



2010 AWARD Fellow Kajuga Nsamira Joëlle

Position:	Head, Biotechnology Laboratories
Institution:	Institut des sciences agronomique du Rwanda (ISAR)
Country:	Rwanda
MSc:	Crop Protection of Tropical and Sub-tropical Crops, Faculté Universitaire des Sciences Agronomiques de Gembloux-Université Libre de Liège, Belgium, 2009
Mentored by:	Dr. Gertrude Night Institut des sciences agronomique du Rwanda (ISAR)

Research area: Plant diagnosis and pathogen identification using visual examination, biological, serological, and molecular methods.

Kajuga Nsamira Joëlle's current area of study is a project involving tree tomato (*Cyphomandra betacea*), a popular fruit in Rwanda, but one that is challenging to cultivate due to viral and fungal diseases. Her project is identifying, mapping, and managing these diseases.

"I am interested in plant diagnosis and identification of pathogens using visual examination and biological, serological, and molecular methods," explains Joëlle. "Epidemiology is also a major focus, because it helps us in the surveillance and successful management of crop diseases."

"Plant pathology is my real passion," reflects Joëlle. "More than 80 percent of Rwanda's people are dependent on agriculture, but production is low. I want to help farmers manage plant diseases in order to improve productivity and food security."

Joëlle says the knowledge and skills she will acquire through the AWARD Fellowship, such as proposal writing, preparing publications, and networking, will help her to be a better scientist. "For instance, I am interested in establishing a disease- and pest-monitoring system, as well as an early warning system, to combat diseases, reduce crop losses, and increase the quality and quantity of food for poor farmers. Improving nutritional conditions and the marketing of agricultural products will reduce poverty and enhance the socio-economic conditions of rural communities in general, and women in particular."

Joëlle expects that AWARD's Women's Leadership and Management Course will boost her professional confidence. "I would like to be confident enough to advise decision makers and NGOs, to supervise students' theses, and to train extension workers and farmers."

Joëlle 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, please visit www.awardfellowships.org