



2017 BHEARD Scholar
Bancy Waweru Waithira

Profile

Country of Study:	Kenya
University:	University of Nairobi
Department:	Agriculture
Student Position:	Graduate Research Assistant-Ph.D.
Home Country:	Kigali, Rwanda
Home Institution:	Rwanda Agriculture Board
Home Position:	Associate Research Fellow
Mentored By:	Dr. Dora Chao Kilalo, University of Nairobi

Research Area: Hot Pepper Viral Diseases

BHEARD PROGRAM START DATE: September 2017

UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION: B.Sc. Agriculture, University of Nairobi (UoN)

GRADUATE EDUCATION: M.Sc. Horticulture, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT)

RESEARCH INTERESTS: The government of Rwanda has put in place a national horticulture policy of which the overall goal is to support market-oriented agricultural production, job creation, poverty reduction and nutritional security via vibrant and sustainable development of the horticulture sector. Several crops have been selected as priorities for export diversification of which pepper is among them. Despite the importance of pepper to the economy of Rwanda, as source of foreign income earner and a tool for income generation for framers, it is hugely constrained by the viral diseases. Up-to date the causative pathogens of these diseases have not been identified, yet it is crucial component for management strategies.

Proposed research is on characterization of hot pepper viruses in Rwanda. The study will aim at improving hot pepper production and farmers' income by reducing losses in pepper due to viral diseases, by developing easy-to-use diagnostic tools/protocols for virus indexing in nurseries and, help capacity building for key stakeholders in virus management.

PERSONAL STATEMENT: Bancy's future goals are; to use the knowledge and skills gained in the course of her studies to conduct further research with impact to the smallholder farmers; to be actively involved in development and dissemination of simple and innovative technologies to support sustainable production of pepper and other horticultural crops in general; to be among the leading researchers in plant pathology field.

WHEN I AM NOT WORKING I ENJOY: During Bancy's free time, she enjoys spending time with her family, listening to gospel music, visiting new places and sports.