



2008 AWARD Fellow  
**Victoria Ndolo**

<b>Position:</b>	Food and nutrition lecturer
<b>Institution:</b>	Chancellor College , University of Malawi
<b>Country:</b>	Malawi
<b>MSc:</b>	Environmental Science – Food Security and Nutrition University of Malawi 2002
<b>Mentored by:</b>	Dr. Agnes Mwangwela Lecturer, Bunda College of Agriculture Lilongwe, Malawi

*“Preserved fruit is easy to store, provides micronutrients and can be a source of income for women in rural communities who are involved in fruit processing.”*

Victoria Ndolo can't stand to see food go to waste, especially in Malawi where 46 percent of children under age five are stunted due to poor nutrition. Sadly, an estimated 60 percent of the perishable fruits harvested annually in Malawi rot or are sold at give-away prices during peak season because of ineffective processing and preservation techniques, and a lack of storage facilities.

Ndolo is determined to change that statistic. Her research focuses on food processing and product development, particularly underutilized crops, such as indigenous vegetables and exotic fruits. “Teaching people to preserve fruit would greatly help to improve food and nutrition and help us achieve the first Millennium Development Goal, the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger that manifests itself in malnutrition.”

She applies her research in the classroom, teaching her students in the Department of Home Economics at the University of Malawi how to produce jam, juice and dried fruit. She is also involved in training groups of rural women how to process and store local fruit. They can serve the dried fruit to their children and sell it in the local market, earning a small income. Ninety percent of Malawi's 14.4 million people live on less than \$2 a day, according to the UNDP.

Ndolo studied the nutritional value of solar-dried mangoes at the University of Manitoba during a fellowship with the Association of Commonwealth Universities. She is transferring her new-found knowledge to communities in Zomba, Malawi. “Fresh mangoes are a good source of beta-carotene and vitamin C and remain a good source of beta-carotene when dried, which is converted to vitamin A in the body,” explains Ndolo. “Vitamin A deficiency is a public health concern in Malawi.”

Currently she is working on a project funded by the European Union to develop a cereal-based product enriched with dried *Moringa oleifera* leaves. Her vision is to develop and patent dried fruits, vegetables and fruit-enriched cereal to benefit children under age five and people living with HIV and AIDS, two groups who are most at risk of malnutrition.

Ndolo was one of eight Malawian scientists chosen for the 60 2008 AWARD Fellowships. She says AWARD's training workshops have equipped her with leadership, mentoring and proposal writing skills, as well as assisting her to increase her visibility and expand her professional networks.

"I can confidently say that AWARD has helped me to discover my true personality and potential. It has enhanced my leadership skills and given me the confidence to use my strengths to benefit my institution and my country," says Ndolo. "I used to be quite introverted and was quick to withdraw if things were not working. I have worked on my assertiveness and I now boldly and graciously pursue issues related to my career and life in general. For instance, I convinced my department and my employer to support me in attending an AWARD science placement at Stellenbosch University in South Africa. This is a stepping stone towards achieving my career goals, including pursuing a PhD in food science."

*Ndolo 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, visit [www.awardfellowships.org](http://www.awardfellowships.org)*

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