



2014 AWARD Fellow  
**Susan Akumu Aruwa**

<b>Position</b>	Senior Agriculture Officer
<b>Institution</b>	State Department of Agriculture, Agriculture Sector Development Support Program (ASDSP)
<b>Country</b>	Kenya
<b>BSc</b>	Agriculture and Human Ecology Extension Egerton University, 2009
<b>Mentor</b>	Dr. Constantine Steven Loum, Lecturer Gulu University, Uganda
<b>Research Area</b>	Coordination of gender-sensitive tests to increase the number of value chains, enhance capacity building, and establish groups for women and youth within the country.

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Susan Akumu Aruwa grew up in western Kenya, where she was involved in young farmers and home economics clubs in her secondary school, and went on to earn a diploma in those areas. Before attending Egerton University for a BSc, Aruwa held a variety of deployments at her job, including working as a desk officer at *Njaa Marufuku* Kenya, a program created by the Ministry of Agriculture to eradicate hunger in Kenya.

“The agriculture sector is the backbone of Kenya’s economy and the means of livelihood for most of the rural population,” Aruwa notes. “My main work involves collaborating with the various stakeholders—non-governmental, community-based and faith-based organizations, private companies—to analyze and upgrade value chains that can generate employment, ensure food security, and improve nutrition for smallholder farmers.”

Aruwa works to help improve market access for farmers—women, men, and youth—and encourages the establishment of women’s and youth groups. “Marketing is a problem for individuals, so we try to bring people together in groups so they can overcome these hurdles,” she says.

Aruwa is part of an ASDSP team that focuses on indigenous poultry, fish, and mangoes. They start with a value chain “platforms” composed of around 20 people in each value chain, and then create thematic groups. “The platforms brainstorm to come up with

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**AWARD is a career-development program that equips top women agricultural scientists across sub-Saharan Africa to accelerate agricultural gains by strengthening their research and leadership skills through tailored fellowships. AWARD is a catalyst for innovations with high potential to contribute to the prosperity and well-being of African smallholder farmers, most of whom are women.**

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ideas, which are then presented as possible solutions to the county government,” she explains. “I’m always asking myself where the farmer’s shortage of produce is coming from—is it in production, processing, marketing, or transportation? Our program comes in to fill those gaps wherever they appear.”

Aruwa intends to pursue a PhD once she completes her master’s in community health and development this year. This ambitious woman plans to start an agribusiness nutrition and health incubation center in Gem sub county to create employment for local people, and has already approached Kenya’s NGO board to conduct a name search for the company. Now working on the business plan, Aruwa is anxious to get started on the center so she can develop fortified flour to provide to low-income families.

Her direct work with smallholders sparked this innovative idea. “I see the problems first-hand,” she explains. “Many of these people need hope; they need someone to help them move to a higher level, and I believe I should be providing more assistance. It may just be a drop in the ocean, but it will help.”

As an AWARD Fellow, she is enthusiastic about learning from her mentor, and is sure she will gain a lot from its proposal writing course for project funding. Aruwa says being an AWARD Fellow already seems to have influenced the level of respect she gets at work. “When you’re working with men, you often have to exert yourself and push your ideas forward,” she reflects. “I’m sure I will gain more confidence through this program.”