



AWARD Training

Enhancing Researchers' Capabilities,
Empowering Institutions' Leadership
Across Africa

November 2021

AWARD Training: Enhancing Researchers' Capabilities, Empowering Institutions' Leadership Across Africa

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Acronyms

AATF	African Agricultural Technology Foundation
AGP2	Agricultural Growth Program 2
ARD	Agricultural Research and Development
A-TEAM	AWARD -Trainers Embracing AWARD Mission
ATU	AWARD Training Unit
AWARD	African Women in Agricultural Research and Development
AWLA	Arab Women Leaders in Agriculture
BMGF	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
CDSF	Capacity Development Support Facility
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CGIAR GENDER Platform	CGIAR Generating Evidence and New Directions for Equitable Results Platform
CIMMYT	International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
ICBA	International Center for Biosaline Agriculture
ICRAF	World Agroforestry
ICRISAT	International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IITA	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institute
IWMI	International Water Management Institute
LEPARD	Leadership Program for Agricultural Research and Development
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MOW	Mentoring Orientation Workshop
RUFORUM	Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
TRG	Training Resource Group Inc
WAfriCLP	Programme ouest-africain de leadership climatique pour les femmes/ West African Climate Leadership Program for Women
WAVE	Central and West African Virus Epidemiology project
WLMC	Women's Leadership and Management Course
WWCA	WAVE Women Career Accelerator



Preface

Africa's agricultural sector presents an exciting opportunity for sustaining the continent's economic growth, and the transformative potential of agricultural research and development (ARD) for the African continent is well-appreciated. The continent's development blueprint, Agenda 2063¹, highlights ARD as a significant driver of the continent's economic and livelihood transformation. The African Development Bank has identified agriculture as the continent's second-largest industrial sector by value. The World Bank estimates that the value of Africa's agriculture will reach USD 800 billion by 2030.

However, megatrends such as increased population, climate change, rapid urbanization, and the COVID-19 pandemic continue to strain the continent's development, calling for an urgent need to revolutionize its ARD.

For sustainable and long-term transformation and given the critical role of ARD for Africa's development, the continent cannot afford to outsource its agricultural innovation needs. Furthermore, the recent growing momentum on transforming the continent's food system has highlighted the need to boost agricultural production and strengthen its agricultural research and development².

Strengthening African agricultural innovation capacity is imperative, beginning with the ARD research systems. The African ARD research systems present unique capacity-building needs manifested by aging senior researchers on the continent. A 2017 study³ recorded that "without adequate succession strategies and training, significant knowledge gaps will emerge" in Africa's agricultural research.

The aging agricultural research workforce calls for urgent and intensified investments to increase African researchers' numbers, enhance their experiences

and strengthen ARD institutions to deliver on their mandate. That is why African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) is working to ensure that African researchers and research institutions can lead and deliver agricultural innovations that respond to Africa's unique challenges, especially in the context of the megatrends.

Based on the premise to make available a pool of trainers in the African continent, AWARD invested significant resources in the recruitment, retention, and development of a high-quality talent pool of African trainers on the assumption that this team would outlive AWARD and build capacity throughout the broader African ARD system. AWARD now boasts of a pool of 34 highly skilled trainers currently providing training services on the African continent and beyond.

Over the past decade, AWARD has gained a reputation for designing and delivering unique learning experiences to develop the talent of African scientists and empower the leadership of scientific institutions across the continent to pursue and deliver cutting-edge ARD.

To holistically support these research institutions and foster inclusion, AWARD has designed programs for staff at different phases in their careers. We build the capacity of emerging, mid-career, and senior leaders and researchers, considering their respective skills and knowledge needs.

Since our founding, AWARD has designed various learning programs on five main themes including mentoring, leadership, science skills, gender in agriculture, and training-of-trainers. We have enjoyed splendid partnerships with various institutions and stakeholders to deliver face-to-face customized learning experiences that have been positively received and described as exceedingly rewarding.

¹<https://au.int/en/agenda2063/aspirations>

²https://sc-fss2021.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/FSS_Brief_Policy_Options_Food_Systems_Transformation_Africa.pdf

³<https://www.asti.cgiar.org/publications/ssa-synthesis-report-2017>

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the AWARD Training Unit (ATU) had, over a 12-year period, designed 17 courses and delivered 293 training events to 7,569 people from 274 institutions across 66 countries.

While 2020 was a remarkably challenging year with the pandemic massively disrupting systems and livelihoods, it presented an opportunity for AWARD to rethink and redesign its training initiative. The challenge posed by the pandemic saw us design 11 additional courses and adopt a blended training approach through the use of virtual platforms. We also developed training courses in French and increased our pool of trainers with new experts from francophone Africa, enhancing our capacity to deliver training in French.

We are also proud to have developed new partnerships that bolstered our interventions and increased our global footprint. Underpinned by the refreshed AWARD Strategy 2017-2022, the ATU intentionally explored innovative approaches to deliver on our partnerships and saw us forge new partnerships with six organizations.

We are excited to enter a new phase, taking with us learnings from the pandemic and our strengthened capacity to deliver both virtual and face-to-face training.



Section one: Building a world-class training unit

"If you are planning for one year, grow rice; If you are planning for twenty years grow trees; If you are planning for centuries, grow people" ~A Chinese proverb



Our learnings have revealed that Africa's agricultural research workforce and decision makers have a tremendous appetite for enhanced leadership, mentoring, research, and technical gender skills⁴. The need for enhanced capacity demands a robust investment in designing and delivering a training strategy to scale the AWARD learning experiences.

Through its ATU, which is tasked with sustainably and efficiently providing training services, AWARD has invested in building a pool of experienced professionals, subject experts, and process facilitators in leadership, mentoring science, and gender. The team is committed to realizing the AWARD vision of gender-responsive agriculture-driven prosperity in Africa. Known as AWARD -Trainers Embracing AWARD Mission (A-TEAM), this international pool of trainers contributes to the success of this vision by designing and delivering bespoke learning experiences for a diverse target audience, including French-speaking professionals across the continent.

AWARD prides itself as a learning institution, placing tremendous emphasis on continuous monitoring

and review to optimize the delivery of its training initiatives. We invest in enhancing the capacity of the training team through our training-of-trainers program and refresher courses for new and existing trainers. One of AWARD's long-standing partners, the Training Resource Group (TRG) Inc., has been instrumental in boosting the capacity of the AWARD trainers.

We have 34 trainers from 12 countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

The ATU unit has, to date, designed a total of 28 training courses, 17 of which require face-to-face delivery and 11 that are delivered virtually. Our training courses fall into five broad themes including mentoring, leadership, science skills, gender in agriculture, and training-of-trainers.

We also pride ourselves in our ability to develop training packages comprising different courses for, face-to-face, virtual delivery or a hybrid delivery depending on our partners' needs.



34 members
of the **A-TEAM**
from **12** countries

⁴<https://awardfellowships.org/our-learnings/a-decade-of-advancing-inclusive-agricultural-research-the-award-story/>



Figure 1: AWARD Training themes



Figure 2: AWARD Training footprint

Table 1: AWARD Training courses for face-to-face delivery

	Course title	Target audience	Level	Course duration
Mentoring Programs Supporting and guiding young professionals in career development	Mentoring Orientation Workshop (Includes technical backstopping/coaching)	Women and men	Emerging and mid-level	5 days
	Programme de l'Atelier d'Orientation du Mentorat	Women and men	Emerging and mid-level	5 days
Leadership Series Strengthening leadership and managerial effectiveness	Women's Leadership and Management Course	Women only	Senior	7 days
	Cours de Formation de Leadership et de Gestion des Femmes	Women only	Senior	7 days
	Enhanced Negotiation Skills for Women	Women only	Senior	3.5 days
	Leadership Program for Agricultural Research and Development (LEPARD)	Women and men	Mid and senior level	5 days
	Programme de Leadership Pour La Recherche et Le Développement Agricoles (LEPARD)	Women and men	Mid and senior level	5 days
Leadership Skills for Career Development	Women and men	Emerging	5 days	
Science Skills Series Writing gender-responsive research proposals and publications	Scientific Writing and Publishing Skills Course	Women and men	Masters level and above	5 days
	Research Proposal Writing Skills Course	Women and men	Masters level and above	5 days
	Cours sur les Compétences scientifiques d'AWARD pour le programme One Planet Fellowship	Women and men	Masters level and above	7 days
Gender in Agriculture Series Integrating gender in research	Why Gender Matters	Women and men	Senior management	Half day
	Gender Responsive Agricultural Research Course	Women and men	Researchers	5 days
Training of Trainers Equipping trainers with cutting-edge training and facilitation skills	Training Mastery Course	Women and men		5 days
Customized/abridged Courses with components from our different series based on clients' needs	TOT Course for Online Facilitation	Women and men		
	Gender in Agriculture Course for Senior Managers and Researchers	Women and men		
	The 21st Century Scientist: Leadership Skills for Global Impact	Women and men		

Table 2: AWARD Training courses for virtual delivery

	Course title	Target audience	Level	Course duration
Mentoring Programs Supporting and guiding young professionals in career development	Programme de l'Atelier d'Orientation du Mentorat			7 weeks
	Mentoring Orientation Workshop			7 weeks
Leadership Series Strengthening leadership and managerial effectiveness	Programme de Leadership Pour La Recherche et Le Développement Agricoles (LEPARD) – Virtuel	Women and men	Mid and senior level	8 weeks
	Leadership Program for Agricultural Research and Development (LEPARD)	Women and men	Mid and senior level	8 weeks
	Special Leadership and Negotiations Skills Course	Women and men	Mid and senior level	8 weeks
	Programme de la formation aux compétences en leadership et en négociation pour les femmes (Virtuel)	Women only	Mid and senior level	8 weeks
	Women Leading in Times of Crisis – Virtual Course	Women only	Mid and senior level	4 weeks
	Special Virtual AWARD Women's Leadership and Management Series	Women only		4 weeks
AWARD Leadership Program for Emerging African Women in STEM	Early and mid-career women in STEM	Mid and senior level	4 weeks	
Science Skills Series Writing gender-responsive research proposals and publications	Forum scientifique d'AWARD – Virtuel			7 weeks
Gender in Agriculture Series Integrating gender in research	Gender in Agriculture Course for Senior Managers			4 hours

Voices from participants of a virtual leadership course



Dr. Susan Chomba

*Former Program Manager of ICRAF's Regreening Africa Program
Kenya*

You can't go wrong with AWARD's course on women's leadership and management; it is worth your one-week time, trust me (I had reservations as well and wondered why I was committing a full week of my time). It helps you see yourself in a different light (understanding your own strengths and shortcomings—which we all have) and how to harness your strengths to achieve what you want without leaving blood on the floor! It also helps you understand where other people you are working with are coming from (both in terms of their personalities and interests) and therefore lead them to their goal. It sounds obvious, and perhaps you already have a natural feel and way of doing this (otherwise you wouldn't be where you are today with your excellent achievements) but trust me, the course will make you breathe with ease when dealing with most work-related challenges.



Gloria Adeyiga

*Research Scientist, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
Ghana*

I always thought leadership was 'genetic'-to realize you can actually harness your strength and weaknesses to a great revelation.



Khadija Begum

*Gender and Youth Specialist, IWMI
Pakistan*

This is the first training that purely focuses on myself. I am seeing my weaknesses and strength. I am also finding tools and techniques to improve myself. In every session I got the energy from the trainers. Sawubona AWARD Team!



Dr. Esther Achandi

*Post Doctoral Fellow-Gender, ILRI
Burundi*

Thanks for giving this course a personal touch- each one of you. And the trainers for being relatable and down-to-earth. You have made the truths sink in.

Section two: Threading the needle in the face of COVID-19

"When it comes to eLearning, content means everything. If the content is not masterfully designed, all the rest will just go down the drain." ~ Christopher Pappas



The COVID-19 pandemic has played a significant role in accelerating the uptake of innovative ways to deliver our learning programs and evolution.

Since our founding, AWARD has primarily effectively delivered its courses in in-person mode. The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic caused a series of global shifts in the different spheres of social, political, labor, and economic life. The lockdowns and restrictions led learning institutions and organizations to rapidly shift from in-person to online learning in response to the pandemic. AWARD was no exception. The year 2020 necessitated greater agility and adaptability in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This situation necessitated a rapid response, which saw us redesign our learning programs and mode of delivery to fulfill our obligations while still delivering quality learning experiences. We invested in designing a blended training approach, which involved synchronous and asynchronous learning. We developed a virtual learning portal, trained AWARD trainers to deliver virtual learning programs, and adopted new ways of engaging participants spread across the globe.

While this shift was a challenge initially, it has been the most impactful in terms of reach. We have had the advantage of "meeting" our target trainees at their locations in their comfort zones.

While the pandemic significantly slowed down some trends, it also accelerated other trends, such as virtual spaces. Since the onset of the pandemic, we have designed 11 new learning programs (see table 2 in section 1), delivered 19 virtual training events, reaching 386 researchers and leaders from 34 countries in Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia, and North America. This number of people would not have been reached within the same period in the absence of the pandemic, which has increased our capacity to deliver virtual and face-to-face training events, reaching 386 researchers and leaders from 34 countries in Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia, and North America. This number of people would not have been reached within the same period in the absence of the pandemic, which has increased our capacity to deliver virtual and face-to-face training.

Recognizing the need to continue supporting our stakeholders during the unprecedented times, AWARD Training organized a special webinar series and delivered webinars on two topics: "Mental resilience for researchers in ARD⁵"; and "Leading in Times of Crisis: Strategies for regaining momentum to thrive in complexity. These webinars were attended by 397 participants from 20 countries in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, and the United States of America.

 **19** Number of virtual training events conducted in 2020 and 2021

 **386** Number of people trained

 **34** Number of countries represented

⁵<https://awardfellowships.org/webinar/mental-resilience-for-researchers/?target=archive>



Section Three: Partnering for Impact

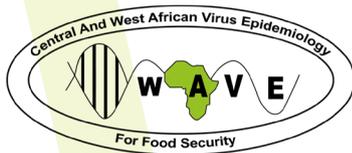
"It is the long history of humankind (and animal kind, too) that those who learned to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed." ~ Charles Darwin



AWARD Training, underpinned by the refreshed AWARD strategy 2017-2022, continues to intentionally explore synergy with various partners, to scale up our commitment to African ARD. We forged different partnerships to increase our outcomes and strengthen our capacity to deliver cutting-edge learning programs.

AWARD Training has worked with various partners to equip institutions and their researchers with the skills and capacity to design research agendas that drive sustainable and inclusive growth.

Central and West African Virus Epidemiology (WAVE) project



We designed a leadership program for the BMGF-funded WAVE project to strengthen the scientific, leadership, and mentoring skills of African women scientists working within WAVE. The program, WAVE Women Career Accelerator (WWCA), equipped 17 women scientists from Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Togo with the skills to optimize their contribution while taking up leadership and supporting emerging women scientists to grow in their careers.

RUFORUM

AWARD shares RUFORUM's vision of a vibrant agricultural sector linked to African universities. It strongly supports its mission of strengthening the capacities of universities to foster innovations responsive to the demands of smallholder farmers.

AWARD and RUFORUM have benefited from a strategic alliance to advance Africa's researchers' capacity-building agenda and unlock the potential of scientific innovation for agriculture-driven inclusive growth and prosperity. This partnership has trained more than 348 agricultural leaders and scientists on gender-responsive ARD, including 58 deans and principals from RUFORUM member universities.

Agricultural Growth Program 2 (AGP2) in Ethiopia

AWARD partnered with the AGP2, supported by the Capacity Development Support Facility (CDSF). We designed a gender in agriculture course for leaders and researchers and trained 37 participants from different institutions in Ethiopia.



**CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT
SUPPORT FACILITY**



Programme ouest-africain de leadership climatique pour les femmes (WAfriCLP)

We worked with WAfriCLP, a climate change program funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), to design and deliver a series of training courses in leadership, science, and communication skills for its female researchers. A total of 18 participants from seven francophone countries—Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Senegal, and Togo—participated in the 14-day customized virtual training program.



GENDER Platform

CGIAR GENDER Platform

We are partnering with the CGIAR GENDER Platform to provide leadership and mentoring training for 23 mid-career gender researchers to enable them to enhance their influence and foster institutional culture change toward gender-responsive ARD.



The International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA)

Recognizing AWARD's experience in running fellowship programs, we collaborated with ICBA, based in the United Arab Emirates, for a fellowship program funded by BMGF for women researchers to secure leadership roles by encouraging gender-responsive working cultures and creating platforms to showcase their intellect, capability, and contribution. The Arab Women Leaders in Agriculture (AWLA) fellowship is for women researchers in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.



African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF)

After developing a comprehensive gender strategy, AATF asked AWARD to train its staff in Kenya and Nigeria offices on gender in agriculture. AWARD trained 39 leaders and researchers to appreciate the role of gender in agriculture and understand how to integrate gender in all aspects of a project cycle.

Partner Spotlight: Annual collaboration with CGIAR centers to deliver leadership courses

The AWARD Women's Leadership and Management Course (WLMC) was initially designed and launched under the CGIAR Gender and Diversity Program, now known as the Gender, Diversity, and Inclusion Program.⁶ This course was designed specifically for CGIAR women leaders and researchers to enhance their leadership skills and widen the pipeline for women in leadership in the CGIAR.

At a time when AWARD leadership courses targeted women only, repeated feedback from our partners indicated that for a real paradigm shift, AWARD's efforts to develop leadership that guarantees gender-responsive ARD must target and involve all staff, irrespective of their gender. This feedback and demand motivated us to create a course targeting women and men in leadership positions in ARD. In 2014, AWARD designed and delivered a leadership program for male and female leaders and researchers in the ARD sector. AWARD partnered with CGIAR centers to pilot this five-day program known as the Leadership Program for Agricultural Research and Development (LEPARD).

AWARD, as a preferred service provider, has continued to annually deliver its renowned WLMC and the LEPARD courses to CGIAR and other international centers. Over the last decade, AWARD has delivered 17 training events to the CGIAR institutes, trained 364 CGIAR staff, building a strong network of women and men leaders supporting each other and influencing ARD across the world.

364

Total number of participants

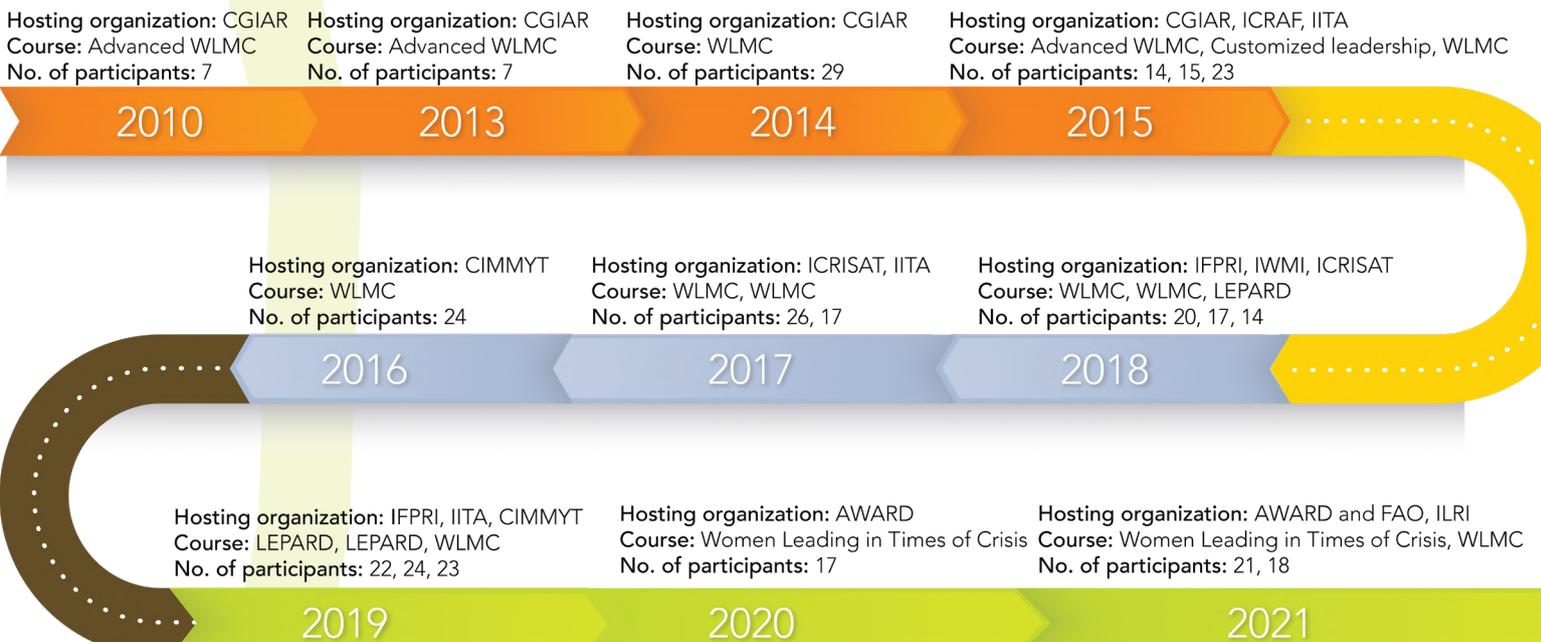


Figure 4: Leadership courses hosted and delivered for CGIAR centers and other international research organizations

⁶<https://www.cgiar.org/how-we-work/accountability/gender-diversity-and-inclusion/>

The Business Model Canvas

<p>Key Partners </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Financial institutions (MFIs, Cooperative bank)- Ethiopia Seed Enterprise- Small holder farmers- Chemical Suppliers (Makabu, Mekemba)- Cooperative Unions	<p>Key Activities </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Farmer Mobilization- training	<p>Value Proposition</p>
<p>Structure</p>	<p>Resources </p>	



Section Four: What we are Learning

"That is what learning is. You suddenly understand something you've understood all your life, but in a new way." ~ Doris Lessing



Strategic partnerships are critical. With virtual delivery being relatively new to AWARD, we had to enlist external expertise to design virtual courses and build the capacity of trainers and staff.

Flexibility is not just a priority but is also paramount as a guiding principle. While face-to-face training has been AWARD's niche, our agility and positive outlook to change steered us to design and deliver new impactful courses in the face of the raging pandemic. Our skill and flexibility in seeing potential opportunities saw us reach a larger number of people with our training events. We delivered multiple courses concurrently, ultimately achieving many more outcomes at a lower cost.

Demand-led re-evaluation of staffing needs and capacity is crucial. The dynamic job requirements require organizations to re-evaluate job functions.

We have learned to restructure staff engagement in line with virtual delivery needs and priorities, supporting our team to access additional skill sets to enable optimal performance.

Intentional assessment of staff mental health and well-being is a necessity. Design and delivery of courses for virtual delivery require more time compared to face-to-face delivery. The need to invest more time to respond to the situation imposed by the pandemic strained work-life balance for staff.

Virtual courses are more expensive at the outset. The design of virtual courses is more time and cost-intensive. Virtual courses require careful design to maximize participants' engagement and interaction, which mainly calls for innovative ways of delivery.

The recent growing momentum to transform Africa's food systems has boosted the demand for programs that strengthen researchers' capabilities. AWARD's ATU is strategically positioned to scale our interventions based on our experience and track record. Studies⁷ show that Africa contributes less than one percent of the global research output. Deliberate investments in supporting African researchers to document and publish their research can positively change this statistic.

Scientific competence alone is not enough to influence ARD. There is a need for capable, influential leaders with the appropriate skills and networks to negotiate and lead critical advances and transform Africa's food systems. That is why AWARD is scaling up its investments in enhancing leadership and mentoring potential among the researchers.

We have established a learning culture, intentionally evaluating, learning, and adjusting our interventions based on our stakeholders' needs and outcomes of our interventions. We continue to build a strong monitoring, evaluation, and learning unit to enhance our listening, learning, and leveraging.

⁷<https://www.elsevier.com/connect/africa-generates-less-than-1-of-the-worlds-research-data-analytics-can-change-that>





African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) works toward inclusive, agriculture-driven prosperity for Africa by strengthening the production and dissemination of more gender-responsive agricultural research and innovation. We invest in African scientists and institutions so that they can deliver agricultural innovations that better respond to the needs and priorities of a diversity of women and men across Africa's agricultural value chains.

Learn more at www.awardfellowships.org

AWARD thanks all its donors and partners that support its work across the African continent. More information about AWARD's partners is available:

<https://awardfellowships.org/our-partners/>

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