



2014 AWARD Fellow
Annet Abenakyo Mulema

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Position	Social Scientist (Gender)
Institution	International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)
Country	Uganda
PhD	Sociology and Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa State University, 2012
Mentor	Dr. Bettina Woll, Deputy Country Director, United Nations Development Programme, Ethiopia
Research Area	Mainstreaming of gender in the livestock value chain to increase production, income and nutrition among resource-poor farmers while conserving the natural resource base. Characterizing gendered constraints and intensification of integrated farming systems.

Annet Abenakyo Mulema saw firsthand the difficulties her parents endured on their livestock farm, such as losing thousands of chickens to disease. It was a desire to help solve their problems that fueled her interest in studying agriculture.

“I thought if I could learn more about agriculture, farm management, and diseases, I could better support farmers like my parents and offer solutions,” says Mulema.

For her BSc in Agriculture at Makerere University, Mulema specialized in agricultural extension and loved getting out into the field and meeting with farmers. She later obtained a fellowship to pursue a master’s degree in Management of Agro-ecological Knowledge and Socio-technical Change at Wageningen University in the Netherlands.

Mulema’s MSc research involved an investigation of efforts by Uganda’s National Agricultural Advisory Services to mainstream gender within staff capacity and extension activities. She found a large gap between policy and practice. “There was a national policy, but no gender budget, plan, gender specialist, qualified training, or meaningful set of activities to accomplish the task,” she explains.

Mulema applied the lessons and skills she had acquired in gender-responsive research to her next job with the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) in Kampala. She worked on three projects aimed at empowering rural communities to innovate, exploit market opportunities, and better manage their natural resources—with gender

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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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analysis and approaches as central components. Mulema led the collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data and co-facilitated training workshops on gender equity mainstreaming and community capacity building. She also ensured that gender was clearly articulated in the research design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

Armed with that practical experience, Mulema entered a PhD program in Sociology and Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University. It required enormous personal sacrifice, as she had to leave behind her husband and young baby. She also had to adjust to the rigors of a new, more theoretical system of thinking, incorporating sociological and human behavioral aspects to explain agricultural choices and outcomes.

Mulema's PhD research focused on a CIAT's sub-Saharan Africa Challenge Program to promote greater involvement of stakeholders in innovation platforms that could increase farmers' access to markets and research technologies. She looked at the structure and organization of innovation platforms in Uganda and Rwanda, analyzing their formation process, participation, and power dynamics. She examined how they evolved over time, and the extent to which women were included or integrated.

"Women participated in the platforms, but often felt their views were not heard or documented during the meetings," she notes. "However, there were some exceptions. In one platform in Rwanda, women were driving innovation and increasing their incomes, making banana-fiber bags for potatoes, which they sold to restaurants and hotels."

Mulema is currently a gender scientist with ILRI. She supports three programs, identifying tools and approaches to increase female participation in livestock value chains, as well as increasing their access to and control of resources. She also looks at how to improve the efficiency of integrated farming systems among smallholder farmers, and the development of household technologies to benefit both men and women.

"I use the gender lens to ensure that programs do not miss vital gender roles and differences in the ownership and control of production resources that affect family nutrition, income, food security, and vulnerability," she says.

Mulema wants to gain professional seniority and visibility, ultimately directing high-level research and policy decisions. As an AWARD Fellow, she plans to refine her science- and proposal-writing skills, and apply the leadership training to become a better manager, advocate, and mentor for others—especially women.