



2010 AWARD Fellow Phindile Chitsulo

Research area: Maternal and child health nutrition in developing countries, with particular focus on micronutrient deficiencies, such as Vitamin A, iron, and zinc.

Position:	Assistant statistician
Institution:	Management Sciences for Health (MSH)
Country:	Malawi
BSc:	Agriculture Bunda College of Agriculture, University of Malawi, 2008
Mentored by:	Dr. Alexander A. Kalimbira, Dean Postgraduate Studies and Research, and senior lecturer in Human Nutrition, Bunda College of Agriculture University of Malawi

Phindile Chitsulo is an ambitious young nutritionist with a deep concern for children, especially those who are susceptible to HIV/AIDS.

“I have a passion for children, and my work in nutrition allows me to help them directly,” says Chitsulo, who is the first woman in her family to graduate from the University of Malawi.

Chitsulo recently joined MSH as an assistant statistician, building on several years of experience as a nutritionist with a University of North Carolina health education project in Malawi, which helped expectant mothers to prevent prenatal and antenatal HIV transmission.

“We taught women how to breastfeed their babies so they didn’t pass on the virus,” explains Chitsulo. “However, breastfeeding can be very taxing on the health of an HIV-positive mother, so we provided nutritional supplementation for them for the first six months. When they stopped breastfeeding, we gave the food supplements to their infants.” Chitsulo says that an evaluation showed that many children were born virus-free, and were still healthy 12 months later.

In her new role with MSH, Chitsulo will assist in implementing the nutritional aspect of a family planning and HIV service project operating in eight districts across Malawi. Her role will be to collect and analyze data, and conduct research.

Chitsulo finds working with people in underserved rural communities extremely rewarding and would like to become a public health practitioner in nutrition. She is confident that AWARD will help her advance on her career path. “Being identified by AWARD as a woman of potential who can bring change to the lives of rural women is a tremendous encouragement to me,” says Chitsulo. “At the orientation workshop, I learned to assess my strengths and weaknesses. I realized that I can be a role model to young girls in my country.”

Chitsulo 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
