

“Water First! Workshop for African Women in Water Research”

Virtual Meeting: 20 & 27 July, 10 & 17 August 2021



Name: Sonia Nadege KENFACK VOUKENG

Current employer & Appointment/title: Green Connexion International / Vice-Director

Mentor or mentee: Professor Martin Hill

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Country: Cameroon

Area of Research/Teaching. Entomology/Environment

Biography

Dr Sonia Kenfack received her Bachelor and her MSc Degree in Ecology-Botany, Department of Plant Biology, from the University of Yaoundé I, Yaoundé-Cameroon, where she was among the best students of her class. For her MSc she was a member of the “Waste Water Research Unit (WWRU)” where she conducted her thesis on “The bio-accumulation of nutrient in a fishing pond invaded by *Cyperus papyrus* (Yaoundé-Cameroon)”.

Sonia has always been passionate about the environment, and about solving environmental problems using available and up to date technology. In keeping with this passion, she works to help the riparian populations of the Wouri Basin (Douala-Cameroon) who suffer as a result of the invasion by water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*), water lettuce (*Pistia stratiotes*) and Giant Salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*) of their waterways, a project for which she won an equipment grant from IDEAL Wild. After completing her MSc, a lack of equipment and funding meant she was unable to continue with her PhD. However, the Organization of Women in Sciences for the Developing World (OWSD) provided an opportunity in 2013 to fulfill this dream, by taking advantage of the knowledge developed in the research group (Centre for Biological Control) at Rhodes University, Department of Zoology and Entomology, South Africa, where, she was tasked to propose and implement suitable solutions to the problems posed by water hyacinth and other invasive species, in Cameroon. After completion of her PhD in 2017, she took an additional year to

work as a research assistant in the same Centre during which she worked on a project to understand the impact of climate change on the efficacy of biological control agents. Sonia has volunteered during her PhD studies as a tutor in the Department of Entomology at Rhodes University, demonstrating practical for 1st to 3rd year students.

Sonia returned to Cameroon in the spring 2018 with the vision to fully work for her country. Despite the challenges and the difficulties, she faced to get a job, she decided to work as a freelance consultant for a beginning, and signed few consultations with the Ministry of Environment, Green Connexion International and the Association of Marine Mammal Conservation (AMMCO) among others.

In 2019, she agreed to work permanently with Green Connexion International, where she holds the position of Vice-Director. Green Connexion International is an Environmental group, which acts for awareness, biodiversity and environmental conservation. They have been involved in several projects nationally and international related to environmental impact studies in areas where dams will be built. They are actually working on implementing a conservation model for threatened species according to the IUCN redlist, especially the Podostemaceae and Asclepiadaceae families.

In addition to the work involved in her position –planning and carrying out field trips, conducting experiments, analyzing data, and writing –As a woman, her desire is to help more young girls to get involve in the areas of science, and to make this dream come true, she registered as a member of the Organization of Women in Science for the Developing World, Cameroon National Chapter and was elected member of the National Bureau as the financial secretary. She also taught in Private Universities and through Green Connexion, supervise students doing their internship in the organization.

Her work was published in Peer review journals and in Cameroonian newsletters such as Cameroon Business, L’œil du Sahel and She also contributed to an article which was published by EuroNews.

To have a broad overview of other scientist researchers in her area or related areas, Sonia has joined as member different professional organizations: Entomological Society of Southern Africa (ESSA), and the African Association of Insect Scientists (AAIS). Furthermore, the different conferences that Sonia attended among which allowed her the opportunity to meet lot of many women and to understand that as a woman, she should also bring her contribution for the development of her country, and therefore Africa.

Dr Sonia also likes read, cook, travel, and help in charity events at church for old and disabled people.



Measuring water's speed during one of our field trip in Loffa River, Guinea Conakry

Primary et secondary Schools:
Douala, Cameroon:
FSLC, GCE

Name: KENFACK VOUKENG Sonia Nadege
Current Appointment: Vice-Director
Institution: Green Connexion International
Country: Cameroon

Your Educational Background

**University of Yaoundé I,
Yaoundé-Cameroon:**
Bsc in 2006, Msc in 2009

**Rhodes University,
Grahamstown, South
Africa:**
PhD, 21st April 2017



Any personal information you would like to share

Like cooking, creating new dishes. Travel around the world and discover different cultures and be in contact with different people is one of my dream. Aunt to several amazing nephews and nieces

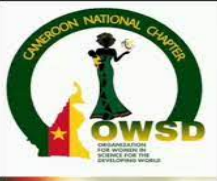
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Link to different articles

<https://www.euronews.com/green/2021/05/11/race-against-time-the-giant-weeds-taking-over-lake-ossa-cameroon>

<https://doi.org/10.2989/16085914.2018.1538868>

<https://doi.org/10.2989/16085914.2019.1636760>



In 2013, she received the OWSD PhD grant and is a member since then. Became member of OWSD-CAM in 2019, and was elected financial secretary the same year



The whole team during a field trip in the Mpem and Djim locality, Cameroon