

Please welcome

Samadangla Ao



“Education is the most fundamental instrument for effecting a transformative change in the life and livelihood of people. An agency (organization) that invests in building capacity of people and institutions anywhere makes the most lasting contribution to humanity at large.”

—Gebisa Ejeta, 2009 World Food Prize Winner

**Project
AgGrad**

Responding to World Hunger

Visit us online at <http://projectaggrad.org/>

Meet Sama Ao, the
7th AgGrad student.

Sama is our first Project
AgGrad student from
India. Her home village is
in a rural area of

Nagaland province that will greatly benefit from the agricultural research and education she is receiving at the University of Minnesota. Sama has a Bachelor of Science degree in Botany and a Masters in Biosciences. She has also served as a schoolteacher and lecturer before being awarded the opportunity to study in the United States with AgGrad for her PhD.



Would your church like to meet Sama?

If you are interested in a lively presentation about Project AgGrad, please contact Eric Forsberg 612-215-3302, ewforsberg@suite2960.com

The Project AgGrad Mission

Project AgGrad seeks to address root causes of world hunger in developing countries by providing highly motivated and trained leaders in production agriculture.

The Project AgGrad students are supported for an advanced degree at the University of Minnesota and then they return home to work on food production for the rest of their career. They in turn educate others, conduct research, supervise other graduate students in their countries, mentor farmer groups, work with volunteer and professional groups, and give leadership in thousands of ways.

As they touch and train others, the circle of influence goes on and on. One person does make a difference in the world.

Research has led to crop yield increases of 88% in Asia, 69% in the Middle East, 66% Latin America, but only 28% in Africa. Africa was missed by the Green Revolution.

Only 8% of hungry people are hungry due to a short-term effect such as a flood, hurricane, drought, etc. Food aid will help in these cases. But 92% have chronic hunger due to food shortages and general poverty. Food aid is only temporary at best.

In Proverbs, it says that *Without a Vision, People Perish*. Project AgGrad is our vision of how to help.

Sponsoring Our Students

Many congregations in the Minnesota Annual Conference and beyond support Project AgGrad through financial contributions. The cost of the fellowship for our student is approximately \$35,000 per year.

Your Contributions Matter

We hope every church in the Conference will include Project Ag-Grad in one of its mission offerings this year. Even with a helpful endowment, on-going regular student support is still very much needed.

The Project Ag-Grad endowment at the U of M Foundation has received approximately \$200,000 in gifts. The income from the endowment is matched by dedicated funds from the Foundation, meaning gifts to the endowment currently earn 9% annual return. The income is used to support the students. **This match is still available for donors.** Would you or your church be interested in making a donation to this endowment?

Please Direct Your Gifts To:

Project AgGrad

Minnesota Annual Conference of
The United Methodist Church
122 West Franklin Avenue, #400
Minneapolis MN 55404.



Expectations

A gift to Project AgGrad goes immediately to work in preparing our selected student for a lifetime of leadership in helping countries feed their people and people feed themselves.

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Project AgGrad has now launched six graduates

The program is designed to ensure the students will return to areas of great need and will be in place to provide a multiplying effect as they teach, mentor, and conduct research, as well as offer leadership in their communities and nations.

1. **Gbadebo Olaoye, Ph.D.** in Plant Breeding, 1990. Dr. Olaoye is a Senior Lecturer, Department of Agronomy and Associate Research Fellow, Sugar Research Institute, University of Ilorin, Nigeria.



“My research interests include development of drought tolerant varieties of sugarcane and maize. As a lecturer, I have designed undergraduate and post-graduate courses in plant breeding. I have published over forty articles in local, national, and international journals related to my work.”

2. **Kingsley Ayisi, Ph.D.** in Agronomy, 1994. Dr. Ayisi is the Director and Senior Agro-Ecologist, African GeoEnvironmental Services in South Africa. *“The focus of my professional activities in recent years includes...development of land use and business plans for the*



Department of Land Affairs in Land Restitution programs in South Africa...a new venture in Ghana for the establishment of plantations for biofuel productions... and other projects.”

3. **Tsitsi Ndowora, Ph.D.** in Plant Pathology, 1998. Dr. Ndowora worked as a plant virologist in Harare, Zimbabwe and is now working with large and small area farmers. As great changes take place in her country, she is poised to offer leadership and knowledge.



4. **Jenipher Bisikwa, Ph.D.** in Agronomy, specializing in weed science, 2004. Dr. Bisikwa is on the faculty of agriculture at Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda. *“My current position is lecturer, and I am a mentor in the AWARD Program which enhances the careers of women in agricultural sciences in sub-Saharan Africa.”*



5. **Toi John Tsilo, Ph.D.** in Applied Plant Sciences, 2009. After finishing postdoctoral research, Dr. Tsilo returned to South Africa where he works for the Agricultural Research Council. *“I lead a comprehensive*



research in cereal breeding and biotechnology. I also hold an adjunct appointment with the University of the Free State as a Senior Lecturer. I train both Masters and Ph.D. students on a range of topics including Plant Genomics, Molecular Genetics and Biotechnology for the improvement of cereal crops. I’m also the Editor and Associate Editor of several journals.”



6. **Cathrine Ziyomo, Ph.D.** in Agronomy and Plant Genetics. *“Upon completion of the Postdoctoral Research Position at the Danforth Plant Science center, I intend to go back to Zimbabwe and continue with research in corn genetics either at the University of Zimbabwe or at the national agricultural research center. My work at the Danforth Plant science center is on ionomics—finding out the genes responsible for the plant (corn) ionome.”*



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Jesus said,

Matthew 25:34-35

'Come, you who are blessed of God, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

'For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; was a stranger, and you invited Me in;...

Matthew 25:40

...The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers and sisters of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'



History

The Minnesota Annual Conference initiated Project AgGrad in response to a 1983 Council of Bishops' letter asking for responsible, targeted programs to meet the increasing demands of World Hunger.

The program is designed to ensure the students will return to areas of great need and will be in place to provide a multiplying effect as they teach, mentor, conduct research, and offer leadership in their communities and nations.



When you were young, did you have enough to eat?

500 thousand kids go blind every year (1 per minute) due to Vitamin A deficiency.

Over 2 billion people show hidden hunger; that is, deficient in vitamin A, iron, or other micronutrient.

Today, 1 billion people in the world do not know where their next meal will come from. This is 3 times the U.S. population.

Project AgGrad is taking the longer view in addressing the critical issues of world hunger.



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