



2014 AWARD Fellow
Amenyé Mulwafu-Banda

Position	Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist
Institution	Land O' Lakes Inc.
Country	Malawi
BSc	Agriculture (Nutrition and Food Science), University of Malawi, 2008
Mentor	Dr. Agnes Mwangwela, Lecturer and Head of Department, Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR)
Research Area	Design of monitoring and evaluation systems and agriculture-related interventions, and development of proposals to benefit resource-poor farmers.

As a monitoring and evaluation specialist at Land O' Lakes, Mulwafu-Banda enjoys seeing less-privileged women in rural communities able to feed their children, thanks to her organization's interventions. "That sense of satisfaction is my primary payment."

Amenyé Mulwafu-Banda grew up in northern Malawi as the lastborn of eight children, and is thankful that her parents encouraged their offspring to continue with their education. Now, as a monitoring and evaluation specialist at Land O' Lakes, she enjoys seeing less-privileged women in rural communities making money and able to feed their children thanks to her organization's interventions. "That sense of satisfaction is my primary payment," she smiles.

After completing high school, Mulwafu-Banda considered becoming a lawyer to best serve people, but later developed an interest in agricultural science and nutrition. With a goal of contributing to poverty reduction in Malawi, she knew she wanted to work with poor communities. "I realized that the best approach was the one I took—agriculture and nutrition. I have no regrets; I know I'm in the right place."

Working as an M&E specialist enables Mulwafu-Banda to present agribusiness interventions using a value-chain approach. "I am working with smallholders in rice, cassava, poultry, and goat value chains," she explains. "We are encouraging them to adopt a business mindset during production. For a long time, they have just done subsistence farming. Our objective is to get them to sell their produce."

Mulwafu-Banda helps implement the program, tracking progress, and keeping the team focused on objectives. Reports are shared with donors and stakeholders. She finds it very satisfying to work on such an effective intervention.

"We are encouraging [smallholders] to adopt a business mindset during production. For a long time, they have just done subsistence farming. Our objective is to get them to sell their produce."



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.

AWARD is generously supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the United States Agency for International Development, and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa. For more information, visit www.awardfellowships.org

Currently on maternity leave with a brand new baby girl, Mulwafu-Banda is confident that her time as an AWARD Fellow will contribute toward making her more focused and proactive once she is back at work. "I know AWARD will help me attain professional visibility and unleash my potential," she says. She hopes to begin a master's program in either nutrition or a development-related field in the next few years.

Mulwafu-Banda sees the AWARD Fellowship as a breakthrough to her career path. "I am looking forward to reshaping my goals and enhancing my research skills," she enthuses. She believes the leadership skills she will gain as an AWARD Fellow will strengthen her interactions with resource-poor farmers, especially women. "With the training I will receive, I hope to combine my leadership and research skills with my background in nutrition, which will prepare me to design climate-smart programs that respond to community needs."

She plans to use her newfound skills to support the design and management of sustainable market-oriented enterprises, which is key to improving livelihoods and food security among resource-poor rural farmers, especially women. "If we are to develop in Malawi and improve household incomes, we need to be sure that we are responding to the needs of the people. I believe AWARD will help me to work better and smarter with communities."