What is the IMMANANA Fellowships Program?

IMMANANA or Innovative Methods and Metrics for Agriculture and Nutrition Actions is a program aimed at accelerating progress on tools, data and capacity needed to guide evidence-based policy in agriculture-food systems, nutrition, and health.

The IMMANANA Fellowships program aims to create a cadre of emerging leaders in agriculture, nutrition, and health research.

Over eight annual rounds of Fellowships, IMMANANA has awarded forty six-month post-doctoral Fellowships to emerging leaders who are applying and/or validating new methodological approaches in ongoing research programmes in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Fellows conduct their research in Africa or Asia under the joint supervision of two mentors, one from the applicant’s current or previous employer or academic institution, and one from a host institution where the applicant proposes to advance their work.

Fellowship Research Projects

Fellows have conducted research focusing on a wide array of topics connected to agriculture, nutrition, and health. Most projects have studied an intersection between two or more of these focus areas. Example of fellowship research projects include:

- Mapping the prevalence of child malnutrition in India using machine learning
- Measuring program coverage for adoption and use of biofortified crops in Rwanda
- Upscaling metrics for sustainable spatial and livestock production system smart prioritization of transboundary animal diseases in Cameroon
- Dietary factors in maternal anemia and pregnancy outcomes in rural Ethiopia
- Climate change and aquaculture intensification: Potential impacts on undernutrition in Bangladesh
- Codifying best practices for participatory approaches in agriculture and nutrition research: a toolkit and case study based on lessons learned in East Africa

Fellows have seen success publishing the results of their fellowship research and research completed after their fellowship. In some cases, fellows’ research has been incorporated into work published by the FAO and other prominent organizations concerned with agriculture, nutrition, and health research and policy.

CAREERS OF FORMER FELLOWS

A 2023 survey of former fellows indicated that all fellows currently hold positions connected to agriculture, nutrition, or health. Fellows hold positions at the following notable organizations: USAID, World Organization for Animal Health, Gates for Opportunity, and Makerere University.

Several respondents reported winning grants for sponsored research building on their IMMANANA fellowship. Former fellows have accepted research fellowship roles at USAID, IFPRI, MANAGE, University of Göttingen, University of Ghana, and Makerere University.

Fellowship Research Projects

Fellows reported that their fellowship had a positive effect on their leadership abilities, job placement, and overall career development. 93% of Fellows said that their fellowship furthered their career in a meaningful way. Fellows felt that their fellowships fostered an attitude of multidisciplinarity and developed their skills in study design, project management, field-based data collection and research communication.

FOLLOWING IMMANANA FELLOWSHIPS

Self-reported improvement of skills following IMMANANA fellowships:

- 6% improvement
- 11% no change
- 89% improvement

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Fellow Profiles

**CYNTHIA MATARE**

**ROUND 2 FELLOW (2015-2016)**

Current Role: Nutrition Education Specialist, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Fellowship Research: Women’s time use, agriculture and nutrition in Zambia

How did Cynthia’s Fellowship impact her career?

“My Fellowship allowed me the opportunity to expand my capabilities for interdisciplinary collaboration and lean more into work related to agriculture and nutrition in Zambia.”

**SEMIRA BEYAN**

**ROUND 3 FELLOW (2016-2017)**

Current Role: Founder and Managing Director, Gate for Opportunity

Fellowship Research: Soil nutrients, dietary intake, and nutritional status of children and women in southern Ethiopia

How did Semira’s Fellowship impact her career?

“Participating in my Fellowship allowed me to explore paths on how I can be an impactful professional. I learned how to make decisions and take initiatives that contribute to the development challenges that my communities are facing. Thus, I founded an NGO (Gate for Opportunity) that works towards improving the living standard of women in rural parts of Ethiopia.”

**ZEWETER ABEBE-SIME**

**ROUND 3 FELLOW (2017-2018)**

Current Role: Assistant Professor, Addis Ababa University

Fellowship Research: Impact of home gardening on breast milk vitamin A composition and child vitamin A intake

How did Zeweter’s Fellowship impact her career?

“Before getting my fellowship, I was working in a university based in a small city with limited resources. After completing the fellowship, the number one university in the country, with well-equipped facilities, hired me. In addition, the fellowship enabled me to identify my key skill gaps which I worked well to improve it to advance my career.”