is currently developing a mitigation project

She hopes to be in a position to impart knowledge on what can be done to address climate change, not only to her students, but also to communities.

Her main goal under the One Planet Fellowship programme is to contribute towards increasing forest cover in Zambia by building the capacity of communities living near forested areas.

She plans to establish a center of excellence in forestry at UNZA where she can be offering training, and facilitate knowledge generation through research.

The call for the One Planet Fellowship was shared in the WhatsApp group of the Zambian Women in Agricultural Research and Development (ZAWARD) of which she is a member.

She was attracted by the content of the programme – training in leadership management skills, advanced science training, networking and grant proposal writing skills.

Kunda seeks to enhance the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices among smallholder farmers and also to conduct gender-responsive research in the quest to help smallholder farmers including women and youth in a changing climate.

The programme is like a dream come true for her because she needs these skills to get to where she wants to be.

The research she conducted for her master's degree was her most impactful. Her findings went against what had been reported widely in literature concerning

Her PhD research will focus on environment and society, specifically on the challenges communities living around forested areas are grappling with as a result of climate change. She hopes to begin her research in January.

Her biggest challenge is gender stereotyping. On a number of occasions, she has undertaken fieldwork with her male counterparts but the respondents in the field assume and conclude that she is just an assistant and not one of the main researchers.

As such, they treat her differently from her male counterparts. Her department is predominantly men; out of 23 members of staff, only five are women. She blames this state of affairs on the cultural backgrounds and norms, where people believe that women should be in the kitchen.

There is also a general expectation that a woman should stay at home and take care of her children and husband. There are times she has had to miss out on field research trips because of a sick child. She acknowledges the support she has received from her husband over the years.

Florence Chibuye Kunda 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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