



Tigist Markos
2015 AWARD Fellow

Position	Lecturer
Institution	Hawassa University
Country	Ethiopia
MSc	Applied Human Nutrition, Hawassa University, 2010
Mentor	Dr. Afework Mulugeta, Associate Professor, Public Health, Mekelle University
Research Area	Promotion of nutrition education and home gardening, quality evaluation, and food product development as a nutrition intervention strategy for infants, children, adolescents, and mothers.

Tigist Markos grew up in Hawassa, Ethiopia as the sixth and lastborn child of two teachers. Early on, she recognized that nutrition is a major problem in her country, which is what spurred her to study Applied Human Nutrition for her master's degree at Hawassa University.

Ethiopia suffers from deficiencies in both micro- and macro-nutrients, which affect many people. "My vision is to tackle the problem of malnutrition in my country," she says. "I hope to integrate agriculture with nutrition by promoting home gardening, and by introducing improved agricultural products such as quality protein maize and improved chickpea varieties."

Markos believes that focusing on women is the best approach to solving the problem of malnutrition. "Many children up to age five are affected by malnutrition, and of course the effects also trickle down to when they are older," she continues. "Plus, there is a knowledge gap about proper nutrition, and only a few health facilities in rural areas."

One of the areas Markos is looking at now is night blindness, which is caused by a deficiency in vitamin A. "I encourage the consumption of vitamin A-enriched foods, such as carrots, mangoes, leafy green vegetables, and liver," she says. "This is especially important for expectant women and those of child-bearing age, which is where my research is focused." This research is being funded by Hawassa University.

Another project she is working on is menu diversification for home grown school-feeding programs in southern Ethiopia. "This project is at the proposal stage right now," she remarks. "This, along with all of the research I am engaged in, is focused on nutrition intervention,



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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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quality evaluation, and food product development of infants, children, adolescents, and mothers." She regularly visits the rural villages to collect data, and also communicates with health facilities. Once the data-collection phase is completed, Markos intends to work with stakeholders to educate them about the importance of proper nutrition.

As her career progresses, Markos hopes to achieve a position as a university professor. "Right now I am applying for a doctorate," she reveals. "I expect to get a PhD in the near future."

Markos expects to gain a lot from AWARD and is particularly looking forward to improving her abilities in science writing and proposal writing. "When I see the areas that AWARD is working in, especially research, mentoring, and leadership, I know how helpful this program will be to me," she says. "As I gain skills in these areas, not only will the knowledge help with my career development, but it will also prepare me to contribute even more to improving the situation that women in Ethiopia face regarding malnutrition." Her AWARD Mentor has already encouraged her to begin writing two scientific papers, and is willing to help her develop a proposal for her doctorate.

As the mother of a small baby, Markos has experienced the struggle that comes with juggling her time. "If I say I can't do some research because I want to be with my baby, they won't ask me a second time," she says. Despite these challenges, Markos has recently been employed, and she looks forward to continuing to be a positive asset for her institution. "I intend to encourage other young women to apply for an AWARD Fellowship," she says. "I plan to be a role model for other women."

Markos says she is very happy when her students understand what she has tried to transfer to them, and especially when they apply what she has taught them. She is committed to using her gifts and talents to contribute to her country, both now and in the next phases of her career. "I have a feeling that AWARD will influence not only my career, but also my day-to-day life."