

### **Christopher Burns**



Christopher Burns is the Acting Deputy Executive Director of the U.S. Global Development Lab at USAID. He is also the Director for the Center for Digital Development in the Lab, where he leads a number of technical teams focused on Digital Finance, Development Informatics, Digital Inclusion and advanced data and geospatial analysis, and the role they play in driving an inclusive digital economy. He previously served as Senior Coordinator, Digital Development for Feed the Future, working alongside the Bureau for Food Security, to integrate a suite of digital technologies into the U.S. Government's Feed the Future Initiative. He also served as Acting Director for the Digital Development team, as well as Senior Advisor for Digital Inclusion, within the Lab. Prior to USAID, Christopher spent nearly ten years with the Peace Corps, as a Program and Training Officer for Peace Corps/Niger, Country Desk Officer for Central Asia, and Agro-Forestry Advisor in Ghana. Christopher holds a Bachelor of Arts in International Development and Environmental Management from St. Lawrence University (Canton, New York) and a Master of Science in Development Management from American University (Washington, DC).

### **Joel Wipperfurth**



Joel Wipperfurth leads the technology field team at WinField United, a Land O' Lakes, Inc. company, delivering precision agricultural tools through retail owners and driving digital marketing capabilities. He works on a pipeline of new technologies that WinField United is bringing them to the market, either in proprietary tools, or best-in-class industry partners through Answer Tech. Previously, Joel served as a WinField United Master Agronomy Advisor and Team Lead in southern Minnesota. Prior to that, he worked as a District Sales Manager for CROPLAN® seed. He holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota in agricultural industries and marketing. Joel grew up on a Holstein dairy farm in southern Wisconsin that also produced corn and alfalfa. He currently resides on a small acreage in Owatonna, Minnesota, with his wife and three children.

### **Sally Rockey**



Dr. Sally Rockey became the inaugural Executive Director of the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research (FFAR) in September 2015. Prior to this role, Dr. Rockey was an award-winning leader in federal research. She spent 19 years with the U.S. Department of Agriculture where she held a number of positions within the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service. Very early in her career she became the head of the competitive grants program, overseeing the extramural grants process and portfolio. Dr. Rockey brought her experience in agriculture research to her 11-year career at the National Institutes of Health, where she emphasized the connection between agriculture, food, and health. As Deputy Director for Extramural Research, Dr. Rockey oversaw the operations of the

largest Federal extramural research program and led groundbreaking initiatives and activities that have and will have a lasting positive impact on the research community.

Dr. Rockey received her Ph.D. in Entomology from The Ohio State University and did postgraduate work at the University of Wisconsin prior to joining the government. She has devoted her career to improving lives through research and will continue her mission by helping FFAR become an essential component of the scientific enterprise.

### **Mike Robinson**



Dr. Michael Robinson is Chief Science Advisor for the Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture (SFSA), based in Basel, Switzerland. SFSA is a charitable foundation working to improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers in developing countries through advancing sustainable agriculture. Previously, he worked as Senior Technology Analyst for the Syngenta Corporate Strategy & Technology group, a role that involved key activities related to the identification of new business areas and the initiation and

management of new technology collaborations. He has more than 20 years of experience in R&D for agricultural biosciences covering discovery technologies, plant breeding, natural products research, chemical genetics, systems biology and sustainably productive agriculture. He has been involved in the establishment and project management of several global collaborative research programmes with academic and commercial organizations.

### **Simon Byabagambi**



Simon Byabagambi holds a PhD in Agriculture from Makerere University. He has worked with the USAID Uganda Mission since July 2011 as a Program Management Specialist and Agronomist and he is a certified AOR/COR in the Economic Growth Office's Agriculture Unit. Simon has more than 20 years of experience in the fields of crop productivity, extension services and value chain development working with bilateral agencies such as USAID and Irish Aid and other local and international organizations in Uganda and the East Africa region. He has

specific experience in sustainably improving crop productivity, strengthening market systems, conducting research and strategic analysis, building strategic partnerships, enhancing resilience and increasing adaptability in agricultural and food security environments. Simon was part of the USAID team that participated in the Brazil Fall Armyworm Study Tour in March 2018.

### **Josephine Okot**



Josephine Okot founded Victoria Seeds Ltd, Uganda in 2004 for the purpose of disseminating superior seeds of food crops to smallholder farmers. Since inception she has steered the business from a struggling start-up to Uganda's leading seed house, ranking #2 in the 2016 Access to Seed Index in East and Central Africa. Okot's outstanding work has been recognized globally. She was awarded the prestigious YARA Prize for a Green Revolution in Africa in 2007 to recognize her efforts to reverse Africa's declining

agricultural productivity and for being an outstanding example of an African entrepreneur willing to take risks and break new ground. Okot was an honoree of the 2009 Oslo Business for Peace Award in recognition of her work in promoting socially responsible and ethical business practice. She was also the African Woman of the Year in 2011 for her work in supporting, promoting, mentoring women and demonstrating qualities required to succeed in business at the Africa Awards for Entrepreneurship. Victoria Seeds was voted Best Seed Company of the Year 2013 at Uganda Responsible Investment Award. Josephine Okot currently serves on the Board of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture and the Uganda Development Corporation.

### **Ethel Cofie**



Named one of the top 5 women impacting IT in Africa by the Mail and Guardian South Africa, Ethel Cofie is CEO and Founder of [EDEL Technology Consulting](#), an IT consulting company in West Africa and Europe recently named IT Consulting Firm of the Year at the Ghana IT and Telecoms Awards. Ethel is also Founder of [Women in Tech Africa](#), Africa's largest women in tech group with members in more than 30 African countries and growing. She created Women in Tech Week, a global event which started in 2016 which impacts more than 10,000 women globally. Ethel has been featured on BBC and has had her opinion pieces published on CNN on the topics of technology in emerging markets and women leadership. When she is not running EDEL and Women in Tech Africa, she is advising and consulting on technology growth in emerging markets and bringing more women into technology careers across Africa.

### **Bruce D. Cameron**

Bruce D. Cameron is the Director, Agribusiness and Project Finance at the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), the Development Finance Institution of the U.S. Government. He has worked at OPIC for more than 21 years and has worked on projects in a wide range of sectors and countries, currently focusing on the agribusiness and food sector. OPIC is actively seeking and working to develop game changing projects and financial facilities for this sector and is reaching far and wide to bring non-traditional parties together to discuss support from OPIC. Mr. Cameron previously worked for McDermott International's Washington Operations Office, a multinational energy services company, on issues ranging from power project development and oil and gas, to defense and energy government contracts. Mr. Cameron also worked as an architectural staff member at the Northern Virginia architectural firm of Temple Washington and Associates. Mr. Cameron holds an MBA as well as a professional Architecture Degree from Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University.

### **Lungisa Matshoba**



Lungisa Matshoba is the Chief Technology Officer and co-founder of Yoco. He is a passionate entrepreneur, having cut his teeth at the age of 13 printing business cards. Since then he has not looked back. Prior to Yoco he co-founded mobile VoIP startup Yeigo Communications, which was later acquired by Telfree. Lungisa likes to live at the cross point between business and technology, leveraging his knowledge of technology to create real solutions to the problems he sees.

### **Debisi Araba**



Debisi Araba is the Africa Director for the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT). He leads CIAT's work in Africa, in collaboration with hundreds of partners, to support countries to improve cultivation and access to nutritious foods. He also helps to make farming more competitive, profitable, and resilient through smarter, more sustainable natural resource management. He was previously the Senior Technical Adviser on Environmental Policy to the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development in Nigeria and the Team Leader of the Environment and Climate Change Unit in the Ministry (2012-2015). He holds a MSc in Clean Technology from the University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, a doctorate degree from Imperial College London and a Master in Public Administration from the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government.