



EQUIPPED FOR THE FUTURE

Young Professionals on Board to Support Nutrition Security

First, the women roast the soybeans over a low fire. Next, they blend them with roasted millet and sesame seeds, and finally cook the mixture into a fortifying meal. All of these women are mothers from two rural districts in Uganda working with Dorcus Alowo, a graduate student at Gulu University who studies food science and human nutrition. Once the porridge is ready to eat, Dorcus tests how the mothers react to the smell, taste, and texture of the dish.

Dorcus is using traditional preparation and processing methods, as well as foods locally available in the districts to develop a nutrient-packed formula for porridge. If it becomes popular, it will help combat malnutrition in rural households. Though still in the preliminary stages of developing the porridge, she hopes this research will lead to improved nutrition and food security.

Last year, Dorcus did not have the funds to continue her research even though she was a stellar student in her class. INGENAES came in at the right time and agreed to fund another year of her research and provide resources to see it through to completion, offering her a place in the INGENAES Fellowship Program. As part of the fellowship program, eleven graduate-level fellows receive a year's worth of education and research funding. They have also had the opportunity to be involved in several activities

INGENAES is engaged with in Uganda. The fellowship program is developing the capacity of young professionals like Dorcus by helping them integrate gender and nutrition extension into their graduate level research on food security-related topics. INGENAES has been instrumental in giving Dorcus and her peers' access to the latest content and relevant learning material on gender and nutrition in agriculture.

Dorcus has been a very active participant in these activities; she grabbed every opportunity to attend several farmer-based organization (FBO) trainings, where she learned about options for integrating gender and nutrition into agricultural development programs. Dorcus even represented the fellows at an FBO-focused Write Shop in July 2017, where she worked with a team of experts to create gender and nutrition training materials for FBOs.

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- Dorcus

Besides the hands-on experience with the mothers, having solid knowledge on nutrition and gender dynamics in rural households and connecting her work to organization actively engaged in nutrition and extension in Uganda

is key to making her formula work for rural household nutrition security.

Like many of the fellows, Dorcus has also been an active participant in the INGENAES Community of Practice meetings where she learns from and interacts with a broad range of stakeholders such as NGOs, Public Sector, Donors, and Private Sector actors involved in food security and agricultural extension. Through all of this, she explained, “I don’t think I am the same nutritionist I was: you bring in gender, you bring in extension, now I am multi-talented.”

In this manner, the ING fellowship program in equipping the next generation of Ugandan students with the professional and technical skills to become tomorrow’s leaders within the areas of agricultural extension, gender, and nutrition development.



Dorcus Alowo, graduate student at Gulu University



Left: Dorcus is certified in a gender and nutrition training course. Right: Mothers weigh and sort grain to add to porridge. © D. Alowo 2017

Cover photo: INGENAES Fellows at the Fellowship Orientation in 2016 ©INGENAES 2016

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