

Distinguished Honorees



Damiana Astudillo

Damiana is committed to reducing hunger through her work on agricultural and rural development in Africa and Latin America.

As a member of the 3rd Class (2005-2007) of Mickey Leland Fellows, she worked in Bolivia with quinoa producers to improve their livelihoods. Her immersion in the lives of quinoa producing communities allowed Damiana to appreciate the challenges these communities faced in processing quinoa, due to lack of adequate and affordable technology. She worked with a local mechanic to develop a basic machine that reduced processing labor by seven hours. This saved time for the women, who are responsible for this task, and allowed them to sell processed quinoa in the local market at a higher price. At the end of her Fellowship, she secured funding from Bioersivity International to pilot this technology in 12 communities. Seven years after the experiment, an entire industry based on quinoa has developed in Southern Bolivia, allowing the benefits of value added products to stay in producing communities. Her work was featured in *Appropriate Technology* magazine.

Damiana is an Associate Director at the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), where she has worked since 2007, overseeing implementation of agriculture and natural resource management projects in Ghana, Burkina Faso, Benin, Cabo Verde, Honduras, Nicaragua, Moldova and Malawi with a portfolio of over \$430 million dollars. She also is working on policy reforms with the Government of Guatemala to improve its eligibility for future MCC funding.

Damiana is very passionate about developing sustainable projects focused on value chain development that allow small and medium size producers to benefit from local and global market opportunities. She is committed to developing results-based contracts and grants systems, and ensuring full social and gender analysis and integration into all projects to maximize benefits for women and other vulnerable groups.

She contributed a chapter to the book, *Biodiversity of Andean Grains: Balancing Market Potential and Sustainable Livelihoods*, and her article, "Creating Sustainable Companies: Lessons from Ghana's Agribusiness Centers," appeared in the *Knowledge and Innovation Network Journal's* Food Security edition.

Damiana holds a Masters' degree in Public Policy and International Development from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs of Princeton University and a BA degree in Economics and Government from Smith College. A native of Ecuador, she has lived in the U.S. for half her life. She resides in Washington, D.C. with her husband Paul and two year old daughter Anahí.