

## STAAARS+ IFPRI Mentor Biographies

Catherine Ragasa



Catherine Ragasa is a Senior Research Fellow at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). She has worked on development economics and agricultural policy for over 20 years, published more than 40 studies in top journals, and actively supports the design and implementation of agricultural programs through her engagement with policymakers and practitioners, mainly in Southeast Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Her research areas include agricultural transformation, value chain competitiveness, agricultural innovation and information systems, food safety, gender and social inclusion, and impact assessment of development and agricultural programs. She is a Senior Editor of the *Journal of Agricultural Education and Extension* and Associate Editor of *Agricultural Economics* and *Food Security*. Prior to joining IFPRI, she was with the Agricultural and Rural Development department in the World Bank, developing and coordinating research and tools in integrating gender dimensions and agricultural innovation systems approach into World Bank operations. She received her PhD in Agricultural Economics from Michigan State University and her MS in Economics from University of the Philippines-Diliman.

Hiroyuki Takeshima



Hiroyuki Takeshima joined IFPRI Nigeria office in January 2009 and joined IFPRI Washington Office in 2012. His research has focused on agricultural technology adoption including varietal technologies and mechanization, farm-nonfarm linkages, agricultural transformation and rural economic transformation, public and private investments, and agriculture-nutrition linkages. His research covers Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia and Central Asia. Hiroyuki is one of the editors of the book "[The Nigerian Rice Economy: Policy Options for Transforming Production, Marketing, and Trade](#)" published in 2016. Hiroyuki is also the 2018 recipient of the Nils Westermarck Award of the International Association of Agricultural Economics. Hiroyuki obtained a Ph.D. in Agriculture & Consumer Economics from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA. Hiroyuki is a citizen of Japan.



Kibrom Abay



Kibrom A. Abay is a Country Program Leader/Research Fellow in the Development Strategy and Governance Division at IFPRI, based in Cairo. He is a development and agricultural economist with research interests covering rural development, agricultural transformation, urbanization, food and nutrition security, and behavioral economics. Most of his research involves impact evaluation methods. Some of his recent studies examine the behavioral and inferential implications of mismeasurement in household surveys. Much of his current research focuses on Africa South of the Sahara and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Before joining IFPRI, he has worked as Postdoctoral researcher at the University of Copenhagen and the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI). Kibrom received his PhD in Economics from the University of Copenhagen, Denmark.



Kristin Davis



Kristin Davis is a Senior Research Fellow in the Development Strategy and Governance Division of the International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington, D.C. She serves as the co-director of the Feed the Future Developing Local Extension Capacity project. Davis, a U.S. national, joined IFPRI in November 2004 as a postdoctoral fellow. She has conducted research on farmer field schools, rural institutions, agricultural innovation systems, pluralistic extension systems and extension education in Africa and worldwide. She has published over 40 peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, and policy briefs. She has served as president of the Association for International Agricultural and Extension Education (AIAEE) and currently serves on the board. She is Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Agricultural Education and Extension (JAEE). Davis was the architect of the New Extensionist Learning Kit, a set of modules containing core competencies for the global extension agent. In 2020 she led the publication of the book [Agricultural extension: Global status and performance in selected countries](#).

Mulu Amare



Mulubrhan Amare is a research fellow in the Development Strategy and Governance Division at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). He is a quantitative development micro-economist, who has considerable experience in the analysis of household survey datasets in several countries in Africa and Southeast Asia. His research focuses on the impact programs, rural institutions and agricultural transformation, poverty and livelihood diversification, and migration and development. He investigated the impact of agricultural productivity and migration on welfare distribution and rural development. His current work examines the study of determinants of chronic child malnutrition in Nigeria as well as on linkages between income diversification and agricultural productivity in Africa South of the Sahara countries. Prior to joining IFPRI, he was a Postdoc Research Fellow at the Partnership for Economic Policy, Nairobi, Kenya. Amare received his PhD in economics with a focus on development and agricultural economics, from Leibniz University of Hannover, Germany in 2015.

Rui Benfica



Rui Benfica is senior research fellow in the Environment and Production Technology Division. Prior to joining IFPRI in April 2019, he worked with the Research and Impact Assessment Division at the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), where he undertook research in areas relevant for the overarching goal of overcoming poverty and achieving food security and nutrition, development and dissemination/outreach of policy research outputs, the design and implementation of Impact Assessments of the Fund's interventions in client countries in Asia and Latin America, and economy-wide modelling analysis to inform IFAD's Country Strategies. He was Associate Professor of International Development at Michigan State University (MSU) undertaking research in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa with the Food Security Group (FSG) on a wide range of issues including policy analysis and evaluation of development interventions aimed at promoting income diversification, reducing poverty, fostering gender equality and women's empowerment, and promoting food and nutrition security. Early in his career, he worked at the World Bank as Economist with the Gender and Development Group, and as Poverty Economist in the Africa Region, Mozambique Country Office, where he engaged in research and policy dialogue with the Ministries of Planning and Development, and of Agriculture and Rural Development, undertaking Poverty Assessments, Impact Evaluations, and Poverty and Social Impact Analyses. Benfica holds a Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from Michigan State University, USA, with focus on International Development, Commodity Market Analysis, and Quantitative Development Policy Research. He is a member of several professional organizations, published extensively in peer reviewed Journals, and served as founder and co-Editor of the IFAD Research Series.



Yanyan Liu



Yanyan Liu is a Senior Research Fellow in the Markets, Trade, and Institutions Division. She received a joint PhD in economics and agricultural economics from Michigan State University in 2006. Prior to joining IFPRI in 2009, she worked for RTI International, and for the Development Research Group at the World Bank. Her research has focused on program impact evaluation, microfinance, microinsurance, and economic transformation. Her work has been published in journals such as *Economic Journal*, *European Economic Review*, *Journal of Applied Econometrics*, *Journal of Risk and Insurance*, the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, *World Bank Economic Review*, and *World Development*.