



**2013 AWARD Fellow**  
**Faith Milkah Muniale**

<b>Position</b>	Programs Coordinator
<b>Institution</b>	Environmental Research Mapping and Information Systems in Africa, Nakuru
<b>Country</b>	Kenya
<b>BSc</b>	Wildlife Management, Moi University, Kenya, 2001
<b>Mentor</b>	Mary Gikungu, Head, Invertebrate Zoology Section Centre for Bee Biology and Pollination National Museums of Kenya

*Research area: Management and conservation of natural resources to promote sustainable development and improve livelihoods for rural communities.*

Faith Muniale is dedicated to helping rural Kenyan communities participate in and benefit from the rehabilitation of degraded forests, and arid and semi-arid lands. The Moi University graduate, who hopes to soon complete her MSc at Egerton University, credits her supportive parents with encouraging her to continue her studies, regardless of the discipline she chose. Muniale, a mother of three, looks forward to unleashing local potential to improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers, and promoting sustainable development through environmental conservation and proper management of natural resources.

“I’m working with the Ogiek people, Kenya’s last indigenous forest-dwelling community, whose ancestral land is the Mau Forest,” Muniale explains. “I’m looking at how they use their indigenous knowledge to cope with challenges brought about by climate change, among other things,” She conducts research, writes proposals, and holds focus groups in the community of 10,000 people. “I really enjoy working with people at the ground level.”

On regular visits to the Ogiek community, Muniale and her team have discovered that the hunter-gatherers need to adjust to the new environmental realities. “There is no more bushmeat to hunt, and very little fruit, so they need to adapt, but they haven’t embraced livestock farming. I am encouraging the adoption of beekeeping, the use of biogas, organic farming, agro-forestry, and other sustainable agricultural practices, all of which are aimed at improving livelihoods,” she continues.

Muniale is also interested in exploring the practicality of implementing a Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) scheme to rehabilitate degraded forests and conserve the existing ones. She hopes that it may improve land for agricultural production, leading to an increase in forest cover and a contribution to climate-change control.

Muniale delights when her project proposals receive funding, noting a recent success with a Mount Kenya

bio-climate project supporting community associations to improve their management of forests. She sees AWARD as the key to unlocking her potential as a researcher. "It will help me achieve my goals, and to bridge the gap between where I am and where I want to be. My time is now."

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*Muniale is one of a growing number of African women agricultural scientists who have won an AWARD Fellowship. 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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