



2009 AWARD Fellow
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With AWARD, I have seen myself grow both personally and professionally in simple yet powerful ways. I am now making an effort to work with what I have and maximize it, instead of focusing on difficult situations, such as having little contact with senior professionals in my field; being younger and the only female professional, as well as working in a field that has research gaps spanning two or three decades.

Through AWARD's Mentoring Orientation Workshop and training from the Leadership Skills Course, I am now more confident in voicing my opinions and making myself heard, and more proactive in reaching out to build and maintain networks and in dealing with situations more assertively. I am not afraid to give my work its very best, particularly when handling training courses and presentations, and perhaps even more importantly, to make sure my name is attached to my work. A sentiment from AWARD's Women's Leadership and Management Course has become my motto: "Women often think that their work will speak for them, but this is not enough; it is vital to speak out and let people know the value of your work."

Just after the leadership course, I put into practice many of the tips I learned about presentation skills as our team prepared to conduct a training course for facilitators in goat and local poultry production for an NGO. The feedback I received from participants was wonderful. The training package included a manual, which I was charged with spearheading. In the past, this would have meant me doing most of the work and more prominent members getting the credit for producing it. This time, I assertively managed the team so there was input from almost all parties, and despite initial resistance and some conflict, we produced a good manual that I personally delivered to the organization. In fact, we even discussed the possibility of future training courses with a larger number of participants and wider scope.

I feel more confident in handling a team and more assertive in handling tough situations and conflicts at work, as well as asking for what I need to do my work through improved negotiation skills.

Chisenga 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