



#### Position

Teacher-researcher

#### Institution

Félix Houphouët-Boigny  
University

#### Country

Ivory Coast

#### Education

PhD, Water and Climate  
Change, Félix Houphouët-  
Boigny University, Abidjan,  
2016

#### Mentor

Dr. Gnangimon Gbenakpon  
Edmond Totin, Climate  
Impact and Adaptation  
Expert, National University  
of Agriculture, Benin

#### Research Area

Climate change and water  
security, science practice  
and policy interface

## Zegbé Narcisse Gahi

2019 One Planet Laureate Candidate

Zegbé Narcisse Gahi was born and grew up in Gagnoa, an important town in the cocoa loop, in the western centre of Ivory Coast, in a family of farmers. A brilliant pupil, he was an Ivory Coast state scholarship pupil throughout his secondary schooling (from his first year of secondary school up to sixth form)

This continued during his higher education where he once again received a scholarship from the state until completing his thesis. After completing a Baccalaureate D (sciences), he went to the economic capital Abidjan for university studies at the Félix Houphouët-Boigny University for a Bachelor's degree in Earth Sciences, specialising in Geology (2006), master's degree in Hydrogeology (2009) and PhD in Climate Change and Water (2016).

During his thesis, he benefitted from two other grants: one from the Institute for the Application and Popularisation of Science (IAVS - Institut d'Application de Vulgarisation en Sciences), renamed the African Centre for Scientific Research and Training (CRES - Centre Africain de Recherche Scientifique et de Formation), and the excellence scholarship from the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA (Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest-Africaine).

At the IAVS, Gahi was quickly identified by the Institute's management who, in addition to his thesis activities, made him scientific co-ordinator for Burkina Faso for the project to integrate urban agriculture and forestry into climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies.

In October 2013, following a presentation of his research work at the African climate conference in Arusha, he was noticed by the University of Reading in England for integrating the catalyst phase of an ongoing project (2014). Subsequently, even before his thesis defence, he was distinguished by the University of Reading's Walker Institute, and thus obtained a post as postdoctoral research assistant (2015). In 2018, he was recruited as a teacher-researcher at the Félix Houphouët-Boigny University in Ivory Coast.

Gahi, a specialist in climate change and water, is currently working on post-doctoral research. His research, which combines science, practice and policy to inform development planning, focuses on climate, water security and human security.

While still young, and marked by images in the local and international media of men and women affected by recurrent droughts and floods, especially in Africa, and the stories of elders,

Gahi promotes an integrated approach to climate services based on four pillars including evidence from his work with the local communities. He aims to better inform the formulation of development policies

Gahi became very sensitive to humanitarian issues. In college, he had already chosen Natural Sciences but was not yet able to make the link with climate change.

At University, he chose the common path of chemistry, biology and geology, then choosing to specialise in geology at undergraduate level and hydrogeology for his master's. And for his thesis, his academic supervisor advised him to work on climate change in general, and the floods in Ivory Coast in particular. Unfortunately, his work was interrupted because of the Ivory Coast post-electoral crisis. The alternative available to him was to carry out field work in Burkina Faso, in particular on the theme of climate change and agricultural water in a systemic approach including the Nakanbé river, the Bagré and Mogtédo dams and the farmers.

The model he developed was tested on three different agricultural sites and zones in Bobo-Dioulassou and Ouagadougou. He addressed the issue of sustainable resilience to climate risks of agri-hydrosystems and food security for populations. One of his major concerns is the following. How to translate scientific results into water policy, taking into account the climate factor, for the benefit of small farmers?

"My real passion for teaching and research came after my baccalaureate," he confides. "I'll tell you a little story, I've been calling myself Dr. since my degree," he says, laughing. "I even turned down a job offer after my DEA degree to devote myself to research."

His research work confirms he made the right choice. Currently, Gahi is promoting an integrated approach to the four-pillar climate services that he initiated.

Based on the evidence of his work with local communities, his objective is to further inform decision-makers.

His career plan is not yet clearly defined because his concern is more to occupy an appropriate position that will allow him to influence political decision-makers in favour of the climate. In addition, he also aims, through this role, to support the private sector to invest more in climate resilience, particularly in terms of adaptive social protection in Ivory Coast and West Africa.

Gahi was made aware of the One Planet fellowship through scientific friends.

As the One Planet Fellowship initiative is a programme based on leadership and gender, it will undoubtedly make a significant contribution to achieving his career goals while taking local realities into account. In terms of research, lessons (leadership, tools) will be shared with his institution, students and colleagues. And he thinks that as a Laureate, he will set an example to follow.

According to him, one of the problems for researchers in Africa lies in communicating their research results and how they can influence political decisions.

**Zegbé Narcisse Gahi** 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)