



Position

Researcher and Voluntary
Assistant-Teacher

Institution

Faculty of Agronomic
Sciences (University of
Abomey-Calavi, Benin)

Country

Benin

Education

PhD, Agronomic Sciences,
specialising in Zootechnics
and Livestock Raising
System

Mentor

Professor Adande Belarmain
Fandohan, Senior Lecturer,
Forestry, National University
of Agriculture, Kétou, Benin

Research Area

Climate change and
pastoralists systems

Marthe Montcho

2019 One Planet Laureate Candidate

Marthe Montcho is a researcher and Teaching Assistant at the Faculty of Agronomic Sciences at the University of Abomey-Calavi, in Benin. In 2014 she received the Yobloco-Young Blog Competition prize for best blog in agriculture in the African Caribbean and Pacific region (ACP) organized by the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), based in the Netherlands. Her interest in agriculture dates from her very early childhood.

At the age of eight, she decided to pursue a career in agriculture. She clearly remembers visits to the rural area where her grandparents lived, where agriculture was the main activity, the dynamics of the rural world animated by agricultural advisers, development agents who assessed the soils and provided advice to the farmers.

After her Secondary School Certificate (Brevet d'études secondaires), she opted for the scientific pathway and obtained her Baccalaureate D (Biology and Geology) in 2007. Her choice was easily made, between studying medicine or agronomic sciences.

She enrolled at the Polytechnic School of Abomey-Calavi (EPAC - École Polytechnique d'Abomey-Calavi) at the University of Abomey-Calavi, to study for an undergraduate degree, which she obtained in 2010.

Between 2010 and 2012, she obtained her master's degree in animal production and health at EPAC. Montcho, whose studies until then were entirely funded by her parents, highlights the difficulty of continuing in the master's cycle without external financial contributions.

The polytechnic school, where she was enrolled, only offered scholarships to students on admission. Having not received the required grade for a scholarship on admission, she could no longer benefit from it during her study, despite her very good results.

In the Faculty of Human Sciences, on the other hand, students who have not received a scholarship on admission could benefit from one as they entered their second year, on the basis of their academic results.

Montcho used this loophole to enrol in a master's degree in sociology-anthropology at the faculty of human sciences at the University of Abomey-Calavi in 2009.

Between 2009 and 2015, she was a scholarship student at the Faculty of Human Sciences where she obtained her master's in sociology-anthropology. She used this grant to fund her master's studies at EPAC.

Montcho wants to contribute to the agricultural development of Benin and West Africa through the identification of the major challenges faced by agro-pastoralist communities.

In 2014, she was guided by her teachers towards a Diploma of Advanced Study (DEA - Diplôme d'Etude Approfondie) programme in animal resource management at the Faculty of Agronomic Sciences (FSA) at the University of Abomey-Calavi (UAC, Benin).

She worked on stocktaking and evaluating resources used to feed livestock in the dry season. Her work is part of the Agricultural Productivity Programme in West Africa (PPAO - Programme de Productivité Agricoles en Afrique de l'Ouest), funded by the World Bank. After her DEA, she applied and obtained a mobility grant from the Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World (OWSD) to do her doctoral thesis between Burkina (at the Rural Development Institute at Nazi Boni University in Bobo-Dioulasso) and Benin (at the Faculty of Agronomic Sciences at the University of Abomey-Calavi).

Her doctoral research has introduced a new approach based on multi-nutritional block technology. These blocks are made from crop residues and agri-industrial by-products for livestock feed in the dry season in Benin.

Montcho is currently pursuing research on the adaptation strategies of pastoralist farms and dairy co-operatives run by women faced with climate change in Benin, Niger and Burkina Faso (West Africa).

Montcho aims to contribute to the agricultural development of Benin and in West Africa through the identification of the major challenges of agri-pastoralist communities.

The development, implementation of scientific research projects and dissemination of innovative research results in the form of illustrated technical sheets and in local languages are of major importance to her. This initiative,

started a few years ago, won her the "Benin Youth Award" in 2016, organized by the Consultative Body for Youth (OCJ - Organe Consultatif de la Jeunesse) of the Ministry of Youth of Benin. She received the prize in the category "Volunteering and Community Service"

Over the next ten years, Montcho became Associate Professor at the University in Benin. She plans to work for international organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to contribute to agricultural development on an international scale. She did not hesitate to apply for the "One Planet Fellowship" programme when one of her teachers from the University told her about it. She is aware that she will need, for her professional development, training in leadership, project writing, fundraising for research and the mentorship offered by the program. She also intends to transfer the knowledge acquired as part of the "One Planet Fellowship" through internal training modules which she plans to organize.

Marthe Montcho 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