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a global initiative for science-based communications

Alliance for Science

2015 Global
Leadership Fellows

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a global initiative for science-based communications

The Alliance for Science Global Leadership Fellows Program is a 12-week intensive training course held on the Cornell University campus for leaders around the globe who are committed to advocating for increased access to agricultural biotechnology. Comprehensive training will equip participants with the integrative approach, foundational skills and practical tools to lead advocacy efforts in their local contexts.



Arif Hossain
*Bangladesh Alliance for
Science, Sathguru
Management
Consultants India
Bangladesh*

Mr. Arif Hossain is currently working as the lead for the Bangladesh Alliance for Science and is a Visiting Fellow at Cornell University. Earlier he worked for the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) as a Senior Specialist in Outreach & Communication. For more than seven years, Arif's expertise in communication has included hands-on experience in international development organizations, human rights, civil society and community engagement, media, and advertising. His area of professional convergence is the intersection of strategic and development communication, advocacy, policy, and good governance reform.

Prior to IRRI, Arif worked as a Communications Coordinator at Plan International where he coordinated communications activities with a holistic approach working with policy makers, service providers, national and international partners, and local NGOs. Prior to that, he worked at Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) as assistant manager of Outreach & Communications. Arif also worked as a copywriter for A Positive Advertising Ltd, newsroom editor for Banglanews24.com, and as an organizer for the Association for Culture and Education (ACE).

Arif completed his MA and BA in English from the University of Rajshahi in India. He has a post graduate diploma in International Relations from the University of Dhaka. He is interested in music and has received a number of national level awards as a vocal artist. He also likes to explore his passion for theater and has performed in several dramas and musical shows.





**Rufai Ahmed
Braimah**

*Technical CSIR-Food
Research Institute,
OFAB
Ghana*

Mr. Rufai Ahmed Braimah is currently the technical officer of the Food Research Institute (FRI) for the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). He is also the programming assistant for the Ghana Chapter of the Open Forum on Agricultural Biotechnology in Africa (OFAB). Rufai helps coordinate the day-to-day activities of OFAB-Ghana, including building capacity for agricultural biotechnology communication in partnership with the Program for Biosafety Systems (PBS-Ghana), as well as other like-minded agencies and stakeholders—especially those in the agricultural sector and policy makers who can facilitate sound decision-making in relation to biotech crops and food security at large. Rufai is also responsible for communicating activities and information on social media.





Aparna Arora
*Head of Corporate
Affairs for Mars
Chocolate India
India*

Born and brought up in New Delhi (India), Ms. Aparna Arora did her post graduate degree in public relations after graduating from Delhi University with a bachelor's degree in Arts. She is a travel enthusiast who is excited about spiritual wellbeing, cultural diversity, food, and performing arts.

Aparna has 15+ years of experience working in consumer (Mars Inc.), retail (Walmart), media and entertainment (HBO, CNN and Cartoon Network), and non-profit (Save the Children) organizations. Working with diverse industries has provided her with strong experience as a corporate affairs professional in the fields of government relations, public advocacy, media relations, corporate communications, corporate social responsibility, and sustainability. She played a key role in advocating the change of FDI policy for multi-brand retail stores, and harmonization of the food laws in India. She has executed public relation campaigns to build corporate reputations and launch some of the biggest global brands in India like Snickers, HBO Original series, Galaxy, etc. Additionally, she evolved, drove, and executed successful and robust sustainability and CSR programs to impact communities through effective partnerships. The success of these programs played a crucial role in influencing policy change, creating shared value and impacting the triple bottom line of organizations. Some of the CSR/Sustainability projects she has worked on include building training centers in public-private partnerships with governments, and direct farm programs spread across various geographies in India that work with government run schools. She has worked with women economic empowerment initiatives, waste management programs, food bank activities, constructing community toilets with sustainable bio-gas fuel generation, and management. She has also developed and executed fund raising strategies in India and has worked closely with several NGOs on various social issues. She has been successful at strategizing alliances with corporations on joint cause CSR activities concerning energy, water, food and waste management. Going forward she would like to focus on the CSR/Sustainability work that she is extremely passionate about.





**Venkat Aditya
Kopeneni**

*Branding and
Communication
Manager, Sathguru
Management
Consultants India
India*

Mr. K.V. Aditya is a branding and communication manager with Sathguru Management Consultants, in India. Previously, he has worked as a communications consultant focused on branding and public relations for the telecom, technology and finance sectors. He is a passionate student of economics and consumer behavior, and has created a management model for business process excellence based on Gandhi's life. He has fostered numerous start-ups in digital communication. KV believes that a person whose career has been spent handling multiple crises gives a different perspective than one trained solely at fair weather businesses. He has been invited to be a TedxYouth speaker, where he argued that Gandhian thought is the "missing catalyst" in corporate strategy.





Lia Hardiantry
*Current College Student
in Biotechnology
Indonesia*

As a student in the International Business Management Program of Atmajaya University, in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, Ms. Lia Hardiantry Moidady is very interested in business communications and consumer behavior, especially with regard to biotechnology food products. She is also interested in the issues of children's education, health, food security and people's welfare. In her other interests, she is active in a few communities and has been involved in events such as ICTempe 2015 (International Conference on Tempe). Between 2008 and 2012, she gave several public speeches on topics ranging from drug abuse to financial planning. All of her experiences have deepened her concern for her fellow people and strengthened her desire to help improve lives of those in need.





Patrick Muriuki
*Founder and Managing
Director, ICOSEED
Kenya*

Mr. Patrick Gitari Muriuki is the founder and managing director of ICOSEED, a national farmer-based NGO in Kenya, founded in 2008. Prior to ICOSEED, Patrick served as a secondary school teacher; an agricultural extension officer and development coordinator in the Anglican Church; and executive director of Christian Resources Management (CHRESMA). He is a graduate in the field of Agriculture and Community Development and holds a diploma in Modern Management & Administration and Resource Mobilization. ICOSEED's vision is to be the leading humanity development institution in Kenya and greater Africa; to instill hope and healing in the midst of human suffering; and to enhance potential for community sustainable socio-economic development. ICOSEED aims to empower poor, destitute, marginalized and less-privileged community members to discover and harness their potential towards self-sustainability in food, health, wealth, education and social wellbeing. As conventional agricultural methods fall short of helping Kenya address the challenge of feeding its rapidly growing population, Patrick and ICOSEED are working at all levels to have biotechnology adopted. After implementing a five-year World Bank-supported cotton production program that faced challenges due to serious pest management, ICOSEED realized the critical importance of genetically modified crops to reduce hunger and poverty in Kenya and beyond.





Kennedy Oyugi
Programmes Officer,
African Biotechnology
Stakeholders Forum
(ABSF)
Kenya

Mr. Kennedy Oyugi holds a master's of science in Agricultural and Applied Economics and a bachelors degree in agriculture, both from Nairobi University. Kennedy started his professional work in 2003 as Marketing Information Point (MIP) Manager with the Kenya Agricultural Commodity Exchange Ltd under the USAID-funded Kenya Maize Development Program. He currently works at the African Biotechnology Stakeholders Forum (ABSF) as the programs officer, where he is in charge of the forum. The role of ABSF is to coordinate and mainstream stakeholders' voice in the development of biotechnology policy and regulatory framework in Kenya. At ABSF, Kennedy has coordinated review of the biosafety packaging regulations and developed a biotechnology monitoring and evaluation framework for Kenya. In addition to regular employment, Kennedy is the soy and groundnut value chain development consultant for the Kenya Agricultural Productivity and Agribusiness Programme (KAPAP), a program jointly funded by the government of Kenya and the World Bank to improve livelihoods of the farming community in Western Kenya. Kennedy has also consulted for the Nile Basin Initiative on cross border livestock trade, where he served as research supervisor and later as rapporteur.





Vivian Twei

*Lecturer and Chapter
Coordinator of the
Kenya University
Biotechnology
Consortium (KUBICO)
at University of Eldoret
Kenya*

Dr. Vivian Twei is a lecturer of Biochemistry and Molecular Biosciences in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at the University of Eldoret (UoE), Kenya. She also serves as the coordinator of the Masters of Science in Biochemistry Program and the Chapter Coordinator of the Kenya University Biotechnology Consortium (KUBICO) at UoE. Under the KUBICO platform and team, she hopes to bring vigor and leadership to the biotech experts in her region by communicating biotech issues, mentoring students and devising strategies for increasing biotech research and outreach capacities. Vivian has participated in fora and trainings organized by KUBICO and its partners, particularly ISAAA/OFAB, and in students' career fairs. Previously, she served as the acting chair of the Department of Biological Sciences at University of Kabianga, Kenya where she was the team leader in curriculum development and coordinator of the pioneering undergraduate programs in biochemistry and microbiology. She received her BSc in Biochemistry and Chemistry from the University of Nairobi, Kenya, and her MS and PhD in Molecular Biosciences and Bioengineering from the University of Hawaii at Manoa, USA. She has taught several courses in biochemistry and also molecular biology such as DNA technology and animal biotechnology. Her research focus is on the role of nutrients and toxicants in the molecular basis of non-communicable metabolic disorders/diseases (obesity, metabolic syndrome, diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular diseases and cancer). She is also focused on being an effective science communicator, educator and advocate for the use of biotech applications for food security, betterment of health, and environmental sustainability.





**Modesta Nnedinso
Abugu**

*Program Assistant,
Open Forum on
Agricultural
Biotechnology (OFAB)
Nigeria*

Ms. Modesta Nnedinso Abugu serves as the program assistant for the Open Forum on Agricultural Biotechnology in Africa (OFAB), Nigeria Chapter. She is involved in the planning of awareness campaigns on agricultural biotechnology in Nigeria, and also manages the social media pages of OFAB Nigeria. She has participated in planning over 30 public awareness and advocacy programs on agricultural biotechnology, and was part of the team that championed the Biosafety Bill into law in Nigeria. She is excited to be trained as a biotechnology communicator by the Cornell Alliance for Science on effective agri-biotech communication strategies and volunteerism, and hopes to begin implementing these strategies in 2015. She holds a BSc degree in Biochemistry from the University of Nigeria Nsukka, Nigeria.





Iro Suleiman

*Chief Editor Public
Relations Office at the
Institute for Agricultural
Research (IAR) Samaru,
Ahmadu Bello
University Zaria
Nigeria*

Mr. Iro Suleiman received professional training from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and Bayero University Kano in development studies, mass communication, and public relations. He works as chief editor and public relations officer at the Institute for Agricultural Research (IAR) Samuru, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. His fulfilling career has spanned more than two decades in advocacy. He has worked to build bridges to eliminate knowledge and information gaps among stakeholders in the agricultural industry. As a team player, he is an ardent believer in the spirit of cooperation, collaboration, teamwork, and consensus building.





**Emmanuel C.
Alparce (Father
Noli)**

*Priest of the Catholic
Church
Philippines*

Rev. Fr. Emmanuel C. Alparce is a Roman Catholic priest. In the 16 years that he has been a priest, Fr. Noli, as he is fondly called, has been involved with not the just regular sacramental work and tasks of a priest but also with the many issues that affect the human person and society. He strongly adheres to the words spoken by St. Irineus centuries ago that “The glory of God is man fully alive.”

On the day he was ordained a priest, Fr. Noli was appointed by his bishop to be the executive director of his diocese’s Social Action Center. In the Philippines, this is the arm of the Catholic Church that responds to the very real concerns of the human person like poverty and hunger, abuse of women and children, human rights, justice and peace, gender equality, sustainable agriculture, insurgency and armed rebellion, good governance, drug addiction, electoral reforms, protection of the environment, climate change and many more. His work in this office led him to explore and eventually embrace biotechnology as an effective means to mitigate hunger and poverty and improve the lives of millions of farmers in his country. In 2014, Fr. Noli was appointed by the Philippine Secretary of Agriculture to sit as a Member of the Technical Committee on Information, Education and Communication of the Department of Agriculture’s Biotechnology Program on Agriculture and Fisheries. He was also appointed as the chairman of this Technical Committee in 2002-2004. In 2001, he was selected to participate in the International Visitor Program of the U.S. State Department to study biotechnology, agriculture and food safety in the United States.

Fr. Noli is a “late-vocation” priest. Before becoming a priest, he obtained a bachelor’s degree in sociology from the University of the Philippines at Los Baños and worked for several years as a journalist/newspaper reporter and deputy chief of staff to a congressman. He loves to raise and breed dogs and birds and has the gift of a “green thumb” that makes almost any plant he puts on the ground grow.





**Marshall "Marlo"
Asis**

*DA-AFID Agriculture's
Information Division
Philippines*

Mr. Marshall Louie Asis is a broadcast program producer announcer in the Philippine Department of Agriculture's Information Division (DA-AFID). He anchors "Maunlad na Magsasaka," ("Progressive Farmer"), the longest-running agricultural radio program in the Philippines, where he features news, expert interviews, technology debates, and other development issues with scientists, researchers, and academics. He is actively involved in disseminating information and staunchly supports development of agricultural biotechnology in the Philippines. Marlo writes for Aggie Trends, DA's official monthly publication, and is the author of numerous publications including, "Truth behind Modern Biotechnology (Scientists correct myths and false beliefs regarding GMOs)," and "Biotech for a Food Secure South East Asia," featured as part of the Biotechnology and Biosafety for Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture Regional Workshop for Media Practitioners sponsored by the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) and the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA). Advocating advances in agricultural research, Marlo recently conducted a scientific visit to International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) in Hyderabad, India (2014) to document pioneering research in the field of crop biotechnology. He is active in several professional networks of print and broadcast media practitioners in the Philippines, is the current president of the Farmcasters Association of the Philippines Inc., and a member of both the Philippine Agriculture Journalists (PAJ) and the Philippine Federation of Rural Broadcasters (PFRB).





**Annalyn Lorenzo
Lopez**
*Department of
Agriculture - Biotech
Program
Philippines*

Ms. Annalyn Lorenzo Lopez is the program development officer of the Philippine Agriculture and Fisheries Biotechnology Program, in the Department of Agriculture (DA) Biotech Program since 2006. She specializes in public policy, science communication, project management, conference management, and event organizing. Annalyn is involved in the review of policies and formulation of a legislative agenda aimed to advance biotechnology application in Philippine agriculture. She also provides technical and coordination support in the implementation of the DA Biotech Program roadmap. She currently serves the DA National Organizing Committee for the Philippine hosting of APEC meetings as the Vice-Chair for HLPDAB Substantive Matters and a member of the DA Technical Group for HLPDAB. Annalyn initiates and monitors several projects on policy research and advocacy, institutional capacity enhancement, and information, education and communication. Her deep interest in science communication led her to work on the formulation, further enhancement, and eventual implementation of the communication plan for the DA Biotech Program, in consultation with experts and partners in biotechnology advocacy. Annalyn also plays an active role in organizing the annual National Biotechnology Week celebration, where she conceptualizes and implements innovative activities to communicate biotechnology to key stakeholders and the general public with a dynamic team.





**Jeremae
Manalaysay**

*Current College Student
in Biotechnology
Philippines*

Ms. Jeremae Manalaysay is one of the first few graduates of the BS Agricultural Biotechnology program in the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), which is the leading university engaged in the research and development of agricultural biotechnology in the Philippines. She has been part of the Youth Council of the Philippines (Sangguniang Kabataan) in her community, and was elected as councilor of the College of Agriculture Student Council in UPLB, where she served as the Volunteer Corps Head for the school year 2013-2014. She has been involved in promoting awareness regarding the benefits and the safe and responsible use of biotechnology since 2012, with her organization, the UP League of Agricultural Biotechnology Students (UPLABS). UPLABS is the first student-based organization advocating agricultural biotechnology in the Philippines. Together with the organization, she assisted in creating and releasing stands on the issue against the permanent Writ of Kalikasan on the multi-location field trials of Bt Talong, which was published in several national newspapers, most recently in 2013. During her term as the president of the organization (2014-2015), she worked closely with institutions like SEARCA, ISAAA, IRRI, and the NAST, in steering projects like biotechnology symposiums, bioinformatics tutorials, career orientations, awareness parades, and quiz contests, so their advocacy would reach more people. As a graduate, she wants to engage in the development of information dissemination, regulations of agricultural biotechnology, and passing the biotech products developed by the different research institutions in the Philippines.





Ana Maria Reynoso
*International Rice
Research Institute
(IRRI)*
Philippines

Ms. Ana Maria Reynoso is an advocate of communication for agricultural and social development. She is a coordinator for visitors and events at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) which gives her the unique opportunity to introduce IRRI's mission to visitors and engage with various stakeholders of the Institute. In pursuit of a Master of Science degree in Development Communication with a minor in Business Management from the University of the Philippines Los Baños, she is writing her thesis on consumer perception of genetically modified rice. Her study aims to develop appropriate communication strategies in the midst of barriers to the adoption of biotech crops by target consumers, with special attention on gender sensitive issues. Ana Maria served as a volunteer student broadcaster for the premiere college radio in the Philippines, LBFM 97.4, for three years until she obtained her BS in agriculture from the same university in 2011. She has experience working for both private and non-government agricultural organizations in her country. She is passionate on matters relating to science communication, agricultural development, biotechnology, gender sensitivity, public speaking, and broadcast communication.





Philbert Nyinondi
OFAB Tanzania
Tanzania

Mr. Philbert Nyinondi is the co-founder of the Tanzania Facility for Innovation and Technology (FIT) and serves as coordinator of the Open Forum for Agricultural Biotechnology (OFAB) in Tanzania. He is actively engaged in agricultural biotechnology communications in Tanzania that appeal to high-profile policy makers. He mobilizes the community, organizes and facilitates training sessions on science communication, works closely with media houses to reach the general public, and coordinates activities to enhance knowledge-sharing and the understanding of potential benefits of agricultural biotechnology in Tanzania. Philbert completed BS and MS degrees in biological sciences before switching gears to pursue an MA in Information Studies. He is a PhD Fellow at the University of Dar es Salaam, specialising in life sciences communication, with considerable experience in conservation, biodiversity information organization, agricultural technologies communication, health communication, and technological related policies. His research deals with public sensemaking of science, communication of the dynamic range of risk controversies—such as biotechnology, climate change and nanotechnology, and public engagement and policy-making in relevant science issues. Philbert is the member of several professional networks and a lecturer at Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA).





Consolata Acayo
*Ministry of Agriculture,
Animal Industry &
Fisheries Uganda*
Uganda

Ms. Consolata Acayo has worked as a principal information scientist and science/biotechnology communicator with the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Uganda for the past 12 years. She is also a champion for food and nutritional security. Consalata is a member of OFAB Uganda Chapter and has a passion for Biotechnology and GMOs because she believes they are the long awaited solutions for food and nutritional security for the people of Uganda and Africa at large. She is advocating aggressively for the passing of the Biotechnology and Biosafety Bill that is currently in the Ugandan 9th Parliament. Consolata is also aggressively looking for all ways and avenues possible that can help her in advocacy to communicate biotech in a much better way for those opposed to GMOs, and those who think they are neutral to understand because a lot of time has already been and more is still being wasted in explaining reality. She has promised never to give up the struggle, but to continue until the country achieves this big struggle, so “Laluta continua!”





Nassib Mugwanya
*Uganda Biosciences
Info Center (UBIC)*
Uganda

Mr. Nassib Mugwanya grew up in the Mukono district-East of Uganda's capital Kampala. After gaining a first degree in agriculture from Makerere University in 2010, he worked as a volunteer extension worker with the area home sub county, training women farmer groups in integrated soil fertility management. In 2011, Nassib received a scholarship from University of California-Davis under the Horticulture Collaborative Research Support Program to study for a masters' degree in agricultural extension and education at Makerere University. At the same time, he worked as a research assistant on the Biosciences for Farming in Africa Project (B4FA), as well as assisting in teaching agricultural communication in the department of extension and innovation studies.

In August 2014, Nassib joined the Uganda Biosciences Information Center (UBIC) at the National Crops Resources Research Institute as an outreach officer. At UBIC, he is responsible for development, packaging, and dissemination of agricultural information to farmers' associates, religious, and cultural leaders. Prior to joining UBIC, Nassib was also a freelance writer with Uganda's leading independent daily, with a keen interest in modern agricultural biotechnology. Nassib continues to progress with his passion for communicating science in a way that empowers the ordinary farmer. He has actively participated in public debates, conferences, expos and workshops on topics such as climate change, food security, HIV/ AIDs, and agricultural biotechnology.





Patricia Nanteza
*African Center for
Global Health and
Banana 21
Uganda*

Ms. Patricia Nanteza began work as a journalist during her second year at university, following a diploma in journalism from her first year. She dabbled in radio journalism before moving to print journalism, landing a job with Uganda's leading independent newspaper, The Daily Monitor. Patricia wrote stories that ranged across agriculture, health, environment, and society. She became a copy editor on the features desk after graduating from university with a BA in social sciences. A year and a half later, she moved to Uganda's best selling newspaper, New Vision, as a senior copy editor. She felt the need for change after six years in the news business and plunged into the world of corporate communications, starting in the health field with the African Center for Global Health and Social Transformation. Patricia soon moved to Uganda's National Agricultural Research Laboratories Institute (NARL) as the communication specialist. She supports efforts of NARL researchers developing improved varieties of crops, such as disease resistant or bio-fortified strains. Patricia draws on her journalistic skills to communicate practical matters, such as how to grow traditional varieties of bananas, as well as larger issues like why Uganda needs to pass the biotechnology and bio-safety bill, and how Uganda's staple food can be improved using genetic engineering.





**Peter
Wamboga-Mugirya**
*Science Foundations for
Livelihoods and
Development (SCIFODE)*
Uganda

Peter Frederick Wamboga-Mugirya serves as director for communication and partnerships at the Science Foundation for Livelihoods and Development (SCIFODE), a not-for-profit organization that links science to society to impact livelihoods, founded by scientists and journalists (registered in Uganda). Peter is a Fellow of the Food Security and Agricultural Communications at Oklahoma State University, in Stillwater City, Oklahoma, USA. He is a graduate of environmental communications at St. Augustine University-Tanzania, and a graduate of mass communications at the Cairo-based Public Communicators Institute in Egypt, under the Egyptian Ministry of Communications and Information. Peter is a founding member of the board of the Uganda Science Journalists' Association (USJA) and a member of communication teams for the Water Efficient Maize for Africa (WEMA) Project-Uganda and Virus Resistant Cassava for Africa (VIRCA). He supports communication activities for the Nitrogen-Use Efficient, Water-Use Efficient and Salt-Tolerant (NEWEST) rice project in NARO-Uganda. Additionally, Peter supports development of the National Farmers' and Youth Forum on Agro-Biotechnology (NAF&YFAB) in Uganda. Among other commitments, Peter is involved in the execution of various projects under SCIFODE's public and private engagements (e.g., Media Bio-Cafés).





Clet Wandui Masiga
*Scientist, Tropical
Institute of
Development
Innovations (TRIDI)
Uganda*

Mr. Clet Wandui Masiga is a conservation biologist and geneticist and the founder and moderator of an online debate and mailing system on biotechnology. He uses several platforms to create awareness and capacity for African communities and legislators to adopt biosafety legislations. He is the most published opinion writer in support of genetically modified organisms in Uganda. As a biotechnology steward, he has trained scientists and regulators responsible for biotechnology science, demonstrating that it is safe for humans and does not disrupt trade in biotechnology products. He is trained in biodiversity conservation, biotechnology, breeding, policy analysis and advocacy, and project coordination, management and implementation. Since 2000, he has worked in 18 countries managing and supervising projects related to biotechnology, biosafety policies, biodiversity, natural resources, and agricultural and rural development. At present, Clet is a director of bioscience engineering and farm innovations at Tropical Institute of Development Innovations (TRIDI). He also works as a director for access and utilization of farm technologies and innovations at Sabunyo Farm. From 2009 to August 2014, he worked for Agrobiodiversity and Biotechnology Programme of the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in East and Central Africa (ASARECA). His work covered 11 countries of Eastern and Central Africa with the primary responsibility of providing management and technical assistance in designing and implementing agricultural projects that focused on utilizing biotechnology as a tool to exploit agricultural biodiversity to improve agricultural productivity.





Eric Cho
Farmer
United States

Eric Cho is a recent graduate from the University of Hawaii with a Bachelors of Science in Agriculture, specializing in Tropical Plant Science and Agroecology.

Since 2002, he has worked on his family's vegetable farm and utilized value-added products to sell at farmers markets on the Big Island of Hawaii. Concurrent to working on the farm, Eric developed his skills in a plant pathology laboratory while attending school and started speaking out for farmers and biotechnology. His passion for science and factual-based information lead him to voice his concerns for biosecurity on social media networks and in his local community.

Eric currently resides in Seattle to broaden his views on biotechnology and sets his sights on being directly involved with communicating and campaigning for biosecurity in the world.





James Foley

Biotechnology Student
United States

James Foley was raised in the American South and eventually made his way to Oakland, CA where he is a biotechnology student and budding DIYbio enthusiast. James is the creator of the SkepticalVegan blog and a co-founder of Vegan GMO, an organization which aims to promote more rational conversations on biotechnology in the vegan community and beyond. A vegan and animal rights advocate for over a decade, he enjoys exploring the intersections between science, animal rights, food security, and social justice.





Joni Kamiya
Public Figure
United States

Joni Kamiya is an occupational therapist by training and an ag-vocate in Hawaii on the biotechnology issue. She is a wife, mother of three, and the daughter of long-time papaya farmer and Hawaii Papaya Industry Association president, Kenneth Kamiya. Her experience with biotechnology started in the early research on cross protection of the papayas back in the early 1990s as a lab assistant. At that time, the papaya ringspot virus was ravaging crops across the state and continuing the family farm did not seem to be a viable option to pursue, so she furthered her education in health care. After completing her BS at the University of Hawaii in Manoa, she continued her education at Washington University in St. Louis School of Medicine in the Occupational Therapy program, where she was introduced to systems thinking and evidence based practice concepts. She spent eight years living away from Hawaii working with the elderly and eventually moved back to her hometown. As the biotech controversy started to emerge in Hawaii, she became an ag-vocate in the social media circles to help defend her family's farm. She founded her blog, the "Hawaii Farmer's Daughter," to speak out for the technology that saved her family's three-generation farm. Through networking on social media, she has been instrumental in developing an even greater circle of fellow ag-vocates to help strengthen the voices of farmers in Hawaii to promote education on biotechnology.





Jayson Merkley
Vegan GMO
United States

Mr. Jayson Merkley is a social media manager and researcher with Vegan GMO, an organization that promotes biotech from the perspective of vegans and animal advocates. He's also a social media consultant and contributor to the March Against Myths About Modification movement, both at the international and local chapter levels. He holds an MBA with an emphasis on marketing management from Idaho State University, where he also studied philosophy and creative writing as an undergrad. After finishing his MBA, Jayson relocated to Portland, Oregon where he works as a freelance writer. Jayson's interests include communications strategies targeted at sharing the benefits of biotech with his fellow animal lovers, and humanitarian efforts to make the best possible biotech tools available to farmers in food-insecure regions. In his free time he enjoys exploring the Pacific Northwest wilderness and playing soccer with friends in the park.



2015 Fellows



2015 Fellows

Philippines (5)

Uganda (5)

USA (4)

Kenya (3)

Nigeria (2)

India (2)

Bangladesh (1)

Ghana (1)

Indonesia (1)

Tanzania (1)



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a global initiative for science-based communications

The Alliance for Science seeks to promote access to scientific innovation as a means of enhancing food security, improving environmental sustainability and raising the quality of life globally.

The Alliance for Science was funded in 2014 with a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and has global partners on six continents. The core team is based at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, USA.



Join the alliance!

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