



**AWARD Fellow:**  
**Miriam Judith Otipa**

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| <b>Position:</b>    | Senior Research Scientist   |
| <b>Institution:</b> | Kenya Agricultural Research Institute, Nairobi  |
| <b>Country:</b>     | Kenya   |
| <b>MSc:</b>         | Nairobi University, Kenya 2004  |
| <b>Mentored by:</b> | Dr. Joseph G. Mureithi<br>Deputy Director<br>Research and Technology<br>Kenya Agricultural Research Institute |

*"I hope to develop and disseminate improved, easy-to-use technologies in crop protection that will reduce crop losses through diseases and that will uplift and improve the livelihoods of income-challenged, rural women farmers."*

Miriam is a senior research scientist at the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) and a PhD student in horticulture at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology. She is passionate about contributing to the livelihoods of poor rural farmers by developing technologies that control plant viral diseases in farming systems.

Her professional expertise includes:

- molecular and biotechnology techniques for characterizing and control of crop viral diseases;
- bio-safety and environmental impact assessments of GMOs;
- regulatory framework for transgenic plants/GMOs;
- development of sustainable IPM strategies;
- capacity building of students, growers, extension agents;
- technology dissemination to all stakeholders in crops value chains.

Miriam heads the plant virology department at KARI's Kabete campus, providing national leadership in plant virology research and outreach programs. She is the projects advisor to the Soroptimist International Club-Mumias branch (Kenya) and charged with fund raising responsibilities.

Currently, Miriam is working on several collaborative projects with scientists from Africa (Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, South Africa, Uganda), Australia and the USA, including researchers at Ohio State University. Her on-going research programs are funded by the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA), the Government of Kenya, the World Bank and the Integrated Pest Management Collaborative Research Support Program (IPM CRSP) of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Miriam has authored, co-authored, presented and published more than 20 papers on disease diagnostics, integrated pest management strategies and policy briefs to advise government on bio-safety regulatory frameworks.

As an AWARD Fellow, Miriam says her participation in the program has boosted her self-confidence and her professional visibility. "I have developed a clear career road map and I have become more focused in my research work. As a result, I was recently promoted from research officer to senior research scientist."

Miriam says that AWARD has helped her develop networks in her field of expertise. "AWARD has offered me a rare and privileged opportunity to interact with and be challenged by highly exposed individuals during the orientation workshop and the women's leadership and scientific writing courses. This has made me stay in touch with current cutting-edge trends in the global agricultural research arena. I have learned how to recognize opportunities from challenges and to mentor other up-coming scientists."

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