



**Emily Benice Ngubia
KURIA**

Home Country
Kenya

Degree
PhD. Medical Sciences

Expertise
Gender Studies
Research,
Neuroscience
Research, Science and
Technology Studies

Research Focus
Evaluation of the
Mental Rotation Task
in its Role in
Establishing Cognitive
Gender/Sex
Differences in
Intellectual Capacity

Host University
Humboldt University of
Berlin, Berlin,
Germany

Fellowship Awarded
2008

Emily Benice Ngubia Kuria is known for her energy and her great motivation to see women excel in achieving their goals. She feels that many women lack mentors in scientific disciplines. The conviction that all things are possible comes from her faith in Jesus and a close relationship with her family. She is the eldest in a family of four, and prefers to be called by her African name, Ngubia.

Ngubia's research focus is on understanding female under-representation in science and on evaluating the validity of research in experimental psychology and neuroscience that continues to allude to biological roots for this phenomenon. She is working to understand the concept of "gender" within neuroscience research, and its representation in experimental designs – specifically in the Mental Rotation Task.

The Mental Rotation Task, an experiment that demonstrates sex differences in spatial cognition, has been used to establish an understanding of biological difference in cognitive performance between women and men. Ngubia is interested in demonstrating the role that gender plays in shaping perceptions about science and performance.

Ngubia says her research is important because normative attributions of sex differences can lead to dissimilarities in the way responsibilities are allocated, resources are distributed, and rights are granted. Policy makers and governments make institutional awards to educational systems based on (sometimes misleading) scientific interpretations.

Ngubia believes that increasing participation by women in science education requires active support by qualified personnel. The challenge is now to create institutional changes that allow the entrance and retaining of women in science disciplines; this is where she plans to play a significant role. She hopes to see more Kenyan women choosing careers in science, and she intends to participate actively in the establishment of new academic research facilities in her country when she completes her PhD in gender studies at the Charité-Humboldt University of Berlin in Germany.

Ngubia plans to teach at the University of Nairobi College of Biological and Physical Sciences, as well as participate in capacity-building exercises at a national level.

