



2009 AWARD Fellow
Everlyne Cherobon

Position:	Project coordinator
Institution:	Empower, Mentor and Develop Network (EMEDEN Kenya)
Country:	Kenya
BSc:	Agribusiness Management, Egerton University, 1995
Mentored by:	Dr. Adrian Mukhebi, Chairman Kenya Agricultural Commodity Exchange

Research area: *Comparative study of beekeeping status in areas of Kenya.*

Everlyne Cherobon has a passion to help improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers, particularly in Kenya's semi-arid North Rift Valley. She and her partners recently founded and registered a non-profit organization—EMEDEN Kenya—with the goal of becoming a champion for this often marginalized group. The focus of EMEDEN is an integrated approach to rural development through sustainable agriculture, agribusiness, microfinance, and entrepreneurship development, in addition to addressing social problems affecting rural households such as alcoholism, teenage pregnancies, and HIV/AIDS.

"As an AWARD Fellow, I have learned to build networks with industry and sector stakeholders in my area of operation," says Cherobon. EMEDEN Kenya has also benefited from the experiences she has gained so far during the fellowship, she says, providing momentum to help the organization grow and realize its objectives.

Cherobon and her organization are focused on empowering smallholders. "I want to be on the front line in building the capacity of farmers and farmers' associations to practice sustainable agriculture and agribusiness within the confines of their natural resources."

Cherobon is exploring ways under which the rural and urban poor can gain access to credit to finance their agricultural businesses and income-generating activities. "Due to their cultural orientation, most tribes in Kenya are not entrepreneurial in nature," she explains. "For those already engaged in business, a lack of credit and technical skills, such as bookkeeping and marketing expertise, has contributed to a lack of growth and sometimes to the failure of their businesses." She wants to study the role that microfinance and entrepreneurship may play in engaging the rural and urban poor in turning the wheels of national economic development.

Cherobon is in the process of applying for a master's program in agricultural and rural development. She recently completed a course in Belgium entitled Bee-Keeping for Poverty Alleviation, which is relevant to her current work with Kenyan farmers.

Cherobon sees mentoring as providing the opportunity to learn hands-on from an expert. "My mentor is a respected professional with vast experience in my field," she says. "I am already benefiting from his experience and networks. It's like someone holding my hand from the other side of a big river and asking me to jump over. With his hand on mine, my chances of jumping over successfully are improved."

She appreciates AWARD's leadership and science writing courses, which she says are equipping her to realize her career goals. "You cannot do what you do not know, but you can build better skills based on the skills you already possess. I hope to build and expand on lessons learned and skills acquired as an AWARD Fellow so I can make a better contribution to national development."

Cherobon is one of 180 African woman scientists who have won an AWARD Fellowship. AWARD is a professional development program that strengthens the research and leadership skills of African women in agricultural science, empowering them to contribute more effectively to poverty alleviation and food security in sub-Saharan Africa. For more information, visit www.awardfellowships.org
