



Oliver Kipkogei

2019 One Planet Laureate Candidate

Position

Climate Scientist

Institution

Inter-Governmental
Authority on Development
(IGAD) Climate Prediction
and Applications Centre
(ICPAC)

Country

Kenya

Education

MSc, Meteorology,
University of Nairobi

Mentor

Dr. Zewdu T. Segele, Senior
Climate Scientist, IGAD
Climate Prediction and
Applications Centre (ICPAC)

Research Area

Managing climate risks
within the smallholder
farmers by enhancing
access to quality tailored
climate services

Like other climate scientists in Africa whose research aims to improve the resilience of smallholder farmers, Oliver Kipkogei has his work cut out for him. To begin with, the magnitude of the problem is daunting, considering that over 75 percent of African nations have an agricultural economy riding mostly on smallholder production, the group that is the most vulnerable to climate change.

Secondly, resources are limited to come up with technologies suited for African farmers or adapt the many innovations generated elsewhere

Thirdly, there is limited understanding of the issues related to increased climate variability and change among extension workers and smallholder farmer representatives and the feeling is that they are not able to advise communities on these issues accordingly.

Kipkogei knows that he has a part to play in improving this situation, a desire that is driven by personal circumstances: his parents are peasant farmers and as he says, he is "... contributing in [his] own small way to help solve their problems.

He is a key contributor to the online ICPAC Maproom, a one-stop shop for tailored climate information for agriculture and food security applications; the focal point for the Climate Resilience Enhancement Initiative (ACREI), a multi-partner collaboration that aims to improve resilience of smallholders in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda; the coordinator of the generation of advisories for the agriculture and food security sector of the Greater Horn of Africa, based on climate forecasts; and a contributor to the Food Security Nutrition Working Forum. All these initiatives generate policy-maker advisories and information relevant to smallholder farmers.

He endeavors to conduct research that generates quality climate information. But he understands that that information needs to be presented in a narrative that its users understand. In this regard, he is committed to building the capacity of relevant stakeholders, including agricultural extension staff, to understand the technical aspects associated with climate information services in order to increase their uptake and build smallholder farmers' resilience.

Any opportunity to interact with the grassroots is a source of fulfilment for Kipkogei because it allows him to see the information and technologies he develops for farmers being applied to solve their problems in their real situations, for example in rainwater harvesting for supplementary irrigation in times of prolonged dry spells, in mulching, and with farmers adopting alternative livelihoods in cases where their current practices are not viable.

Kipkogei sees the One Planet Fellowship, along with the PhD degree in climate change and adaptation that he is pursuing, as what he needs to take his career to the next level and move closer to his dream of becoming a global leader in climate risk assessment and provision of climate change adaptation solutions and information for improvement of smallholder resilience.

Mentoring and the training in soft skills will help him to become assertive and improve his decision-making and self-presentation skills, and the opportunities for networking, publishing, improvement of academics and global exposure will broaden his worldview and connect him with global leaders in his field.

Kipkogei will also apply his new knowledge to stimulate a positive change in his institution. For example, besides sharing his learning with colleagues, he will seek to lead in ensuring that ICPAC introduces gender, diversity and culture considerations in all its programs.

Kipkogei wants to conduct research that generates quality climate information. He is committed to building the capacity of relevant stakeholders to understand the technical aspects associated with climate information services in order to increase their uptake and build smallholder farmers' resilience.

One would expect a positive reception for the scientific advice of the kind that Oliver delivers by those who stand to benefit from it, but this is not always so.

This is mainly associated with the limited understanding of issues related to climate uncertainty and the inability to dispel myths about inaccurate climate information. Although he and his ICPAC colleagues and ICPAC Member States' conduct outreach activities to improve user understanding of climate science, that coverage, especially at the local scale, is not to the desired levels.

Oliver Kipkogei 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