



2008 AWARD Fellow
Filomena Dos Anjos

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Earning Feathers for Her Cap

In many ways, Filomena Dos Anjos, is a trailblazer. She is a leading Mozambican animal health scientist and was among the first AWARD Fellows to join the program back in 2008. Her work focuses on two areas. Firstly, improving the health of indigenous chicken in Mozambique through championing the use of a potent vaccine against the deadly, New Castle Disease. Secondly identifying new feed sources to raise the productivity of these chickens. This work has endeared her to women farmers who are the main keepers of indigenous chicken, which occupy a central role in Mozambican culture, and women’s livelihoods.

“Women struggling to put food on the table for the whole family is a great source of inspiration to me,” she says with conviction.

Indigenous chicken in Mozambique and across many parts of sub-Saharan African are slaughtered to make a meal for special guests, and are a source of earning income. For many rural households in Mozambique, poultry constitute the main source of animal protein, and culturally, they are a source of pride and prestige for the women who rear them. The larger and healthier the flocks, the better the perceived fortunes and esteem of their owner.

Dos Anjos’s deep connections and love for these birds began at an early age as she helped her mother tend to their chicken, ducks and rabbits. It was no surprise that she chose to study agriculture at university, where she specialized in animal health.

Dos Anjos is currently working with women and young farmers to improve productivity of indigenous chickens through adoption of the thermotolerant I-2 vaccine, brooding and feeding technologies. The vaccine has been a breakthrough in chicken production since it means farmers can better handle the stable vaccine and have better successes with inoculating their chickens and preventing flock losses which occur when the New Castle Disease strikes. These approaches will greatly contribute to increasing household food security and incomes derived from chicken farming.

“Personally I’ve grown a lot as a beneficiary of AWARD. As a result of my increased visibility and new professional qualifications, I have been invited to lead the development of a curriculum on animal science, at the Faculty of Veterinary, at the University of Eduardo Mondlane here in Maputo,” she elaborates. The new program will begin in February 2016.

Through the AWARD Fellowship, Dos Anjos says she was able to improve on her English, which greatly facilitated her studies and AWARD Fellowship program participation. Thanks to the Advanced Science Training, she was able to travel to Missouri, US to be based at Novus International. Novus is a leading developer of animal health and nutrition programs for the poultry, pork, beef, dairy, aquaculture, and related animal industries.



Filomena Dos Anjos examining indigenous chicken during the course of her research. (Photo credit: Carlos Litulo)

During her time at Novus, she was tasked with increasing the efficiency and profitability of poultry-production systems in Mozambique through the use of more cost-effective feed ingredients, such as pigeon peas and cowpeas.

She was also given the opportunity to work with scientists on an experiment that increased the percentage of cowpeas and pigeon peas into a chicken soybean feed. This feed includes vitamins, antioxidants, amino acids, and minerals. The potential benefit of this development is immense and could create increased demand and production of peas in Mozambique for use as chicken feed ingredients, creating a whole new value chain.

Dos Anjos says her motivation comes from the fact that the projects she is involved with, are benefiting women farmers in Mozambique.

AWARD is a catalyst for innovations with high potential to contribute to the prosperity and well-being of African smallholder farmers. We equip top women agricultural scientists across sub-Saharan Africa to accelerate agricultural gains by strengthening their research and leadership skills.