



2018 AWARD Fellow
Theresia Jumanne Jumbe

Position	Lecturer, Food Technology, Nutrition, and Consumer Sciences
Institution	Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA)
Country	Tanzania
PhD	Human Nutrition, Michigan State University, 2015
Mentor	Professor Susan Nchimbi Msolla, Department of Crop Science and Horticulture, College of Agriculture, SUA
Research Area	Testing various interventions aimed at improving the nutritional status of different population groups using a household approach

At SUA, Jumbe serves as a postgraduate coordinator in the Department of Food Technology, Nutrition, and Consumer Sciences. She is also conducting research to test various interventions aimed at improving the nutrition of different population groups using a household approach.

Theresia Jumanne Jumbe understands the value of mentorship as she has benefited from teachers who took an interest in her education and career path. "Growing up, I wanted to become a medical doctor, because I had an interest in science," she recalls. When she did not get the required grades to enter medical school, her teacher advised her to reprioritize her choices. With this in mind, Jumbe applied for a Bsc in Home Economics and Human Nutrition. "Ever since, I have never regretted being in this field," she asserts.

After graduation, Jumbe was unable to find a job in her field, so she took a position at a microfinance institution, where she worked for four years. By this time, she was thinking of advancing her education by enrolling for a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree. She sought the counsel of her professor, who told her: "You do not need an MBA, you can do it at any time in your life! Do a master's that is specific to your interest." Heeding this advice, Jumbe applied for her master's in Human Nutrition and subsequently earned a doctorate in the same field. "I want to make sure that people understand that their food choices and lifestyle affect their well-being," she states.

At SUA, Jumbe serves as a postgraduate coordinator in the Department of Food Technology, Nutrition, and Consumer Sciences. Her duties involve reviewing postgraduate students' proposals, assigning them supervisors, and offering technical and social support. She is also conducting research to test various interventions aimed at improving the nutrition of different population groups using a household approach.

Jumbe believes that involving all household members in nutrition

“If you want to improve nutrition, have a population that is well-fed and healthy, you need to be able to influence policy.”



Jumbe is one of a growing number of women agricultural scientists who have won an AWARD Fellowship. AWARD works toward inclusive, agriculture-driven prosperity for the African continent by strengthening the production and dissemination of more gender-responsive agricultural research and innovation. We invest in scientists, research institutions, and agribusinesses to deliver sustainable, gender-responsive agricultural research and innovation.

The AWARD Fellowship is a career-development program that invests in top women agricultural scientists to ensure that confident, capable, and influential women are available to lead critical advances and innovations in the agricultural sector.

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interventions is the best way to inculcate good practices. “Most nutrition interventions focus only on women,” laments Jumbe. She explains that these interventions may fail because, as much as the woman understands the importance of good nutrition, her husband may not see the need to make dietary changes in the household. “Involving everyone in the household has resulted in improvements in the way people eat,” she adds. “When children know they need to eat a balanced meal, they will request a fruit.” Jumbe has received feedback from a man in the field who said: “I have asked my wife to prepare vegetables the way you taught us.” She has also encountered men who ask how they can help a pregnant woman who is vomiting. “If he knows what he could do, he could help his wife and even his daughter in future, because knowledge stays with people. In our group, we go back to communities to share research results—it is a requirement in our research design,” says Jumbe, underlining the importance of feedback.

For her PhD research, Jumbe examined the role of fatty acids in cognition and growth. “The most exciting part was when I realized that we have nutritious seeds—that contain fatty acids—that we do not use,” she says, citing pumpkin and sunflower seeds as an example. Jumbe has been involved in the development of the National Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plan and Nutritional Guidelines for Multi-Drug Resistant Tuberculosis. She has also been involved in developing various nutritional materials aimed at affecting behavioral change and raising awareness of issues related to food safety. As part of her community outreach, she has participated in a national radio program highlighting the importance of nutrition.

“If you want to improve nutrition, have a population that is well-fed and healthy, you need to be able to influence policy,” states Jumbe, sharing her career goals. She sees herself in a regional position where she can be instrumental in shaping policy on the continent. “To make changes in Africa, you need to be in a decision-making position, to decide what funds go into nutrition.”

One of the challenges Jumbe faced when she enrolled for her PhD studies in the U.S. was the advanced laboratory technology. “The technology was so new—It was the first time I was seeing gas chromatography!” she exclaims. This is a technique used in analytical chemistry to identify and quantify compounds in a mixture. “At first, I felt like I knew nothing, but this is something I later overcame. It helped me realize that we need to equip our laboratories better,” she says.

“The AWARD Fellowship will help nurture my leadership skills,” says Jumbe. She is confident that she will benefit from networking with other scientists and from the training in proposal writing. “I am going to share what I learn at AWARD and encourage others to apply for the fellowship,” she resolves. She would like to see her university partner with AWARD on training in leadership, interpersonal skills, and networking. Jumbe is confident that the skills she gains from AWARD will benefit her university. “If I am able to write a good proposal, it is my institution that is winning,” she concludes.