



2017 BHEARD Scholar
Jonah Ziyaaba

Profile

Country of Study:	Ghana
University:	KNUST
Department:	Crop & Soil Sciences
Student Position:	Graduate Research Assistant
Home Country:	Tongo-Bolgatanga, Ghana
Home Institution:	KNUST

Research Area: Grain Yield Improvement

BHEARD PROGRAM START DATE: August 2017

UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION: BSc. Agricultural Biotechnology, KNUST

RESEARCH INTERESTS: Maize is one of the most important crops for the agricultural sector and for food security of Ghana. It is the number one crop in terms of area planted and accounts for 50-60% of total cereal production (MiDA, 2010). Annual maize production in the country has increased at an estimated rate of 4.95 % per annum from 2000 to 2014 at a yield of 1.74 t ha⁻¹ (MoFA, 2013; Index Mumdi, 2015). This is quite low compared to the world average yield of 5 t ha⁻¹ (FAOSTAT, 2014). The marginal increase in production over the last decade has come as a result of expansion in the area harvested rather than from increases in yield per unit area. The area harvested has increased steadily from 7 to 10 million hectares from 2000 to 2014 (Index Mumdi, 2015). Increasing production through expansion in the area of land harvested cannot be sustainable given the increase in the demand for agricultural land for other activities per crop in response to population increase and the erratic nature of the weather conditions in Ghana. Therefore, it is of great importance to produce short-cycle maize varieties to reduce the risk of crop loss due to terminal drought and adopt improved technologies to maximize yield.

PERSONAL STATEMENT: Jonah's interest in agriculture – crop plants, to be specific dates back to his days as a young boy. He was born in a remote village in Ghana where agriculture is the primary source of livelihood. Ever since Jonah was a boy, he has been helping his parents on their farms. His interest in the improvement of crop plants gained momentum as he grew older. This is what pushed him to pursue a Bachelor of Science program in Agricultural Biotechnology. His vision is to help improve upon the available crop species so that they would be of the best quality and produce the highest yield within the shortest possible time. He wants to pursue a masters program in seed science and technology, seed business and seed systems so that he can form a team at the end of the program to produce high quality seeds for the market. It is also part of his dream to pursue Ph.D. in plant breeding so that he can breed high quality seeds.

WHEN I AM NOT WORKING I ENJOY: Jonah describes himself a confident, determined, hard-working and result-oriented person with a strong passion for success. He is a critical and analytical thinker showing initiative and creativity in whatever he does. He is also a very dedicated person who is constantly seeking new opportunities and methods of learning and finding interesting ways of applying that knowledge. He is also a team player, and willing to work with anyone from any background, for the ultimate benefit of the society. He constantly seeks more knowledge and spends his leisure time reading motivational books, journals, and articles. Jonah is a fan of Manchester United and watches their matches whenever he is free.