



Márcia Maposse
2015 AWARD Fellow

Position	General Director
Institution	Bindzu Agrobusiness e Consultoria, Lda
Country	Mozambique
BSc	Agronomy, Eduardo Mondlane University, 2006
Mentor	Dr. Anabela Manhiça, National Coordinator, Scaling Seeds and Technology Partnership, AGRA
Research Area	Provision of agronomic support, agricultural inputs and services, and technical advice for value addition and to improve crops.

Márcia Maposse was raised by her grandparents, who were farmers in Maputo, since her parents were working in Germany during her childhood. She recalls visits to large successful farms in South Africa as sparking her interest in agricultural science. "I wondered why my grandparents' farm was so small," she recalls. "I resolved to change lives by improving farming techniques in Mozambique."

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Once she finished her bachelor's degree, she took a job with ProCaná, a large biofuels project in Mozambique. However, when the government canceled that project, she decided to change her focus. "I noticed that many of my fellow graduates had become university lecturers," she recalls. "But my question is, who will share this information with the farmers? I realized I needed experience in the private sector, so I can teach good farming techniques, and advise farmers on the best ways to get funding."

When Maposse applied for her first job, the employers were skeptical that she could work in rural areas because she's a woman. "They didn't believe I could do it, but I showed them I could," she smiles. In 2010, she joined forces with three colleagues she has known since secondary school who shared her vision, to form Bindzu Agrobusiness.

"Bindzu means 'production' in Changana, the local language," Maposse explains. "Our initial aim was to produce and market vegetables, but we have since expanded to address the shortage of inputs and other agricultural services in this community. Our goal is to positively influence agricultural value production and improve the farmers' standards of quality and performance."

Now, Bindzu is providing both inputs and advice to local smallholder farmers, most of whom are women. "We learned what inputs are required, and how to design projects that will increase farmers' yields,"

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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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she says. “As well, Bindzu owns a shop where we sell agricultural inputs and irrigation equipment. Our company provides a range of other services, including business plan design, technical assistance in agricultural production, and soil preparation for the production of diverse vegetables and cereals.”

Maposse and her partners—all of whom are male—are also producing potatoes, peppers, tomatoes, green beans, grains, and sugar cane in rural areas. She is the company’s marketing person, so she is teaching farmers to do fundraising and to keep an eye on market conditions when selling their products.

“I hope my company will become well recognized in Mozambique and eventually influence the politics of agriculture,” she says. “We know the situation in the field because we work directly with the farmers. My long-term goal is to collaborate with the Ministry of Agriculture, universities, and agricultural organizations. I also hope to inspire young people to work in rural areas, encouraging them not to wait to find jobs, but to create their own.”

Last year Maposse was offered a master’s scholarship, but she turned it down because she wasn’t sure exactly what she wanted to pursue. However, she now has a plan. “I want to get an MBA with the purpose of transforming agriculture into business,” she states. “After that, I plan to take a master’s in agribusiness via distance education, while taking a variety of courses in related subjects. I am very motivated to continue my studies.”

Maposse is confident that her position as an AWARD Fellow will increase her leadership capacity as well as her visibility. “If I become more visible, I will be able to share my experience with other women, to encourage them to get degrees in agriculture and work in this field,” she enthuses. She looks forward to learning how to write proposals, and is keen to learn from her mentor.

Seeing the results of her commitment gives her great satisfaction. “For example, when I started working, people were not using irrigation systems, but after we demonstrated drip irrigation technology and saw farmers using it, it was very rewarding,” she says. “They are applying what I have taught them as best practices, which means they trust me.”

Recently the Ministry of Agriculture brought in a team of consultants to work with the farmers—but this didn’t happen. “The farmers refused to work with the consultants, saying ‘We want these young people.’ This was confirmation that the work we are doing is valued.”