

ASPB-AFRICAN RESEARCHERS NETWORK #PLANTBIO21 PARTICIPATION AWARD WINNERS

LUCY KIPTUI JEKPEMOI



Lucy got her master's degree in plant pathology from Egerton University, Kenya. She got her bachelors in Botany and Zoology from the same university and is interested in undertaking bioscience research that promotes plant health to improve food security. She has undertaken research in plant virology and contributed to science through several publications. Currently, her research focuses on understanding plant-microbes interaction affecting native orphan crops and to further influence their relationship to increase crop yield. *Twitter: @Ljepkemoi*

MARWA EL GRAOUI



Marwa is a PhD student at the Mohammed VI Polytechnic University (UM6P), in Morocco. She is part of the African Integrated Plant and Soil Research group (AIPlaS) and is passionate about agriculture, biology, and statistical modeling. She is working on the exploration of the diversity of Vigna, an orphan legume crop, whilst focusing on wild species and their potential resistance to abiotic stresses, as well as their nitrogen fixation capacity. Prior to that, she got a master's degree in Sciences and Technologies of Fertilizers at the School of Agriculture, Fertilizers and Environmental Sciences (ESAFE) at UM6P as well. *Twitter: @GraouiMarwa*

AZIZA ZERROUK



Aziza is a student at the Mohammed VI Polytechnic University, Ben-Guerir, Morocco

SALMA ROUICHI



Salma is a first year PhD student at the Mohammed VI Polytechnic University, Ben-Guerir, Morocco affiliated to the African Integrated Plant and Soil Research (AiPlaS) group. Her thesis aims to explore the genetic diversity and potential variability existing in wild relatives of lentil in order to identify potential sources of abiotic stress resistance, phosphorus uptake, with high nutritional quality. Before joining UM6P, in October 2020, she graduated from the Hassan II Agronomic and Veterinary Institute, Rabat as an engineer in biotechnology and plant breeding. Twitter: [@rouichi_salma](https://twitter.com/rouichi_salma)

IDOWU ARINOLA OBISESAN (Ph.D.).



Idowu got her PhD in Plant Physiology and biotechnology, College of Engineering, Agriculture and Sciences, Bowen University Iwo, Nigeria. She is currently working towards achieving drought resilient and disease resistant legumes for sustainable agriculture. She is also working to promote sustainable legume farming in Africa.

Twitter: [@IdowuAobisesan](https://twitter.com/IdowuAobisesan)

OKON ODIONG UNUNG



Okon is a Senior Research Officer in the Plant Biotechnology Division of the National Biotechnology Development Agency, Nigeria. His professional experience spans over eight years of involvement in plant biotechnology, breeding, molecular genetics, virology and agronomic research and development as well as extension service delivery to farmers. He has also been involved in training of farmers in Nigeria on crop cultivation technologies and agronomic practices to enhance agricultural productivity for optimum yield. In addition, he has been involved in science communications and science policy advocacy efforts that promote evidence-based decision-making across a wide range of science, agriculture and biotechnology issues to enable access to scientific innovations for food security and sustainable development. He holds a Master of Science degree in Agronomy with specialization in Plant Breeding and Biotechnology from the University of Ibadan, and a bachelor's degree in Agriculture from the University of Uyo. His current research interest is on deciphering plant pathogenesis and epigenetic dynamics in plant responses to viral infections as well as CRISPR/Cas9-mediated genetic engineering for disease resistance in plants.

Twitter: [@OUnung](https://twitter.com/OUnung)

OLUWAKEMI ADETUTU BELLO



Oluwakemi is an early career researcher and a Faculty at Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria. Her research focuses on *in vitro* propagation of African indigenous vegetables using plant tissue culture techniques. She has carried out studies to develop novel, effective and efficient protocols for in vitro propagation of some of these vegetables. She is currently investigating the potentials of other indigenous vegetables for genetic improvements for cultivation, nutrient, and better yield to combat hidden hunger. Twitter: [@flourishingtutu](https://twitter.com/flourishingtutu)

EVARISTE NSABIMANA



Evariste grew up in Nyamagabe, a rural community in Rwanda where he used to farm. His exposure to the agriculture industry ignited his passion to pursue a Bachelor's degree in crop sciences at the former National University of Rwanda. He joined the Agro-studies Internship program in Israel in 2014 during which he worked in the poultry industry and later joined the seed company Hazera Seeds of Growth. He also worked in a breeding program before returning to his country in 2015. Evariste obtained his Master's degree in crop sciences from the University of Rwanda in 2020. Currently, he is working with One Acre Fund as an Agronomist in the tree program.

NATASHA MWILA (PHD)



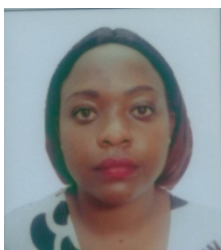
Natasha got her PhD in Plant Breeding and Biotechnology from Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda; and is also an alumni of University of Zambia. She is currently a postdoctoral researcher/lecturer at the University of Zambia through a Carnegie Corporation of New York fellowship under RUFORUM. She lectures at the School of Agricultural Sciences, Department of Plant Sciences and at Graduate School of Business. She is also a research expert at the Zambian Women in Agricultural Research and Development (ZaWARD), the Zambian chapter of AWARD fellowships. She offers diverse agricultural consultation to various organizations and individuals. She has worked at senior level in both public (Ministry of Agriculture) and private (USAID, EU projects) organizations. A recipient of the Food Systems Network Africa fellowship (FSNet-Africa 2021) representing Zambia, collaborating with the University of Leeds and University of Pretoria, she is working on improving livelihoods, health and nutrition among children and women by using science-based technologies, linking them to social and economic benefits; science that works.

MUKAMANASASIRA GODMAN



Mukamanasasira is a researcher, Faculty of Agricultural sciences, Uganda Christian University. He obtained a Bsc, in Biotechnology from Makerere University and an Msc. in Plant Breeding and seed systems from the same university where his research focused on the Genetics of Tomato resistance to *Ralstonia solanaecorum*. He was part of the organizing committee for the first Plant Sciences symposium at Makerere university funded by CORTEVA.

KWEYU SHARON



Sharon is a Master's student in plant breeding at Makerere Regional Centre for Crop Improvement at Makerere University in Uganda. Her Msc project is on Resistance to Turicum Leaf Blight in sorghum. She has a bachelor's degree in Seed Science and Technology from University of Eldoret in Kenya.

Twitter: @Kweyu17

FRANCIS WANJOHI KIEMO



Francis is chairman of the Nairobi based agricultural biotechnology awareness association (ABAA). He worked as a high school teacher and a part-time lecturer of biotechnology at Machakos University. He also worked as an administrative assistant and economic officer at the embassy of Hungary in Nairobi. He is currently in the third year of PhD in Plant Science (biotechnology) at the Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences, working on sweet potato virus diseases. Francis won the 'building resilience in agriculture' blogging challenge by FAO-UNDP-UNITAR. He participated in the committee on food security (CFS 46), FAO regional meeting on agricultural biotechnologies in sustainable food systems and nutrition in sub-Saharan Africa and the international symposium on agricultural innovation for family farmers. He aspires to promote mitigation and adaptation to climate change impacts on food security and nutrition in Kenya and Africa at large. Twitter: @WanjohiFrank

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