



2011 AWARD Fellow
Annah Indeche

Position	Senior field technician
Institution	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT)
Country	Kenya
MSc	Horticulture, JKUAT, 2010
Mentor	Professor Mary Abukutsa-Onyango, Department of Horticulture, Faculty of Agriculture, JKUAT

Research area: Enhancing sustainable agricultural technologies, especially for nutrient-rich vegetables.

As the firstborn in a family of 13 children, Annah Indeche came by her leadership skills quite naturally. Although her father's death when she was very young affected her academic progress, she succeeded in earning a diploma in horticulture in 2003, followed by a BSc in the same discipline in 2010.

"I pursued a career in agricultural science for many reasons," Indeche says. "I recognize that if food productivity can be increased, it will alleviate hunger. We need to improve farming technologies before we can increase food production."

Indeche cites a number of factors that she believes are affecting food security in Kenya, including population growth and climate change. "My mother is a farmer," she says. "I would like to assist her and other female farmers by providing new technologies to ease their workload and increase their productivity."

As a senior field technician at JKUAT, Indeche is working with African kale, an indigenous vegetable that is a dual-purpose crop. "It can be used both as a vegetable and as source of oil, which can be extracted for home use," she explains. "I am looking at how its use can be boosted by applying potassium as fertilizer—focusing on how the leaf or seed would respond." She is also interested in organic integrated pest-management methods.

Indeche, who has worked at JKUAT for 13 years, meets with farmers and school groups who visit the institution. Her job as a field technician also includes assisting undergraduate students in practical courses concerning horticultural vegetables and food production, and helping post-graduate students with their research. She is particularly gratified when she influences a student's decision to pursue agriculture. "It's rewarding when they come to do their post-grad work and they are still in agriculture."

Indeche plans to further her own education. "I am looking into a master's degree in horticulture, and hope to pursue a PhD eventually. I will die a professor," she asserts.

Indeche anticipates gaining much as an AWARD Fellow. "Mentoring will help me to fast-track my career, because I'll have someone there to encourage me," she says. "I expect to acquire scientific writing skills, get my work published, and become more confident and assertive so I can contribute to the growth of my department."

Approaching her 41st birthday, this mother of three children sees AWARD's lack of age limit for applicants as a main benefit. "My favorite quote is 'It's never too late to become what you might have been.' AWARD is driving me to become what I am meant to be," says Indeche.

Indeche is one of a growing number of 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
