



2018 AWARD Fellow
Emily Awuor Ouma

Position	Senior Scientist
Institution	International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)
Country	Kenya
PhD	Agricultural Economics, University of Kiel, Germany, 2007
Mentor	Dr. Sarah Mubiru, Director, Sow and Grow Foundation
Research Area	Economics of farm-level competitiveness and agri-food value chains, ex-ante and ex-post impact analysis of interventions.



As a senior scientist at ILRI, Emily is developing agricultural systems, value chains, and institutions that are responsive to innovative research, and that will ultimately address the needs and encourage the participation of men, women, and youth.

Emily Awuor Ouma longs to see improvements in people’s livelihoods—increasing food security, improving incomes, and reducing poverty—and she hopes her research will help to bring this to reality. As a senior scientist at ILRI, she is developing agricultural systems, value chains, and institutions that are responsive to innovative research, and that will ultimately address the needs and encourage the participation of men, women, and youth.

Born in Nairobi, Ouma, who is married with 10-year-old son, credits her uncle for encouraging her to pursue a career in agricultural economics. She did her primary and high school studies in Nairobi, and then completed a BSc at Egerton University. She took a position at ILRI upon graduation, working as a research technician. “After two years there, I decided to quit my job and enroll in a master’s program,” she recalls. “I followed up with a PhD shortly thereafter.”

Ouma moved to Burundi after completing her doctorate, where she worked at the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) as a postdoctoral scientist. “I was there for four years, and then came straight to Uganda,” she says.

Ouma wants to understand what enabling factors will encourage farmers to adopt recommended interventions. Although based in Kampala, she is currently leading a dairy project in Rwanda funded by Feed the Future. “I’m directly involved in the economic analysis of a milk-quality certification system introduced by the Rwandan government and a USAID-funded project,” she explains. “It’s all related to milk—Rwanda provides each poor family with a cow, but we still don’t know whether having a cow is improving the families’

“We’ve done the research and we have the results, but we want to have influence on the ground, where it will help people.”



Ouma is one of a growing number of women agricultural scientists who have won an AWARD Fellowship. AWARD works toward inclusive, agriculture-driven prosperity for the African continent by strengthening the production and dissemination of more gender-responsive agricultural research and innovation. We invest in scientists, research institutions, and agribusinesses to deliver sustainable, gender-responsive agricultural research and innovation.

The AWARD Fellowship is a career-development program that invests in top women agricultural scientists to ensure that confident, capable, and influential women are available to lead critical advances and innovations in the agricultural sector.

For more information, visit www.awardfellowships.org

nutrition.” Working mainly with farmers in rural areas but also with some peri-urban dwellers, Ouma is trying to determine if consumers see the value in having high-quality milk, and aims to assess the attributes they are looking for.

As a component of this project, which is a collaboration between Research Triangle International (RTI), TechnoServe, the University of Rwanda, and ILRI, Ouma is looking at the impact of a nutrition education intervention on young children and their caregivers through a randomized controlled trial. “We have three study arms,” she explains. “Households in one group received cows two years ago but do not receive the nutrition intervention. The second group comprises households who received cows two years ago and received education on the importance of drinking milk—especially children and women of reproductive age. Households in the third group have not yet received the cows, though eligible, and do not receive the nutrition intervention. We are doing a comparison of the nutritional status of children and mothers in the three groups.”

In Uganda, Ouma is part of a CGIAR value chain team to design, test, and evaluate interventions to improve the livelihoods and incomes of smallholder pig farmer households. “The gender dimension of this project demonstrates that women are largely involved in the pig production node, feeding and watering the animals, and carrying out husbandry-related practices, although having poor access to technologies coupled with low capacities to enable improvement in practices,” Ouma explains. “The implication is that effective disease-control measures need to consider all members of the household—particularly women—in order to prevent the spread of zoonotic diseases, which spread between animals and humans.”

Ouma’s goal is to eventually be in a position where she can contribute to influencing policy. “We’ve done the research and we have the results, but we want to have influence on the ground, where it will help people,” she states.

Ouma sees tremendous benefits as an AWARD Fellow, and is particularly looking forward to the leadership training. “I need these skills to advocate and influence policy,” she enthuses. She especially appreciates the focus on gender, and says the program blends well with ILRI’s philosophy. “I want to enhance my skills in gender-responsive agricultural research and innovation. Many of the skills I will acquire as an AWARD Fellow will go right back into my organization. In fact, my supervisor and I agreed that I’ll fit the AWARD components into my annual work plan.

“Ouma is grateful for a supportive husband and extended family, having faced an uphill battle in moving from postdoc to scientist to senior scientist. But she’s up to the challenge, and is ready to put in the effort required to reach her goal.