



Position

Research Associate

Institution

Regional Agricultural Research
Centre (CRRRA) of Sotuba,
Bamako

Country

Mali

Education

MPhil, Soil Science, Kwame
Nkrumah University of Science
and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana,

Mentor

Dr. Sanogo Kapoury, Researcher,
International Crops Research
Institute for the Semi-Arid
Tropics (ICRISAT)

Research Area

Improving the short- to
long-term agroecological
sustainability of cotton and
maize production in Mali.

Ginette Dembélé

2020 One Planet Laureate Candidate

Agricultural engineer Ginette Dembélé has been a research associate and delegate for the cotton programme at the Regional Agricultural Research Centre (CRRRA) of Sotuba (Institute of Rural Economic, Mali) in Bamako since 2017.

This soil scientist focuses on improving agronomic practices, and people's living conditions since 80% of the population in Mali are farmers. Ginette laments that poor soil management in West Africa is responsible for a decline in soil fertility and environmental damage and, by extension, climate change.

Her research is based on improving the agroecological sustainability of cotton and maize production. These crops are widely farmed in southern Mali and are a source of income for most people.

Her research also includes a section on fair-trade organic cotton production by women. Furthermore, she plans to identify fertilizers used in organic farming and the determining factors to ensure farmers adopt them.

Additionally, Ginette is collaborating with farmers to develop integrated and economical methods of cotton weed control in Mali Kita, in Fana-Koulikoro.

After observing the significant lack of women working in the soil sector, she felt even more motivated to do something about it. That is

why she wants to inspire other women scientists to follow this career path. "Women are more at ease in the field, especially working on fertilization," she says.

Ginette has been passionate about science from an early age and was strongly encouraged by her mother. As a child, she dreamed of becoming a scientist and decided to specialize in agronomy quite early on; a heritage passed down from her parents, who were farmers in their spare time. Ginette grew up in Ségou, the first town in Mali outside Bamako to have a university.

A brilliant pupil, she won the Physics and Chemistry Award for Excellence in secondary school in 2004 and obtained her Malian high school diploma a year later.

In 2007, she obtained a General Studies Diploma (DEUG) II in Life Sciences from the Faculty of Science and Technology (FAST) at the University of Bamako. The same year, she passed the entrance exam to the Rural Polytechnic Institute for Training and Applied Research (IPR IFRA) in Katibougou, Mali, to become an Agricultural Engineer. Armed with her engineering degree, in 2010, Ginette worked for a few months on a Transboundary Natural Resource Management project in Ségou.

The following year, she was recruited as an

assistant to the coordinator of the agro-microdose project at the Cinzana Agricultural Research Station.

In 2012, she passed the civil service exam with flying colors, coming third in the national ranking. The following year, she started a Master of Research in Soil Science at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, Ghana, and graduated in 2015.

Ginette discovered the One Planet Fellowship during a training course on "Integrated Farming Systems in Sub-Saharan Africa" in Porto-Novo, Benin, attended by laureates from the AWARD and One Planet programs.

Her career objectives are to enroll in a PhD in soil science to broaden her knowledge while improving agricultural land management. Her mid-term goal is to become a research fellow to increase her eligibility for funding.

The One Planet Fellowship will help Ginette improve her technical skills, develop sufficient knowledge of fertilizer management techniques in organic farming, and lead her field of expertise. Additionally, she plans to design a project on biochar in Mali for smallholder farmers.

She would like to influence decision-making and serve as a role model through her work. "Self-confidence is of paramount importance," she emphasizes.

She also hopes to build capacity within her institution and in her field with her publications and help drive the research center forward.

Ginette's main research objective is to improve the agroecological sustainability of cotton and maize. She plans to identify fertilizers used in organic farming and the determining factors to ensure farmers adopt them.

As a woman researcher, she has had to overcome many challenges. Through perseverance and hard work, Ginette is sure she can overcome these issues and lead in the economic construction of her country while improving agricultural management techniques.

Ginette Dembélé 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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