



## Toundji Olivier Amoussou

2019 One Planet Laureate Candidate

### Position

Post-Doctorate Researcher

### Institution

International Centre for  
Research and Development  
on Livestock Farming in  
Sub-humid Zones (CIRDES),  
Bobo-Dioulasso (Burkina  
Faso)

### Country

Benin

### Education

PhD, Fisheries Sciences,  
Nazi Boni University, 2017

### Mentor

Dr. Dorothé Ngondjeb Yong  
Nje, Teacher – Researcher,  
University of Yaoundé II

### Research Area

Conservation, Aquaculture  
and Genetics of aquatic  
resources

Born in Kpataba in the commune of Savalou in Benin, Toundji Olivier Amoussou began his primary studies in Parakou then continued them in Dassa-Zoumé where he spent his secondary education up to Baccalaureate D level. He passed the national examinations for university admission and was admitted to study physiotherapy and livestock production. Without hesitation, he enrolled to study livestock production at the University of Abomey-Calavi's Polytechnic School with a national scholarship from the State of Benin.

From as long as he remembers, Amoussou has always been passionate about fish. At the beginning of his university studies he worked on catfish because of the high demand for fry for fish farms. With a degree in Livestock Production (2009) he undertook his master's degree in Fishing and Aquaculture at the University of Abomey-Calavi. In the second year of his master's, Amoussou obtained a scholarship from the West Africa Office of the Francophonie University Association (AUF - Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie) for a three month internship at the International Centre for Research and Development on Livestock Farming in Sub-humid Zones (CIRDES), based in Bobo-Dioulasso in

Burkina Faso. The fieldwork phase of the second year of his master's took place in the village of Bama, around 20km from Bobo-Dioulasso (2011). Later, he focused on aquaculture, specifically breeding tilapia, two species of fish that are more accessible to fishermen and fish farmers in a context of declining productivity of traditional fishing. "It was clear in my mind. From the time I did my master's, I knew that I wanted to become an expert in fisheries sciences," he explains. His scientific approach aims to find innovative solutions for fish farmers and fishermen while preserving the natural environment. The genetics and genomics of fish fascinate him particularly because, from this starting point, he feels that he can suggest strategies for the conservation and sustainable management of aquatic resources.

At the end of his Master's degree, Amoussou wrote a thesis project for which the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA - Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest-Africaine) granted him funding to start the thesis.

With his vision behind him, Amoussou began his thesis, driven by the desire to help produce enough fish both by protecting their natural environment,

and by increasing their yield while preserving the resource. During his thesis, he benefitted from a grant from the French government's Co-operation and Cultural Action Service (SCAC - Service de Coopération et d'Action Culturelle). Later, he obtained an intra-ACP mobility grant from the European Union and towards the end of the thesis he received a donation from the International Foundation for Science (IFS) allowing him to finalize his thesis as well as part of the post-doctorate.

Amoussou defended his thesis in Fisheries Science in 2017 at the Nazi Boni University of Bobo-Dioulasso and continued with a six month post-doctorate at the same institution, CIRDES. Today, he is a postdoctoral research fellow at CIRDES on the one hand, and at the Agriculture Innovation Laboratory of the Institute for Rural Development at Nazi Boni University, on the other. He works indirectly with local communities of fishermen, fish farmers, and women involved in the sale and processing of fish, with an NGO based in Benin. In addition, Amoussou supports two associations including the Association "Initiatives for Sustainable Agriculture" (IAD - Initiatives pour une Agriculture Durable) as a Project Manager and the NGO "Aquaculture and Sustainable Development" (AquaDeD).

His interest in research is focused on the conservation and environmental sustainability of aquatic genetic resources (aquatic plants and animals).

"It was clear in my mind. By the time I got my master's degree, I knew I wanted to be an expert in fisheries science. My goal is to find innovative solutions for fish farmers and fishermen while preserving the natural environment," states Amoussou.

At professional level, his objective is to integrate an African university or an internationally renowned research centre but of course his priority is to continue to look for solutions to solve the problems of the local populations.

He found out about the One Planet fellowship thanks to a CIRDES mailing list. In his opinion, the One Planet Fellowship initiative will allow him both personal development and the integration of a network of researchers. From a scientific point of view, this scholarship will contribute to the improvement of project writing and therefore, more chance of obtaining funding. On the other hand, lessons learned or capacity building within a European laboratory will provide the necessary tools to come back and positively impact the community of fishermen and aquaculturists, as well as the environment. One of the major challenges for African researchers to highlight remains financial resources, according to him.

**Toundji Olivier Amoussou** 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](mailto:oneplanet.award@cgiar.org)

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