



Kouyaté Sidi Boudama

2021 One Planet Laureate Candidate

Position

Researcher

Institution

Africa Rice Center

Country

Benin

Education

Master II, Public Health, Nutrition option, University of Sciences, Techniques and Technologies (USTTB), Bamako

Mentor

Dr. Niaba Teme, Research Director, Biotechnology Laboratory/Regional Centre for Agricultural Research (CARRA) of Sotuba/Institute of Rural Economics (IER)

Research Area

Food security and nutrition and food technology.

Kouyaté Sidi Boudama was born in 1990 in Ségou, a city in Mali located 240 km from the capital Bamako. His family moved to Bamako a year after he was born. At that time, his father was an inspector of the national treasury, then a director-general. His father died young when Kouyaté was only five years of age. His widowed mother, then an agricultural engineer from the Institut Polytechnique Rural de Formation et de Recherche Appliquée (IPR/IFRA) in Katibougou, raised her three boys and their half-siblings alone. Ahmed completed all his schooling in Bamako.

He immediately showed a preference for scientific subjects. His goal has been to become a doctor specializing in cardio-pediatric surgery from an early age. As a young man, he developed empathy for children with heart problems, who, for lack of a local technical platform, lost their lives or, on rare occasions, were taken care of by associations for surgical operations in the west. Kouyaté grew up, and over time, his interest turned to nutrition. He insists, however, that this interest was not influenced by his mother, who has a doctorate in nutrition.

In 2009, Ahmed obtained his scientific baccalaureate with a good overall result. He was awarded a scholarship from the Malian government for the higher cycle in Algeria. He left Mali to enroll in the Faculty of Natural and Life Sciences, Department of Nutrition and Agri-Food Technology at the Ibn-Khaldoun University of Tiaret, located in Tiaret, Algeria.

Five years later, he defended his state engineering degree in nutrition and agri-food technology on the theme of the determinants influencing diarrhea in children under five years of age. He obtained an excellent overall result.

Kouyaté returned to Mali in 2014. Eager to integrate quickly into professional life, he then did several internships. His first three-month advanced internship was at IER in the CRRRA of Sotuba in the Laboratory of Food Technology (LTA) department. Next, he spent a year in the department of pediatrics in the nutrition unit of the University Hospital Center of the Gabriel Touré Hospital, studying the nutritional care of malnourished children. He then continued with an internship at the Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment (APEJ). Here he was sent to the Misola association, which produces Misola infant flour as part of the fight against acute malnutrition. During this internship, he had the opportunity to teach evening classes at a private health university.

At the same time, in 2016, the nutritionist landed a teaching position at a private health university. It provided evening classes on nutrition and food, food security, nutrition for people living with HIV/AIDS, child growth and development, and nutritional epidemiology.

Finally, he did another internship in the Centre de Santé de Référence (CSRéf) [Health Reference Centre] of Commune III in the endocrinology unit alongside a doctor. He provided dietary and nutritional advice to patients.

Kouyaté provides training in local agri-food processing technologies in market gardening distribution of varieties resistant to climate change stress.

At the beginning of 2018, thanks to all his professional experience in the field, he finally signed a contract at the IER in the CRRA of Sotuba in the LTA as part of an ongoing project on food adaptation to climate change (ACC).

Kouyaté received a 15-day training fellowship on the added value and diversification of coconut and cocoa products at the ICAR-Central Plantation Crops Research Institute, Kasaragod in Kerala, India, as an international training program.

In addition, he also benefited from other specific training on postharvest technology and added value at the CSIR-Central Food Technological Research Institute in Mysore, India, in 2018.

He obtained funding from the ACC Phase II project for his 'master's and doctoral studies.

He enrolled in a 'master's in nutrition at the Faculty of Medicine and Odonto-Stomatology (FMOS). For this year only, given that there were only three students for the master 2 (second-year master's) in nutrition, the faculty suggested that he delay for a year.

Kouyaté decided otherwise, knowing that Algeria's training was needed to acquire basic skills. The 'master's would allow him to deepen his knowledge to respond to the fight against food insecurity and malnutrition.

With this in mind, in the absence of the master 2 in nutrition, he decided to enroll in master 1 (first-year master's) in public health and then the following year in master 2 in nutrition, which he obtained on January 22, 2021.

Kouyaté regularly works with rural communities, particularly in the communes of Dio, Yélimané, Kati, Baraouéli, Bandiagara, and Kolokani.

He is involved mainly with women in terms of market gardening: new techniques of market gardening and distribution of varieties resistant to the stressful conditions of climate change.

He provides training in processing technologies for local agri-food products. This training is coupled with raising awareness on food and nutrition for children under five years of age.

Now, Kouyaté is a researcher at the LTA at the CRRA of Sotuba, IER in Mali. His research is focused on the preparation of food supplements with high added nutritional value made from local products available in different regions.

He is studying the dietary value of key functional foods in different communities amid climate change to prevent and combat malnutrition in children aged six months to five years and in women of childbearing age.

He is currently conducting a clinical study on two dietary supplements based on local products (NEZAB and NEBAB) to treat iron and vitamin A deficiency in children under five years of age.

Several other products have also been used in the fight against malnutrition, namely mugufara flour, voandzou flour associated with moringa, and finally, moringa powder as part of the treatment of anemia in women.

Currently, Kouyaté is in the process of enrolling in doctoral school. He is very determined, and believes he can be more effective in helping by reaching a higher level.

At the beginning of the year, his boss sent him the call for the One Planet Scholarship application, encouraging him to apply.

Kouyaté does not doubt that he will continue his future career at his current institution and native country.

He hopes to become an associate professor to better apply the knowledge and skills he has gained to train the next generation. Further down the line, he wants to become a research director.

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His objective is to contribute to the improvement of the nutritional status of the Malian rural population, in particular women of reproductive age and children under five years of age, through the approach of adapting a sustainable, local, and acceptable diet through the development of local food products that meet the specific needs of this population.

Extremely proud to be the only candidate from Mali, this scholarship will undoubtedly improve his interpersonal skills (self-confidence, leadership skills).

His expectations of this program are, among others, the development of entrepreneurial capacity (skills at the research level), visits to excellent research centers, increasing his scientific capabilities (writing articles, writing projects, obtaining funding, ability to convince funders), all aspects that will allow him to increase his capacities and quickly achieve the objectives he sets himself.

For Kouyaté, the skills or knowledge acquired during this program will benefit both the institution and the community, as the teachings will be transferred across all levels.

His major challenge is his development as a researcher. On the one hand, he would like to establish himself as a young researcher in his research laboratory. On the other hand, he would like to be more involved in the research work of senior researchers to benefit from their experience.

He would like inclusive collaboration and focused and convergent research activities so that research results can be more effective.

Kouyaté Sidi Boudama 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.

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