



2009 AWARD Fellow
Maureen Hamiyanze

Position:	Program manager
Institution:	HODI, Elimination of Child Labour in Tobacco-growing Program
Country:	Zambia
BSc:	Agriculture, University of Wales, 2002
Mentored by:	Martin Sishekanu, Chief agricultural specialist Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives

The AWARD Fellowship is empowering. Before I was honoured with this fellowship, I felt trapped and disillusioned with this dream to use my knowledge and skills in agriculture to help communities and my country to be food secure, and eventually come out of poverty. There was no platform from which to launch as a woman agriculturist, since most of the opportunities were available only to men. I now have a sense of professional purpose and direction that I did not have before the AWARD Fellowship. For example, I have doubled my scientific networks, and I am more confident and assertive. My leadership skills have also greatly improved.

The AWARD Fellowship is inspiring. It has helped me to come out of the shadows (where I was pushed as a woman scientist), into the light of the many possibilities and opportunities that exist—to be part of a solution to end chronic hunger and poverty in Africa. The AWARD Mentoring Orientation Workshop, for example, inspired me to pin down my purpose and to develop a plan to accomplish it. Having a mentor also keeps me on my toes professionally, ensuring that I do not revert to passivity. The opportunity to interact with women agriculturists from other countries is also encouraging, as it eliminates the feeling of isolation.

The AWARD Fellowship promotes balanced development that is professionally (scientifically), personally, and practically (leadership) advantageous. It has helped me to be relevant in the real world. The Women's Leadership and Management Course, for example, taught me how to carry myself with confidence as a professional woman, and how to give and receive feedback. I learned key lessons in team building, effective listening, and time management—all of which I now use in my leadership roles.

Some highlights of the fellowship's impact on my professional career and personal development:

- **Competency:** Within a few months of being named an AWARD Fellow, I was offered a highly competitive job as Program Manager for the Elimination of Child Labour in Tobacco-growing Program. With improved resource management, stakeholder confidence was restored, which in turn has improved support to the program.
- **Productivity:** I led a team in the development of a questionnaire under the agricultural section that was used in conducting a needs assessment for the possible expansion of the Livelihood Improvement Program (LIP). This effort was successful and helped in securing further funding for our activities.

- o I led a baseline survey in two communities of our operation for a proposed micro-finance partnership with a micro-credit institution, and subsequently produced a report that is being used to develop a memorandum of understanding with the institution that will provide agricultural and business loans to the two communities.
- o The AWARD Women's Leadership and Management Course taught me to always evaluate activities based on whether they are important and urgent. Now I am able to meet reporting deadlines without panic as a result of improved time management, and the quality of my reporting has also improved.
- **Visibility:** My visibility has greatly improved, with the LIP activities that I manage being covered by local radio and newspapers. Two speeches on the LIP objectives were also aired recently.
- **Connectedness:** The fellowship has enabled me to broaden my professional networks, and I am in the process of joining two professional associations.
- **Confidence:** This is a big one for me. Other AWARD Fellows have affirmed the big change in me, as I am now able to express myself far more confidently. Before the fellowship, I was so timid and passive that I let many opportunities pass me by. A classic example of improvement is when, a month before the end of the quarter for our project, my then boss changed the work plan and added activities that were impossible to accomplish in that time frame for the number of staff and resources available. I confidently explained to the boss how that change would throw us off course, and prevent us from meeting the reporting deadline. This openness helped us implement the program as earlier planned. Everyone was surprised that I was able to stand my ground convincingly and it worked well. In the past, I would have passively accepted and broken my neck trying to achieve the impossible.
- **Relationship with my AWARD Mentor:** I have a mentor who sees so much potential in me that I can now see it myself.
- **Benefits to institution from my participation in AWARD:** My institution is benefiting from my improved time management skills and resource management, which has brought about donor confidence. I contributed to the institution's visibility as our program was covered by local media.
- **Benefits to rural communities where I work, especially women farmers:** Women are now inspired to take leadership roles in their communities through my interaction with them. While doing a case study, I highlighted the stories of women, thereby bringing transformation to their livelihoods and communities through sustainable agriculture.
- **Plans/dreams/aspirations for the future:** My immediate plan is to enrol in an MSc/PhD program to study agricultural leadership. This is a first step towards maximum implementation of my purpose that will facilitate the transformation of rural households through sustainable agriculture and leadership development.

Hamiyanze 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