



Position

Master's II Student

Institution

African Centre for
Excellence on Climate
Change, Biodiversity and
Sustainable Agriculture,
Abidjan, (Ivory Coast)

Country

Togo

Education

MSc, Physical Geography,
University of Abomey-
Calavi, Benin, 2016

Mentor

Dr. Kouadio Alain Serge,
Director, green economy
and societal responsibility,
Ministry of the Environment
and Sustainable
Development, Ivory Coast

Research Area

Fires, plant dynamics,
climate change, forests and
remote sensing

Kueshi Sémanou Dahan

2019 One Planet Laureate Candidate

Born in the village of Ahlon-Tinipe, Kueshi Sémanou Dahan did his primary studies, up to sixth form in the prefecture of Kloto (Togo). Originally from the plateaux region, a large agroforestry region, Dahan wanted to study agronomy from sixth form. And it was in the region's capital, Atakpamé, that Dahan obtained his Baccalaureate series D (sciences) in 2009. At first, he wanted to be an agronomist and then changed his mind. A born artist, as he describes himself, passionate about art in general when he arrived in Cotonou (Benin), he opted for an atypical journey.

A true lover of nature from a young age, he ended up choosing physical geography including the management and conservation of biodiversity. Attracted by the aesthetic side of this discipline, more specifically cartography and remote sensing, he thought of reconciling the two through this pathway.

However, not wanting to give up his passion for drawing, which he had from a very young age (in his fifth year at school), he decided to enrol in parallel with a course in visual arts.

At the end of this double course, he obtained both a bachelor's degree in physical geography from the University of Abomey-Calavi (2012) and a master's degree (2016). He is also the recipient of a certificate of national visual artist, recognised by the Ministry of Culture of Benin.

Dahan is a hyper-active young man. Very invested in associative movements, during his training, he joined the UNESCO University Club for the Environment. He was also co-ordinator and trainer in the health, culture and environment department of the AfricaTIC-emplois NGO based in Cotonou.

Indeed, from his father, a vegetarian teacher, he inherited a taste for the traditional pharmacopoeia. Among other things, he was a visual arts trainer at the International Youth Fellowship (IYF) world youth camps. And, he joined the Pan-African NGO Africans Rising Benin as a volunteer, one of whose missions is the fight for the environmental cause (climate justice). In addition, he is also a member of G54 Africa. Finally, Dahan is a founding member and vice-president of the Human Rights Priority NGO based in Cotonou.

“Geography, climate change, biodiversity and ecosystem services is a topical and crucial area: coastal erosion, deforestation, drought, are causing suffering in villages. I am driven by a deep desire to contribute to the development of the region,” says Dahan.

Following a national selection, Dahan was employed by the international NGO OXFAM Quebec for employment and youth issues.

From 2015 to 2017, he worked with OXFAM in Benin as a consultant in the development of food security programs, economic empowerment of young people and was part of the OXFAM Youth programme.

With a Master's I in Plant Biology (2018), he went on to study a Master's II in Climate Change and Biodiversity and Ecosystemic Services at the doctoral school of the African Centre of Excellence for Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Agriculture of the Félix Houphouët-Boigny University, whose headquarters is at the Science and Innovation Hub in Bingerville, Ivory Coast.

A multidisciplinary scientist, Dahan is the 2019 laureate in risk and natural disaster management from the Integrated Research on Disaster Risks (IRDR).

The real lightbulb-moment happened in sixth form, “I wanted to do research in agronomy, but applied research,” he specifies. Why did you choose climate change, biodiversity and ecosystem services as a geography speciality? “This is a topical and crucial area: coastal erosion, deforestation, drought are causing the suffering of people in the villages. I am driven by a deep desire to contribute,” he replied passionately. In addition, Mr. Dahan is sensitive to the gender issue.

His research work focuses on mastery of land management and biodiversity conservation in the

savannah forest of the department of Toumodi in the centre of Côte d'Ivoire.

Of course, aware of global environmental news, Dahan knew about the two One Planet Summits (Paris, 2017 and Nairobi, 2019) but he admits having discovered by chance, through research on the Internet, the “One Planet Fellowship” initiative.

On a professional level, Mr. Dahan aspires to work in a research laboratory within an international team of researchers, and/or to create a consultancy firm specializing in GIS and remote sensing applied to climatology for the management of climate risks, both to contribute to and mitigate the phenomena of climate change and food security.

He obviously intends to pursue doctoral studies in applied remote sensing by reconciling climate and plant biodiversity. In addition, a project on agri-forestry systems in Togo is close to his heart as well as an initiative called “Envie SIG” (“GIS Wish”). To do this, he is relying on the capacity building from which he will benefit thanks to this grant, but also the increased visibility.

Kueshi Sémanou Dahan 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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