

## Gender Responsive Agriculture Systems Policy (GRASP) Fellowship

### Fellow Profile



#### Position

Director General of Sanitation,  
Wastewater and Excreta

#### Institution

Ministry of Environment, Water and  
Sanitation of Burkina Faso

#### Country

Burkina Faso

#### Education

MSc in Sanitary and Environmental  
Engineering, International Institute of  
Water and Environmental Engineering  
(2iE),  
Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), 2011

#### Mentor

Dr Lansana Gagny Sakho, Consultant,  
former Director General of the  
Office of Rural Drilling and the  
National Sanitation Office of Senegal

#### Research Area

The mobilization of water resources  
for agriculture by integrating the  
use of wastewater and recovered  
fecal sludge as an amendment

### Julienne Tiendrebeogo 2023 AWARD Policy Fellow

*"When people realize that you have the required skills, they set aside their prejudices and forget that you are a woman."*

In 2009, having obtained a degree from the National School of Engineering (ENI) of Bamako, Mali, Julienne Tiendrebeogo began working in Burkina Faso in water management and agriculture, both of which were overseen by the same ministry. Since 2022, as General Manager of Sanitation, Wastewater, and Sewage, she has overseen monitoring and implementing strategies and policies regarding sanitation and wastewater treatment in Burkina Faso.

Julienne studied Microbiology at the University of Abobo Adjamé in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, in 2004. She grew used to the country's favorable climate for agriculture. When she moved back to Burkina Faso in 2005, she was alarmed by the scarcity of vegetation and water, particularly in rural areas. "I realized the vital importance of water for rural development. That is when I also became interested in water availability and management issues," she explains.

During study trips to Egypt in 2010, Julienne was impressed and inspired by the arable land, the result of diverting water from the Nile at the heart of the Sinai desert. "What really impressed me was the Egyptians' ability to plan and their unrelenting efforts.

Transforming desert into fertile land requires years of work and, above all, a 'vision,' recalls Julienne. She firmly believes that drawing inspiration from similar examples makes it possible to create orchards and jobs in the Sahel region and turn them into a pole of growth.

Julienne considers herself the lucky beneficiary of a gender-oriented initiative: thanks to a women's scholarship program sponsored by the Embassy of Denmark in Burkina Faso, she was able to study engineering at the ENI in Bamako.

It was the start of her career when very few women held water management jobs. “Fresh out of school, I was quickly promoted to manager at the Ministry of Agriculture in Burkina Faso. Not many women worked in the industry,” recalls Julienne. She was higher in the hierarchy than her older male colleagues. She also came across people in the field who were not used to dealing with young women in senior management positions. “I was conscious of my abilities and chose to display them. When people realize you have the required skills, they set aside their prejudices and forget that you are a woman,” she affirms.

Julienne found out about the GRASP Fellowship call for applicants online. At the time, she was thinking about her next career move; she wanted to spend more time on personal development. “I told myself it was the right moment and program,” she explains. She wishes to focus on regional water management projects that will help develop agriculture. Julienne sees the GRASP Fellowship as an opportunity to connect with women with career experience. With advice and support from her mentor, Dr Lansana Gagny Sakho, she hopes to strengthen her leadership and advocacy skills to change the lives of rural women in her country.

*Julienne Tiendrebeogo is among a growing number of women selected for the Gender Responsive Agriculture Systems Policy (GRASP) Fellowship. GRASP Fellowship is a career development program growing a pool of confident, capable African women to lead the design and implementation of gender-responsive policies in Africa. The Fellowship is an initiative of African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).*