

Brief Bio

Fatoumata Thiam is a PASET-RSIF Ph.D. Scholars originally from Senegal. Fatoumata is enrolled at University Gaston Berger (Saint-Louis, Senegal) and she is currently doing the sandwich program at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), USA.

She obtained a BSc in computer engineering in 2013 at the University of Thiés, Senegal. She then proceeded to the University Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar, Senegal, for an MSc in Distributed Information Systems, which she obtained in 2015. She worked on a distributed architecture of Voice over IP (VoIP). For her master thesis, she worked on real-time storage techniques for Wireless Sensor Networks (WSN). She considers her greatest achievement to be a two-year tenure as an engineer of telecommunications networks and services in the Department of Information Services, at Thiés University, Senegal.

Welcome Remarks, Orientation Training, 28/06/2021, 3 AM NY Time

Good morning everyone,

Dear Prof Prof. Aminata Sall Diallo, Executive Director, PASET

Prof. Goolam, Chair PASET CAG

Ms Ruth Charo, Task Team Leader, RSIF, World Bank.

Dr Moses Osiru, RSIF Manager, RSIF Regional Coordination Unit (RSIF-RCU), and the entire icipe team.

Cohort 3 Scholars

Ladies and gentlemen.

Warm greetings from Boston,

I am Fatoumata Thiam, I am from Senegal, I commenced my Ph.D. studies, through the Regional Scholarship and Innovation Fund in and I hope to finish by, I am registered at the University Gaston Berger, Senegal but currently at WPI doing my internship. My research focus is on the Internet of Things (IoT), and Artificial Intelligence (AI), applied to agriculture and farming. I am assessing energy efficiency within irrigation networks, and clean energy with solar-powered systems.

We are very pleased to be able to welcome the third Cohort today. I congratulate you for being selected.

Let me share some of my experiences. Prior to getting the scholarship, I did all my academic curriculum in Senegal, I had never traveled, I had never dreamt of traveling for my studies because of the financial and resource inaccessibility. This was a grace and a chance to me and my career. I appreciate all the support I have received through webinars, seminars, resource access grants, etc. that have helped me to move forward.

What has worked for me: first: I made it my own, my own competition with a single runner, if it was a race. I mean we all are different; we all assimilate things differently but know one thing:

you have been chosen among thousands. Now run at your own pace - if you end up slightly slower than your colleagues there is no need to panic. Never doubt yourself- believe in yourself.

And the second point, is hardwork and quality. I recognized the importance of quality in all my work. I believe I have received a lot and need to think about how I can give back. It's hard sometimes, but set the bar high, as it is said: "Shoot for the moon and you'll reach the stars".

For my sisters out there: the opportunities for women to advance have never been this many - the many women out there like Prof. Aminata Diallo and Ms. Ruth Charo at the World Bank who are here today are excellent examples. Don't be shy or intimidated by anything. Build that confidence in you, and what you're capable of. I know there will be difficult times - but for sure we are strong, and we can make relevant moves in this domain.

Three years move very fast. Take advantage of all the resources and also enjoy the experience. For me, the exposure to the global scientific world at WPI for almost two years, with the sandwich program, was an eyeopener for me – to be able to work at the highest standards with the best Scientists out there.

I thank all the funders of the RSIF program, and the ICIPE team for believing in us and supporting us. We won't disappoint you.

I remind my colleagues in Cohort 3 to use the opportunity of this training / orientation to start well - in terms of research orientation and methodologies, supervision, and communication. Also get to know each other and get to know the *icipe* team. The network is the biggest support you have to facilitate your experience and you can count on them too.

In summary, work hard and have fun. Good luck and enjoy the journey.

Thank you.