



Laura Estelle Loko Yeyinou

2020 One Planet Laureate Candidate

Position

Associate Professor

Institution

Higher National School of Biosciences and Applied Biotechnologies (ENSBBA), National University of Sciences, Technologies, Engineering and Mathematics (UNSTIM)

Country

Benin

Education

PhD, Plant Genetic Resources and Crop Protection, University of Abomey-Calavi, Benin

Mentor

Prof. Simplicite Davo Vodouhé, Agricultural Engineering, and Environment specializing in Environmental Sociology, University of Abomey-Calavi

Research Area

Development and implementation of innovative and ecological practices for integrated crop pest management.

36-year-old Laura Estelle Loko Yeyinou has had an exceptional scientific career. She is an Associate Professor in zoology and genetics at the Higher National School of Biosciences, and Applied Biotechnologies (ENSBBA) of the National University of Sciences, Technologies, Engineering and Mathematics (UNSTIM), and she is also head of the Laboratory of Applied Entomology at ENSBBA in the Republic of Benin.

Her research focuses on the development and implementation of innovative and ecological practices for integrated crop pest management. Her research work also focuses on gaining a better understanding of Benin's plant genetic resources.

She has published sixty scientific articles in international journals. She has also received several grants and awards, such as the L'Oréal-UNESCO Sub-Saharan Africa: For Women in Science Award in 2014.

Laura specializes in genetics and entomology and is passionate about research. Her current research project combines these two disciplines. She is particularly interested in identifying methods of pest control that are respectful of human health and the Environment. The research develops strategies for the conservation of Benin's plant genetic resources.

Laura claims many crop types are neglected despite offering greater resilience to climate change and better food security.

A mother of five with an incredibly active social and professional life, Laura is working tirelessly to achieve her goals. She is a member of the Academy of Young Scientists of Benin (AJSB) and the agriculture and education and ethic committees of the Benin National Academy of Sciences and Arts.

Her father, a rewinder operator, and her mother, a shopkeeper, made every effort to ensure the academic success of their four daughters. After obtaining her high school diploma in 2002, she enrolled in specialist science classes at the Higher National School in Yaoundé, Cameroon. In 2006, she graduated as a grade-one secondary school teacher in Life and Earth Sciences. At the same time, she was studying at the University of Yaoundé I. She obtained a Bachelor's degree in Animal Biology and then a Master's degree in Animal Biology, specializing in zoology the following year. During her induction at the Faculty of Sciences of the University of Yaounde I, her choice was based on the level of difficulty of the Master's program, which was reflected by the low number of students in the lecture hall.

In 2007, after completing her studies, she returned to live in her country of origin and settled in Cotonou, the capital of Benin.

Laura specializes in genetics and entomology. She is particularly interested in identifying methods of pest control that are respectful of human health and the Environment to preserve the conservation of Benin's plant genetic resources.

That same year, she enrolled on a Master's degree in Applied Entomology at the University of Abomey-Calavi, which she obtained in March 2010 and was awarded a scholarship from the Beninese government for her thesis.

While surveying yam diversity as part of her thesis, she observed that women farmers were experiencing significant post-harvest losses due to insect pests in stored yam pods. After completing a literature review, she realized that there was little research on the subject. This inspired her passion for finding solutions that were human and environmentally friendly. She subsequently began to focus on climate change because of the proliferation of new pests in West Africa, a phenomenon directly linked to climate change.

She obtained a Ph.D. in Plant Genetic Resources and Crop Protection from the University of Abomey-Calavi (UAC) in 2013. She also enrolled in an open distance learning program thanks to a grant from the University Agency for Francophonie (AUF) at the St Quentin-en-Yvelines University in France. In 2013, she obtained her professional Master's degree in Health, Environmental, Territorial, and Social Sciences.

After being recruited as an assistant at the University of Abomey-Calavi in October 2013, she quickly rose through the ranks. In 2016, she was promoted to Senior University Lecturer for CAMES (African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education).

In 2020, she was appointed as a Senior Lecturer at the National University of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, her current institution.

Laura learned about the One Planet Fellowship while researching on the internet. She is already in discussion with another candidate

from the Fellowship about doing a joint research project.

She is also aware that this Fellowship will benefit her institution's visibility, and she hopes to obtain funding to equip the institution. Furthermore, she would like to serve as a role model to her colleagues, to whom she wants to convey the importance of research. The mentoring and capacity-building elements of the One Planet Fellowship program will help her conduct quality research that can be published in renowned journals and mentoring Ph.D. students.

Laura's vision is set on becoming a Full Professor, the most senior position possible. Through her research, she aims to help improve food security and raise farmers' income in her country by developing innovative solutions for crop insect pest management.

Noting the limited financial and technical resources, Laura constantly applies for grants and other sources of funding available to help promote collaboration between research institutes/centers. Laura acknowledges that to have a quality family life despite her considerable workload; she must learn to be better disciplined.

Laura Estelle Loko Yeyinou 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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