

# **Gender Responsive Agriculture Systems Policy**

**2023 AWARD Policy Fellows**



# About Gender Responsive Agriculture Systems Policy (GRASP) Fellowship

The Gender Responsive Agriculture Systems Policy (GRASP) Fellowship is a career development program that targets mid-career African women in the policy field to catalyze the design and implementation of gender-responsive agricultural policies across Africa. Funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Fellowship is implemented by African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD).

The second cohort of the GRASP Fellowship comprises 50 Policy Fellows, bringing the total number of Fellows in the Fellowship to 98 policy practitioners from 12 African countries.

The second Cohort of AWARD Policy Fellows are from six anglophone and francophone countries: Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Mozambique, Rwanda, and Senegal. The Fellows are drawn from 39 diverse organizations, including the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and government agencies.

[www.awardfellowships.org](http://www.awardfellowships.org)





**Carine Alexandra Marlyne Sédogo**  
**Research Engineer**  
**INERA**  
**Burkina Faso**

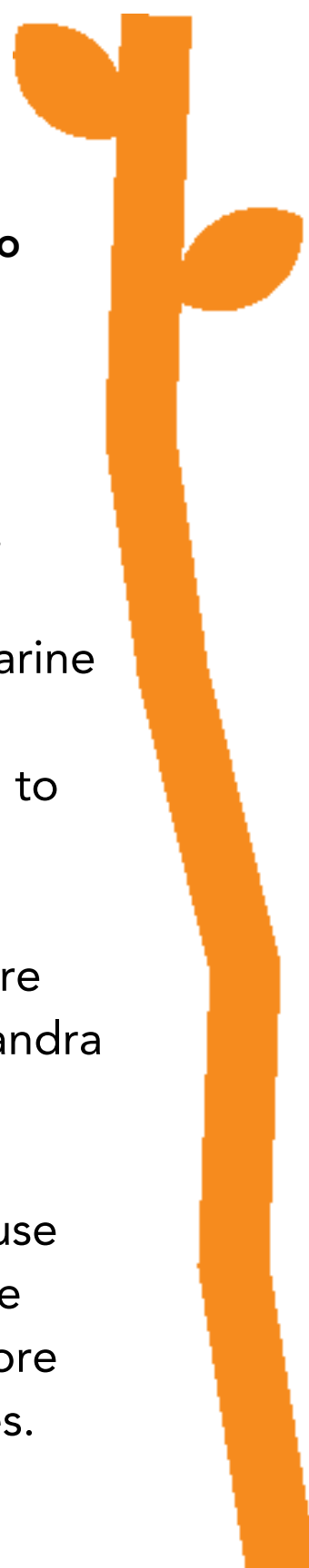
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**Commercialization and transformation in Burkina Faso are often women's jobs. Unfortunately, women have limited access to credit and often lack knowledge and techniques for their activities.**

As a Research Engineer at INERA, Carine analyses the profitability of the technologies developed and offered to producers by the institute. She is particularly interested in agricultural processing and marketing, which were the focus themes of her thesis. Alexandra sees the GRASP Fellowship as an opportunity to explore the nexus of policies and her technical work and use this knowledge to develop innovative ideas to help producers generate more income from processing technologies.





A black and white portrait of Julienne Tiendrebeogo, a woman with short, dark, curly hair, wearing a dark, patterned top and a white and dark striped scarf. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is blurred.

**Julienne Tiendrebeogo**  
Hydrogeologist  
Ministry of Water and Sanitation  
Burkina Faso

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**When people realize that you have the required skills, they set aside their prejudices and forget that you are a woman.**

Julienne is a seasoned hydrogeologist, having held senior positions in the Ministry of Water and Sanitation in Burkina Faso for four years. She is primarily interested in the role of water in rural development, inspired by experiences that demonstrated the possibilities of agricultural development in desert areas. By participating in the GRASP Fellowship, she hopes to acquire skills that enable her to leverage policy to replicate successful water management examples in the Sahel.





A black and white portrait of Kadidia Dao Doro, a smiling woman with dark skin. She is wearing a white headwrap with a knot and a patterned headband. Her top has vertical stripes and a ruffled neckline. The background is blurred, showing an outdoor setting with trees and a building.

Kadidia Dao Doro  
Agronomist  
The Permanent Secretariat for the Coordination of  
Agricultural Sector Policies  
Burkina Faso  
2023 AWARD Policy Fellow

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**Collaborating with agricultural producers has given me a useful experience. It will help to elaborate agricultural policies that consider their real needs.**

Kadidia wants to use her field experience to contribute to formulating better agricultural policies. She recently joined the Department responsible for agricultural sectoral policy issues at the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal and Fisheries Resources. During her career, she has also developed an interest in gender issues and hopes to deepen her knowledge through the GRASP Fellowship.





Lizèta Ouedraogo  
Gender and Nutrition Specialist  
Ministry of Agriculture  
Burkina Faso

2023 AWARD Policy Fellow

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**I am convinced that working with experienced individuals from various fields will broaden my horizons.**

As a gender specialist, Lizèta put her expertise at the service of development stakeholders and partners in several areas before specializing in nutrition. With the West Africa Food System Resilience Program (PRSA), a sub-regional organization that she recently joined, Lizèta works on food and nutritional security projects. As an AWARD Policy Fellow, she would like to strengthen her knowledge of agricultural policies, particularly on the role of gender-sensitive policies in achieving food security.







**Mariam Ouattara**  
**Senior Agricultural Technician**  
**Provincial Directorate of Agriculture**  
**Burkina Faso**

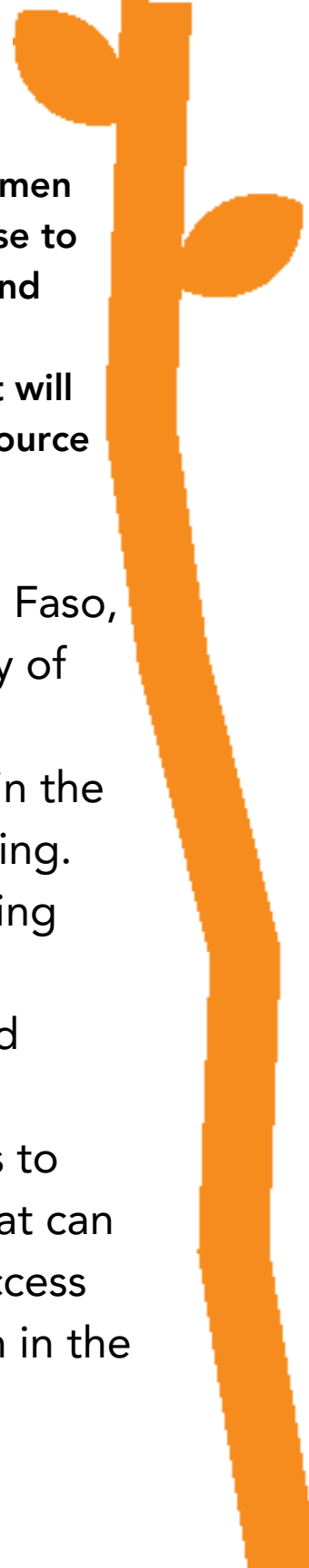
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Once the farming season ends, women and young people have nothing else to do. If we can give them the skills and the means to transform what they produce during the rainy season, it will keep them busy and give them a source of revenue.

Originally from the south-west of Burkina Faso, Mariam has been working for the Ministry of Agriculture since 2009, after training in agronomy and working for several years in the private sector, particularly in rice processing. She trains and advises producers on making farming more profitable, supervises and evaluates agricultural extension tools, and analyses data monitoring agents collect. Through the GRASP Fellowship, she aims to gain skills on how to influence policies that can help improve conditions for women to access arable land or enhance their participation in the processing of agricultural products.





A black and white portrait of Salimata Pousga, a woman with her hair in intricate braids, wearing a patterned shawl and large beaded earrings. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is softly blurred, showing what appears to be a palm tree and some foliage.

**Salimata Pousga**  
**Research Officer**  
**International Center for Research and Development**  
**on Livestock in Subhumid Zones (CIRDES)**  
**Burkina Faso**  
**2023 AWARD Policy Fellow**

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**As a Research Professor, I am keen to bring the subject of animal husbandry into the conversation. An essential sub-sector of agriculture, it is often overlooked in discussions around agricultural policy.**

The daughter of a livestock farmer, Pousga dreamt of a career as a Livestock Engineer. Her passion for animal science led her to study at leading universities in Senegal and Sweden, thanks to scholarships that rewarded her excellence. Now a Senior Lecturer in Animal Reproduction and Nutrition, she devotes her time to teaching and research. For Pousga, benefiting from the GRASP initiative is an opportunity to restore livestock farming to its rightful place in agricultural policy discussions.



A black and white portrait of Vanessa Kabore, a woman with short dark hair pulled back, wearing glasses and large hoop earrings. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. She is wearing a light-colored collared shirt under a darker jacket. The background is blurred, showing an indoor setting with a lamp and some furniture.

**Vanessa Kabore**  
**Consultant**  
**International Institute of Water and Environmental**  
**Engineering (2iE)**  
**Burkina Faso**

**2023 AWARD Policy Fellow**

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**As a young female engineer,  
I often supervise older men.  
Establishing proper  
guidelines can be a  
challenge. My way of dealing  
with it is to lead by example.**

Inspired and encouraged by her mother, a Rural Engineer, Vanessa became involved in rural development. After attaining a Master's degree in Civil and Hydraulic Engineering, she worked as an independent consultant for companies and rural development projects. She aims to consider rural women's needs when formulating and implementing agricultural projects. Through the GRASP Fellowship, she hopes to improve her leadership skills, expand her network, and develop her young career.





A black and white portrait of Halimata Sawadogo, a Black woman with short, dark, braided hair. She is wearing black-rimmed glasses and large, circular hoop earrings. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. She is wearing a patterned shawl or jacket over a dark top. The background is blurred, showing some foliage and a building.

Halimata Sawadogo  
Data Services Expert  
IIAkvo Foundation  
Burkina Faso

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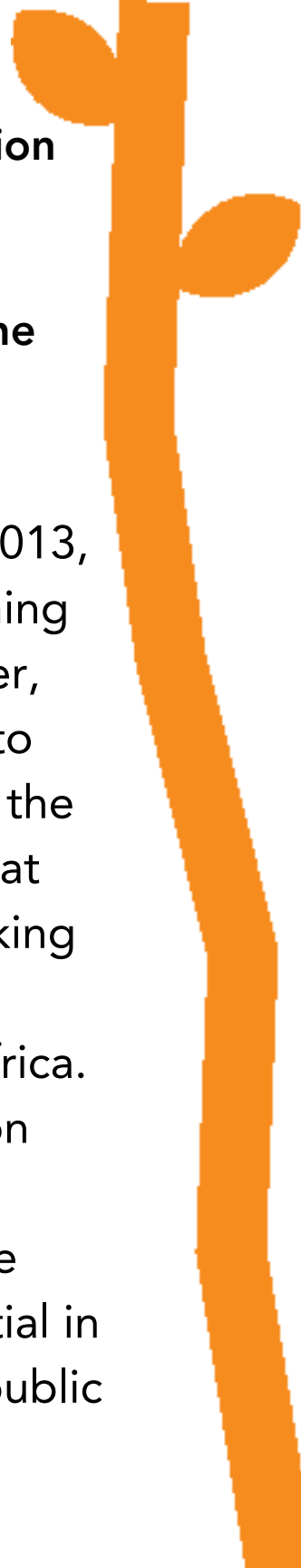
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**Data, monitoring, and evaluation are vital to developing good public policy for agriculture, especially in rural areas. It is the best way to learn from your mistakes and improve.**

At the start of her university studies in 2013, Halimata did not imagine herself becoming a statistician. Still, training as an engineer, statistician, and economist allowed her to find her path. As a daughter of farmers, the young engineer now puts her expertise at the service of rural communities by working as an expert in Data Services with the international organization Akvo West Africa. Halimata focuses mainly on the collection and analysis of data in the fields of agriculture, environment, and water. She believes data and monitoring are essential in developing practical, gender-sensitive public policies.







Servienne Segbo  
Agricultural Economist  
Director of Agriculture, Animal and Fisheries  
Resources  
Burkina Faso

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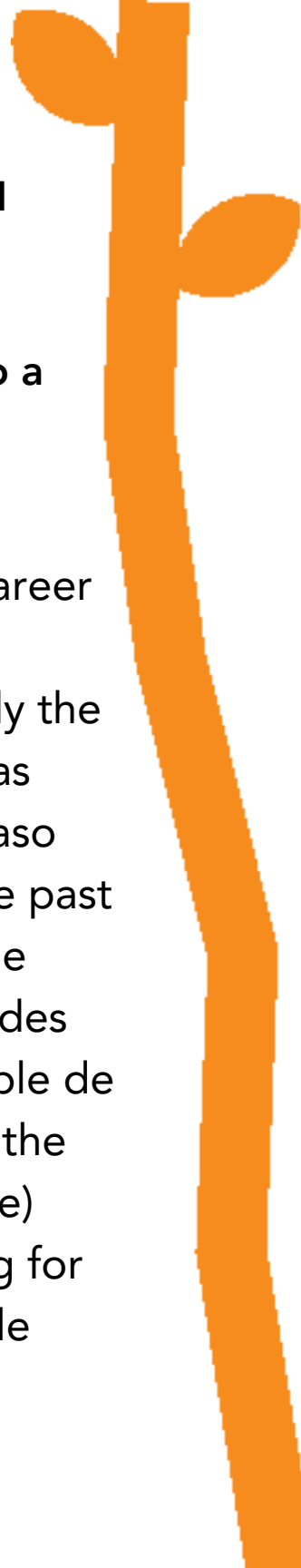
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**As an Agricultural Economist, I am interested in technologies and policies that promote profitable agriculture. It is also a way to help my uncles and Burkinabe producers.**

Servienne never planned to pursue a career in agriculture. Yet, she became Burkina Faso's first female soil engineer to study the formation and evolution of soils. She has been helping implement the Burkina Faso Government's agricultural policy for the past three years. Servienne has also been the Executive Secretary of the Association des Femmes Pour le Developpement Durable de l'Agriculture (Women's Association for the Sustainable Development of Agriculture) since 2020 and is committed to fighting for the cause of women through sustainable development.





Laetitia Rahamata  
Chairperson  
Consortium of Leading Rural Women's  
Organizations in Burkina Faso  
Burkina Faso

2023 AWARD Policy Fellow

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**As a consortium, we aim to conduct nationwide research on women in agriculture, and I believe this Fellowship will contribute to my ability to lead the study.**

Laetitia strives to help women in Burkina Faso understand their land ownership rights and obtain access to land. To help support her goal of attaining improved living conditions for women, she is the chairperson of a consortium of 27 rural women leaders' organizations. Comprising over 100,000 women members, the consortium aims to acquire land security for rural and peri-urban women. Laetitia believes the GRASP Fellowship will offer her significant learning opportunities in developing projects that will help transform the lives of rural women working in agriculture.







**Debir Belay**  
**Researcher**  
**South Agricultural Research Institute**  
**Ethiopia**

**2023 AWARD Policy Fellow**

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**The Fellowship's focus on gender and policy topics makes it highly relevant to me because I want to empower rural women and ensure they can benefit from research-based solutions in animal breeding.**

As a researcher in animal breeding and genetics, Debir develops technologies and breeding practices to support households and ensure food security in rural areas. Since 2009, she has served at the Southern Agricultural Research Institute, a government research center in the Southern Regional State of Ethiopia. Her experience includes community-based breeding, where she focuses on implementing participatory and easy-to-use techniques for farmers. As an AWARD Policy Fellow, she aims to acquire knowledge and skills that will allow her to identify and address the factors that limit women's decision-making in farming and livestock activities.





A black and white portrait of Genet Asgedom, a woman with short, dark, wavy hair, smiling at the camera. She is wearing a dark-colored collared shirt and a large hoop earring. The background is blurred, showing some vertical light patterns.

**Genet Asgedom**  
**Monitoring, Evaluation, and Knowledge**  
**Management Officer,**  
**International Labour Organization**  
**Ethiopia**  
**2023 AWARD Policy Fellow**

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**During my field trips, I realized there was much to do to help our brothers and sisters who are short of jobs in rural areas. Fortunately, we also have the solution right there, in agriculture.**

Genet has spent more than a decade working on development projects in rural areas, including projects on food security, livelihood, rural agriculture, and youth and women empowerment. After serving in various international organizations, she recently joined the International Labour Organization in Addis Ababa as a monitoring, evaluation, and knowledge management officer. There, she supports projects in the agribusiness sector, focusing on self-employment and job opportunities. As an AWARD Policy Fellow, Genet aims to acquire the relevant skills and knowledge to explore and create more opportunities for landless youth and women in agriculture.





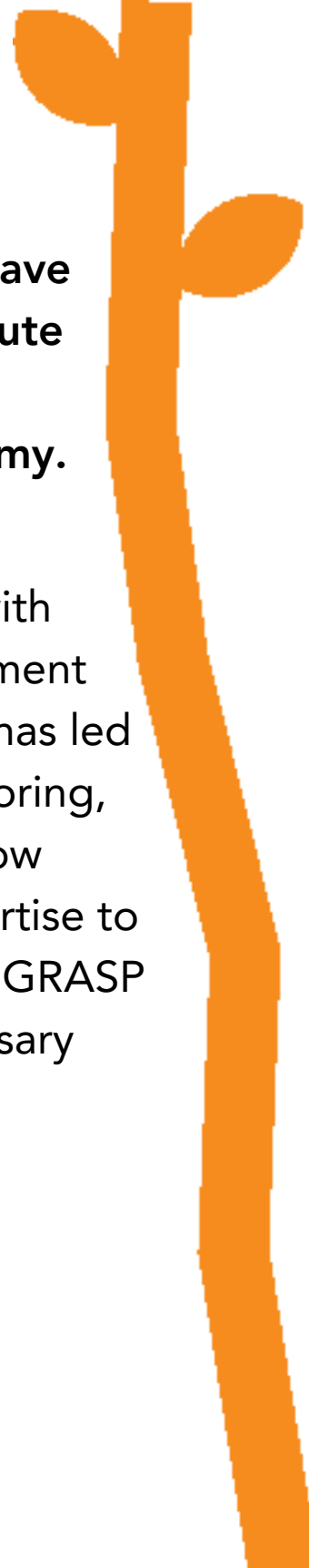
**Kalkidan Yimer**  
**Gender and Inclusion Program Officer**  
**Save The Children International**  
**Ethiopia**  
**2023 AWARD Policy Fellow**

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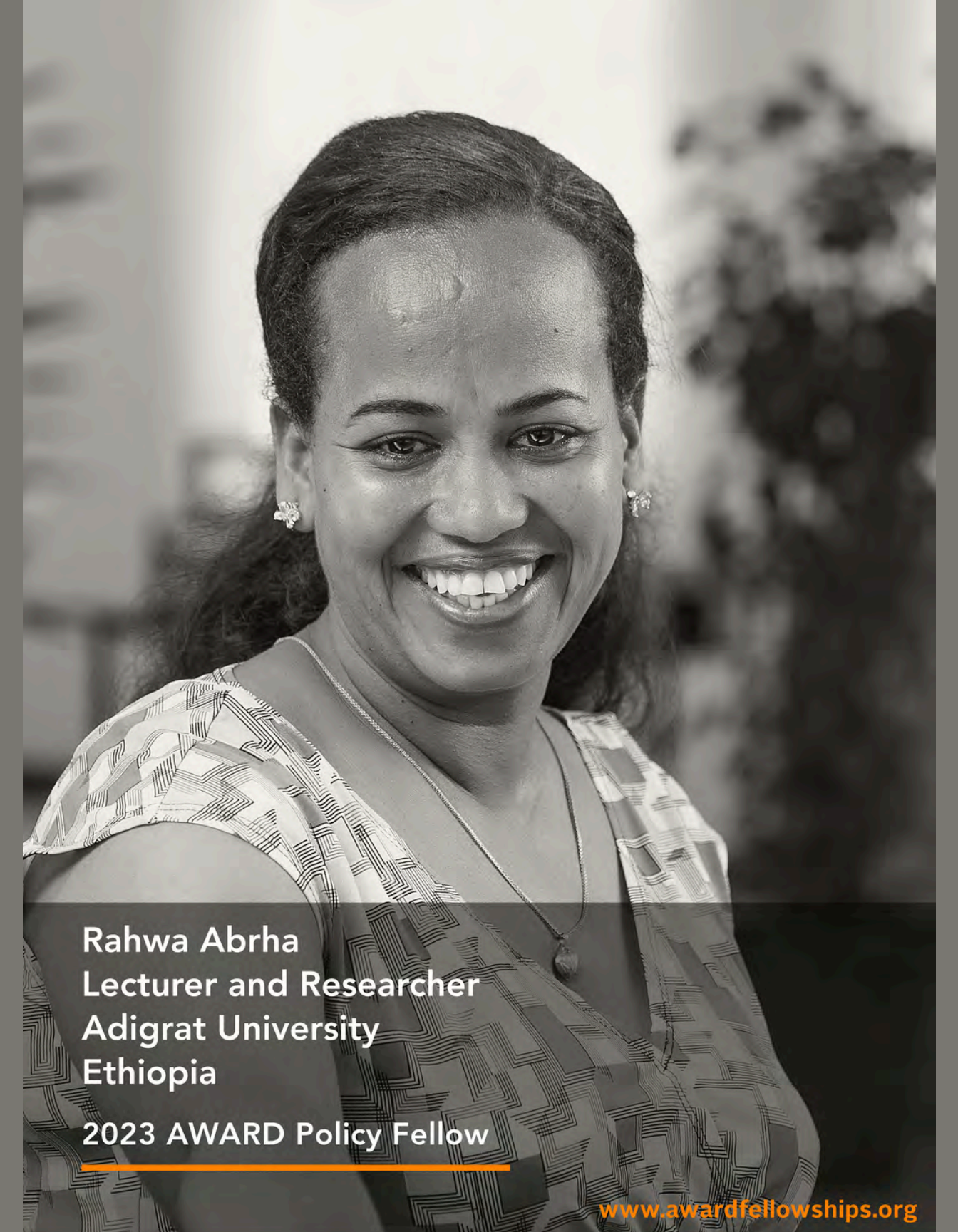


**To understand agriculture, we must understand the gender dynamics within agriculture. I have the right knowledge to contribute to this huge sector at the foundation of Ethiopia's economy.**

Kalkidan is a gender inclusion expert with over 10 years of experience in Government and Development Organizations., she has led several planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating gender projects. She now hopes to bring her gender-based expertise to agriculture, and she is counting on the GRASP Fellowship to equip her with the necessary skills to take on projects in the sector.





A black and white portrait of a woman with dark hair pulled back, smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a patterned top and a necklace. The background is softly blurred, showing foliage.

Rahwa Abrha  
Lecturer and Researcher  
Adigrat University  
Ethiopia

2023 AWARD Policy Fellow



**From the first time I stepped out of university and met a group of farmers, I knew I was ready to change their lives the way I had always wanted to.**

Rahwa is an agricultural researcher and academic who has contributed to developing the agriculture curriculum at Adigrat University in Ethiopia for eight years. She has published many research papers in international academic journals but is keen to gain more knowledge to inform policy and contribute to the development of Ethiopia's agricultural sector. For Rahwa, the GRASP Fellowship is an exciting opportunity to develop knowledge in gender-responsive policy formulation.





A black and white portrait of a woman with braided hair, smiling. She is wearing a dark top and a necklace with beads and a chain. The background is blurred.

**Soyome Alemayehu**  
**National Gender Advisor**  
**SNV**  
**Ethiopia**

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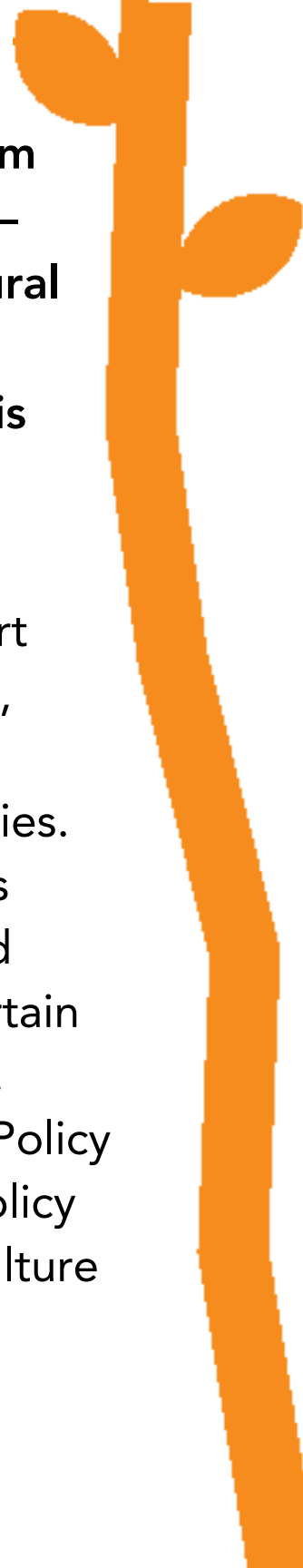
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**I want to be part of the team that challenges the system – the gender-biased agricultural policies and ensure that implementation of policies is gender-responsive.**

Soyome is a gender advisor and expert who has worked with the government, private sector, small businesses, and farmers to shape gender-neutral policies. As part of the Ministry of Agriculture's gender task force, she has also helped draft gender-based policies within certain areas of agriculture, such as irrigation. With the skills learned as an AWARD Policy Fellow, Soyome seeks to transform policy formulation by ensuring that all agriculture policies address gender.





**Tesfanesh Tekehaymanot**  
**Country Program Manager**  
**Farm Radio International**  
**Ethiopia**

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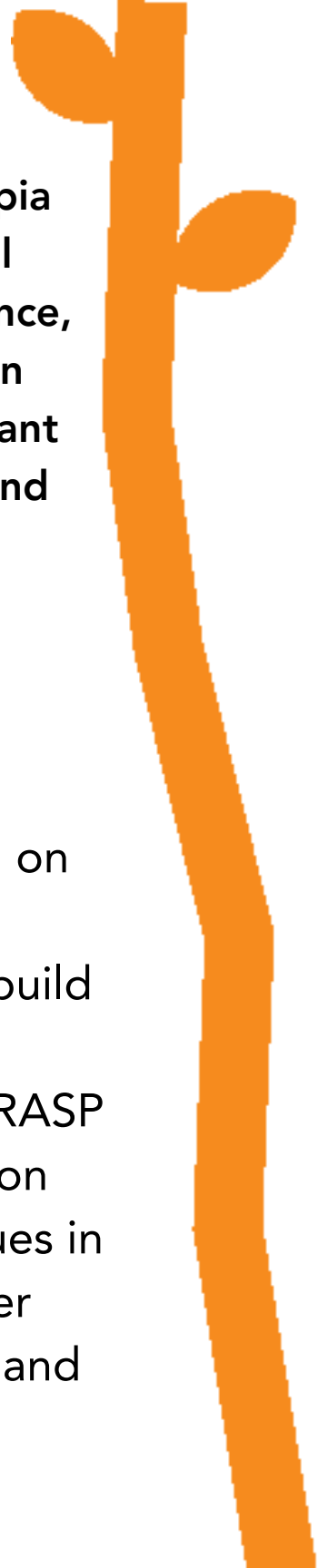
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**Female-led households in Ethiopia are neglected in key agricultural activities, such as access to finance, agriculture inputs, and extension services. At the policy level, I want to challenge this sad situation and influence the shift to focus on empowering and recognizing female heads in agriculture decisions.**

Tesfanesh is a communication-for-development expert who has worked on women's empowerment and social enterprise and managed projects to build the confidence and resilience of marginalized women. Through the GRASP Fellowship, Tesfanesh seeks to build on her knowledge of gender-related issues in the agriculture sector and enhance her skills in leadership policy formulation and influence.







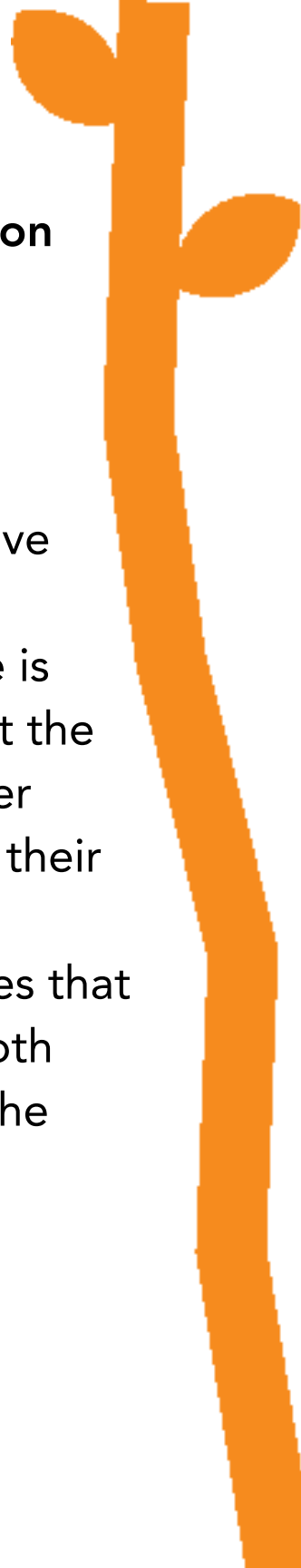
**Tinsaie Yitayew Birhanu**  
**Gender, Youth, and Social Dynamics Lead**  
**FH Ethiopia**  
**Ethiopia**  
**2023 AWARD Policy Fellow**

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**I want to introduce gender-responsive policies in extension services that ordinary people will feel and enjoy.**

Tinsaie is a gender expert with extensive career experience in the development space. Focusing on gender equity, she is keen to ensure women have a space at the leadership table and works to empower women entrepreneurs so they can run their businesses successfully. Her focus as a GRASP Fellow is on introducing policies that create a conducive environment for both men and women to work together in the agriculture sector.







**Tsion Abate**  
**Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Consultant**  
**International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)**  
**Ethiopia**

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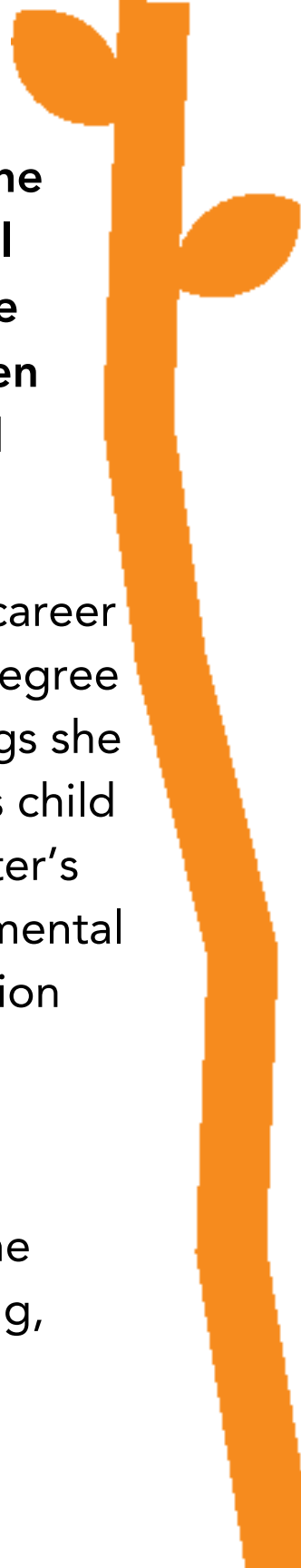
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**I am fortunate to be part of the GRASP Fellowship. It is crucial for my career and will help me commit to empowering women as one means to achieve food security.**

Tsion's agriculture and food security career started following an undergraduate degree in Nursing and Nutrition. The teachings she received fuelled her desire to address child malnutrition. Since completing a master's degree in food security and Developmental Studies at Addis Ababa University, Tsion has worked as a nutrition and gender expert for many organizations. She currently works at the International Livestock Research Institute, where she works to ensure gender mainstreaming, particularly in food security projects.





**Yesuf Fatie**  
**Lecturer and Researcher**  
**Haramaya University**  
**Ethiopia**

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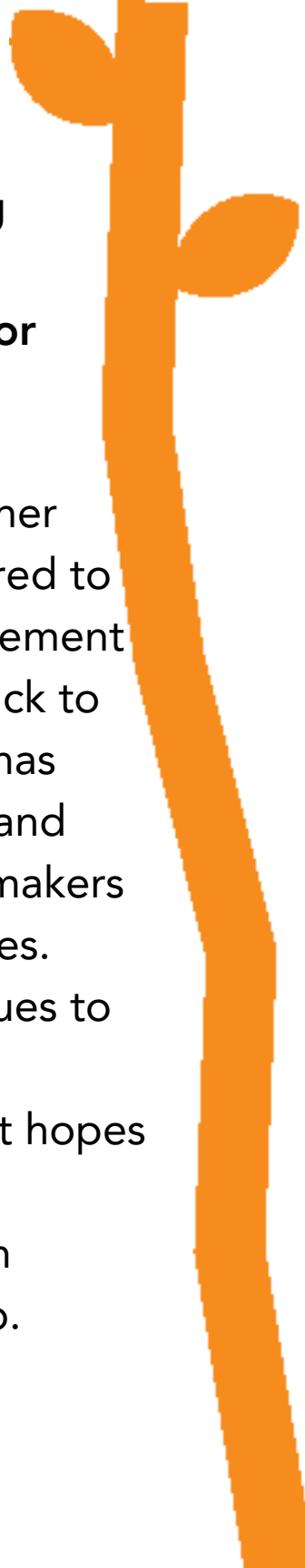
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**The opportunity allows me to harness my skills while inspiring me to take on big projects that can translate into real change for farmers.**

After witnessing the farming ordeals of her community growing up, Yesuf was inspired to study natural resources and land management and take the lessons she had learned back to her village. Throughout her career, she has continued to interact with smallholders and communicate their challenges to policymakers to assist in developing pro-farmer policies. Now working in academia, Yesuf continues to inform policymakers and agricultural stakeholders on sustainable land use but hopes to build upon her skills in policy implementation – particularly for women farmers - through the GRASP Fellowship.





A black and white portrait of a smiling woman with her hair in braids, wearing a white high-collared shirt. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a plant and some architectural elements.

Zemene Ayalew  
Researcher  
Policy Studies Institute (PSI)  
Ethiopia

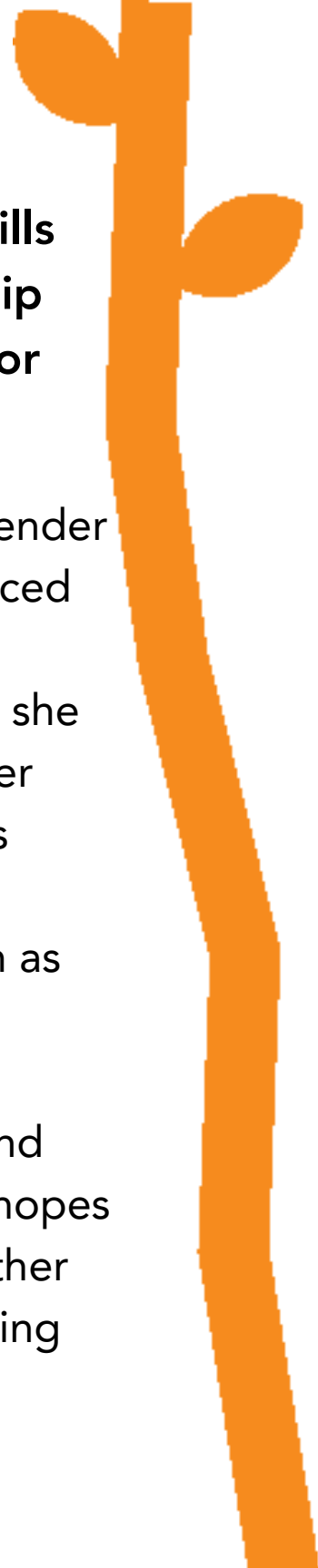
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**Putting together my experience with the new skills I will get from this Fellowship will help me bring change for many women in rural areas.**

Zemene is determined to drive greater gender equality within agriculture through enhanced policies. She works as a researcher at the Policy Studies Institute in Ethiopia, where she collaborates closely with policymakers. Her academic background as a statistician has given her a clear understanding of the challenges faced by women farmers, such as low ownership of land, livestock, and commercial farms. As an AWARD Policy Fellow, she aims to address such issues and boost women's empowerment. She also hopes to create new networks and learn from other Fellows to increase her chances of accessing research-funding opportunities.







**Zeritu Nida**  
**National Project Coordinator**  
**International Labour Organization**  
**Ethiopia**

**2023 AWARD Policy Fellow**

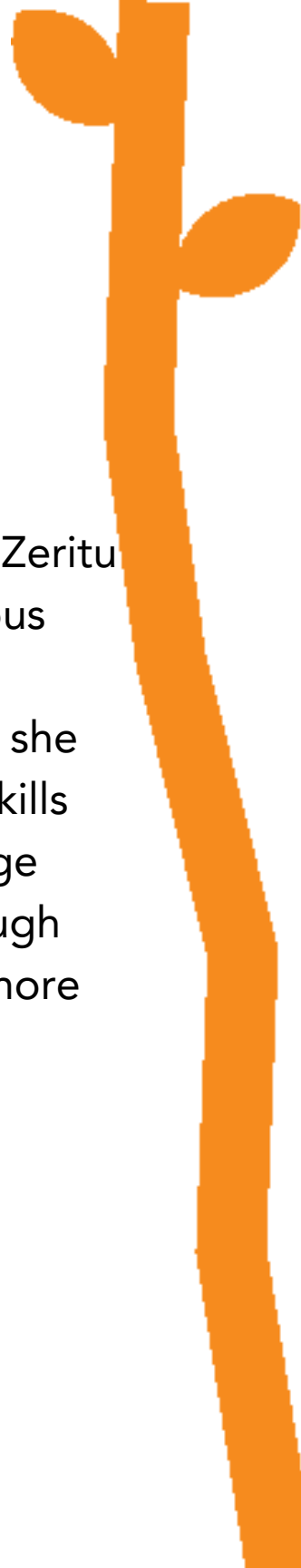
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**In agriculture, there is still much we can do to uplift our farmers and grow the sector.**

As an agribusiness development expert, Zeritu has spent over 12 years working on various projects in the development world. With extensive technical and field experience, she is keen to combine her knowledge and skills and enter the policy world to drive change within agribusiness. She hopes that through the GRASP Fellowship, she will acquire more skills and networks to expand her reach among farmers, especially women, with agriculture-for-markets messaging.






Yolande Leondaris  
Head of Technical Assistance Mission  
AFAFI-Centre Program  
Madagascar

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**“ My goal is to help the emergence of agroecological transition policies for women in rural areas who need resilient agricultural techniques to deal with climate change – and crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic.**

An Ecology and Plant Biology graduate, Yolande Razafindrakoto Leondaris is a key expert in land security in Madagascar. She has been working in rural development for two decades and is particularly committed to considering gender issues in all her interventions. As part of the GRASP Fellowship, she hopes to continue helping women in rural areas transition to agroecology, leveraging women's platforms.



A black and white portrait of a woman with dark hair pulled back, smiling slightly. She is wearing a light-colored collared shirt under a dark jacket. The background is blurred.

**Volatiana Razafindratoanina**  
**Project Coordinator**  
**World Bank- RIZ PLUS**  
**Madagascar**

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**Gender issues are important to me. Women's autonomy in rural areas, representing 60% of the population, is a means to combat inequality and vulnerability.**

Volatiana, an agricultural engineer, is the World Bank's RICE PLUS program coordinator in Madagascar. The program focuses on the rice sector to increase the productivity and resilience of rural livelihoods and food systems in the North Sofia Region and the East Alaotra Mangoro Region. She is also interested in issues related to gender, particularly in rural areas. Volatiana looks forward to consolidating her knowledge of policy advocacy through the GRASP Fellowship.





A black and white portrait of a woman with long dark hair, wearing glasses and smiling. She is wearing a patterned top. The background is blurred.

**Voninfanja Herimanitra Ramanoelina**  
Researcher  
University of Antananarivo  
Madagascar

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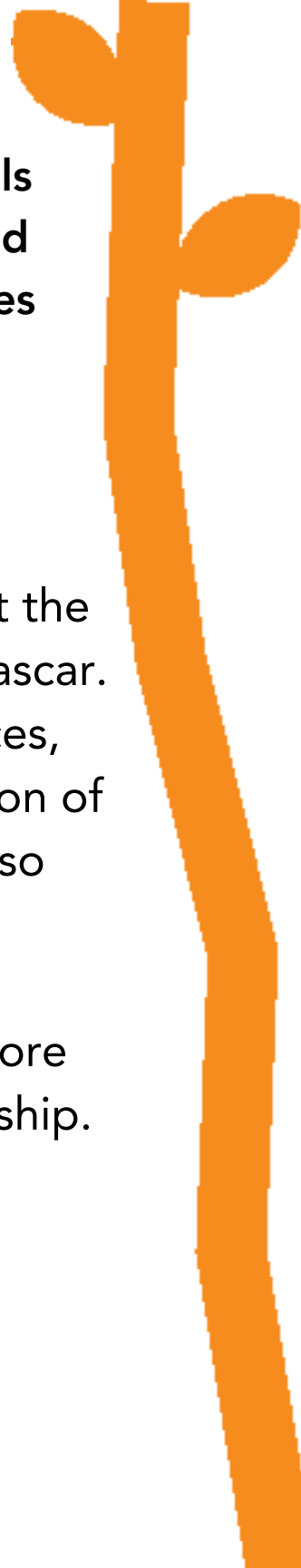
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**I am excited to improve my skills in project design regarding food security policy and gender issues in Madagascar. There is a gap between research and public policy.**

Voninfanja is a Teacher-Researcher at the University of Antananarivo in Madagascar. She specializes in Engineering Sciences, focusing on the quality and valorization of agricultural products. Voninfanja is also interested in the public policymaking process on food security and gender mainstreaming and is excited to explore this topic through the GRASP Fellowship.



A black and white portrait of a woman with dark, shoulder-length hair, smiling. She is wearing a dark-colored top with a light-colored, fringed shawl draped over her right shoulder. The background is blurred, showing an indoor setting with a window and a framed picture.

**Hasina Miharisoa Ralalason**  
**Technical Collaborator**  
**Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock**  
**Madagascar**

**2023 AWARD Policy Fellow**

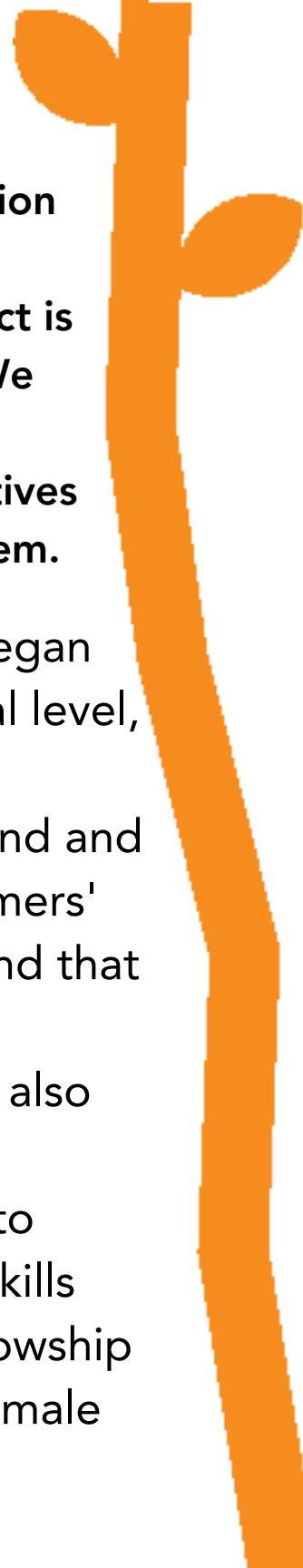
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**Taking gender and other socio-cultural aspects into consideration at the design stage of an agricultural development project is a major factor for its success. We must consider women in all our activities and ensure that initiatives are specifically designed for them.**

An Agricultural Engineer, Ralalason began her career as a Field Agent at the local level, working closely with producers.

Experiencing the realities on the ground and gaining a better understanding of farmers' perspectives enabled her to understand that solutions to agricultural development cannot be purely technical – but must also consider the socio-economic and environmental context. Hasina wants to acquire multidisciplinary and people skills and is convinced that the GRASP Fellowship will help her professionalize African female producers' activities.





A black and white portrait of a woman with dark, curly hair and glasses, smiling. She is wearing a light-colored, striped button-down shirt. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an office or indoor setting with windows.

**Mamy Rajaonarisoa**  
**Project Manager**  
**Belgian Development Agency (Enabel)**  
**Madagascar**

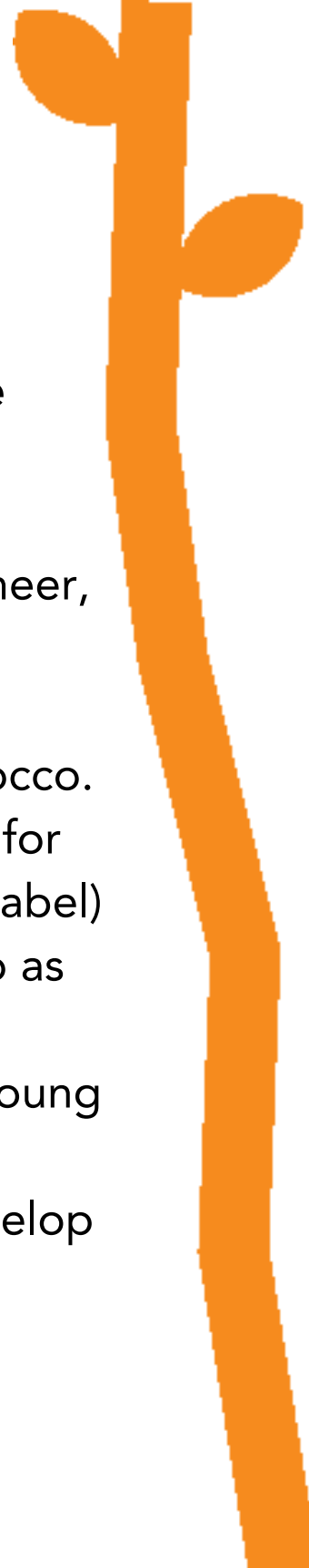
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**As a woman, I have developed emotional intelligence and high self-esteem. This has helped me professionally.**

After becoming an Agricultural Engineer, Mamy worked for agricultural development organizations in Madagascar, Burkina Faso, and Morocco. She is currently the Project Manager for the Belgian development agency (Enabel) in the Democratic Republic of Congo as part of an agricultural training and professional integration project for young people in rural areas. Through the GRASP Fellowship, she hopes to develop her knowledge of diplomacy, her capacity for strategic influence, self-confidence, and her network.





**Laurette Ratsimbazafy**  
**Regional Director**  
**Agricultural Development Fund**  
**Madagascar**

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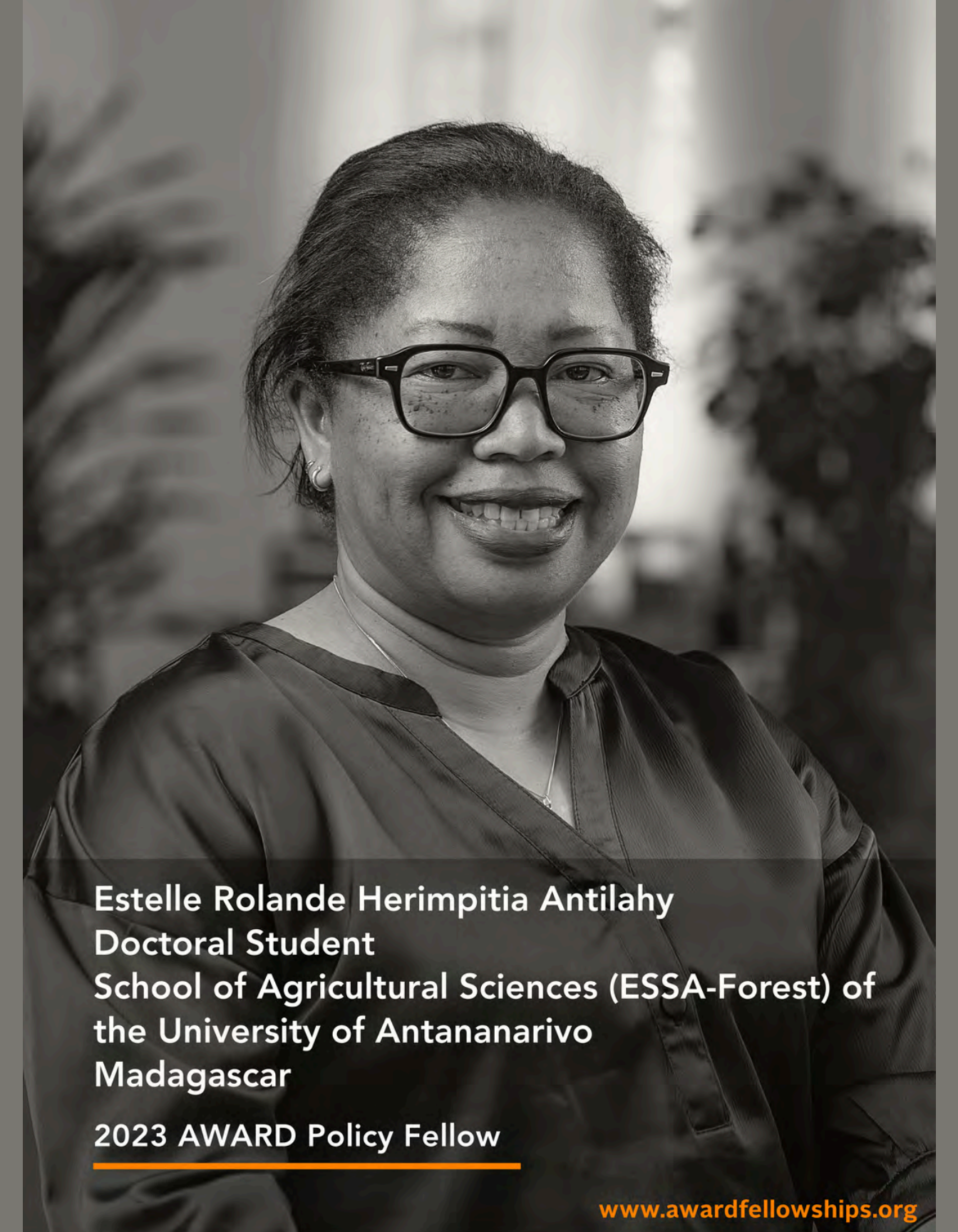




**The people running awareness campaigns in communes are mostly male. This must change. Women need specific support; they need to take center stage in these issues.**

Laurette is an Agricultural Engineer. In 2012, her outstanding performance at the Higher School of Agricultural Sciences at the University of Antananarivo enabled her to study for four months in France. On her return to Madagascar, she joined the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock as Head of the Regional Livestock Department in Analanjirofo, east of the island. Since 2020, she has been the Regional Director of the Agricultural Development Fund in northern Madagascar. Through the GRASP Fellowship, she wants to acquire new skills in lobbying, negotiating with partners, and enhancing leadership potential on agricultural policy.



A black and white portrait of a woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing glasses and a dark top. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is blurred, showing some foliage.

**Estelle Rolande Herimpitia Antilahy**  
**Doctoral Student**  
**School of Agricultural Sciences (ESSA-Forest) of**  
**the University of Antananarivo**  
**Madagascar**

**2023 AWARD Policy Fellow**

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**I want the product of my intellectual endeavors to have a strong impact. University research rarely gives rise to public policy that can positively change the livelihood of impoverished people.**

Estelle obtained an MSc in Economics from the Faculty of Law, Economics, Management, and Sociology at the University of Antananarivo in 1998. She continues to combine her studies with fieldwork in rural communities in Madagascar. As a Consultant in Development Economics, she travels throughout the country to evaluate development programs and carry out studies concerning strategies to combat poverty and promote food and nutritional security. She sees the GRASP Fellowship as foundational in her aim to develop methods and procedures to highlight local dynamics and promote genuine rural development.







**Hobisoa Prisca Raharimboahangy**  
**Director of Sustainable Development**  
**Sahanala**  
**Madagascar**

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**Getting women farmers more involved and giving them more responsibilities is integral to our company policy.**

Hobisoa has a degree in Accounting and Business Administration. Since starting her career, she has worked in rural communities, promoting access to microfinance for producers. Accustomed to managing cross-functional projects to help disadvantaged farmers, she is now Head of Sustainable Development at Sahanala. This social enterprise seeks to combine agribusiness and nature conservation in collaboration with farmers' organizations. Hobisoa hopes to acquire new skills in methodology, social inclusion, and public relations through the GRASP Fellowship.





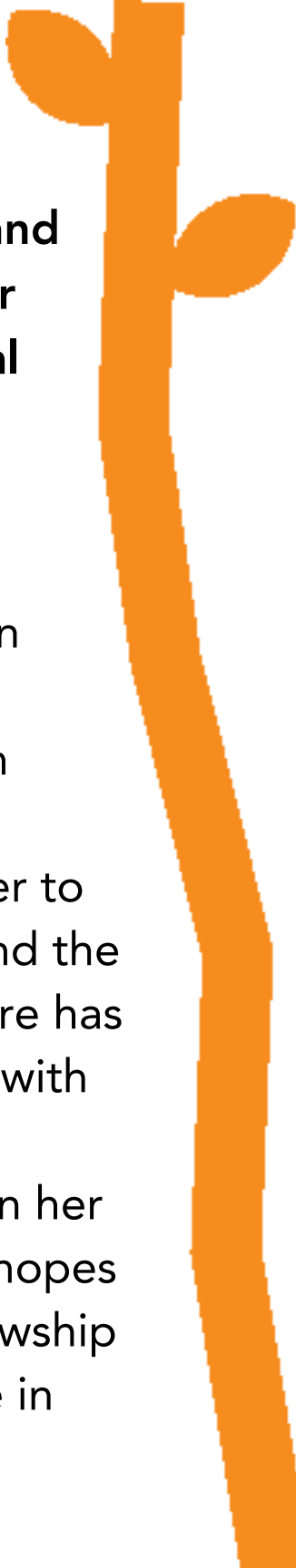
**Holy Razafindrandretsa**  
**Technical Advisor in Public Relations**  
**Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale**  
**Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)**  
**Madagascar**

**2023 AWARD Policy Fellow**

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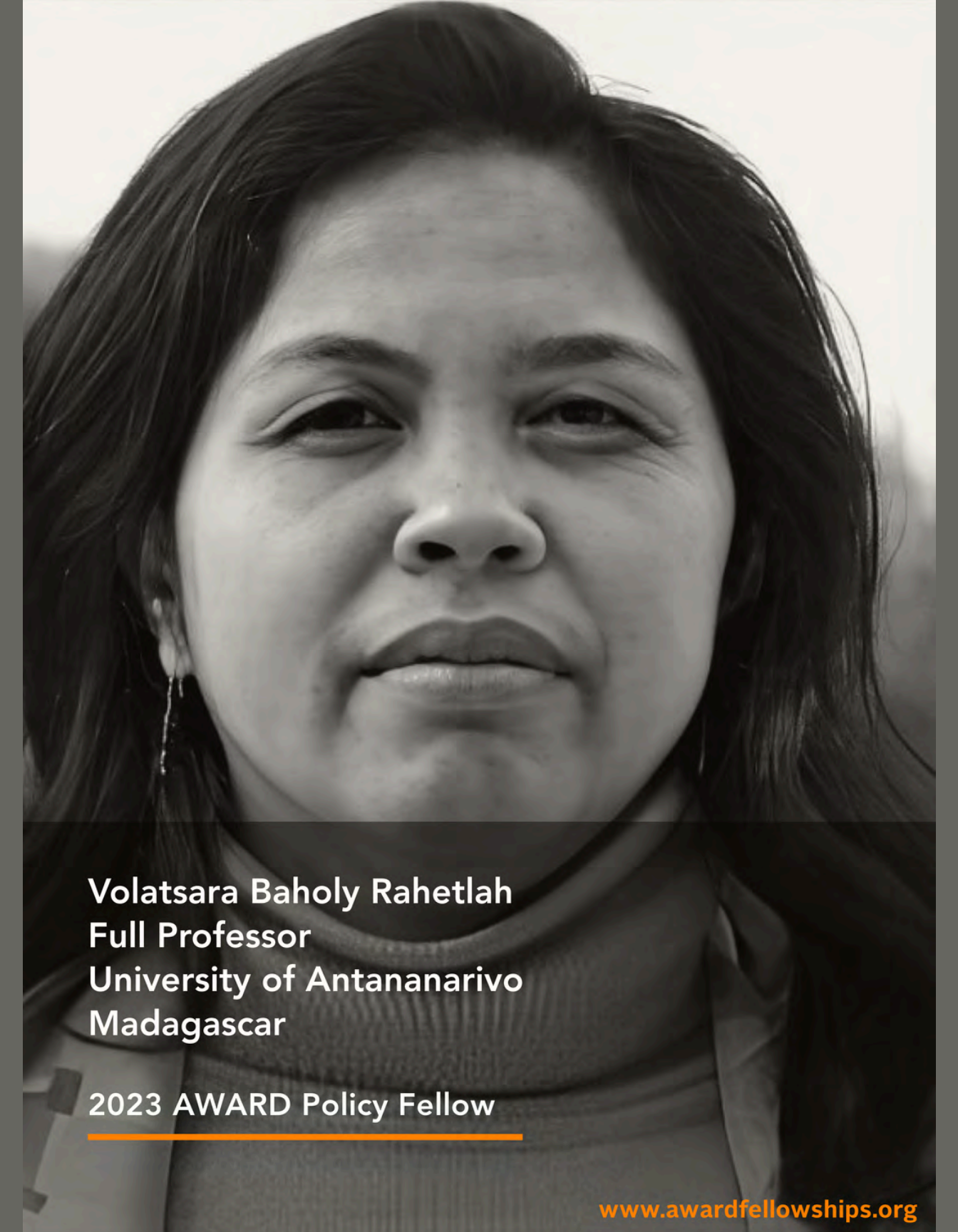
[www.awardfellowships.org](http://www.awardfellowships.org)





**“ We want to make women economically self-sufficient and to help them take on greater responsibilities in agricultural and livestock activities. We intervene in Madagascar’s poorest regions.**

Holy began her career with a degree in communications, languages, and interculturality, and then she trained in social marketing. Her first job in a communications agency introduced her to nutrition, maternal and child health, and the food industry. Her interest in agriculture has not waned since. Her current position with the German Cooperation Agency-GIZ, which is linked to agriculture, has given her a taste for entrepreneurship, and she hopes to take advantage of the GRASP Fellowship to benefit from her mentor's expertise in business development and policies.

A black and white portrait of a woman with dark, wavy hair, looking slightly upwards and to the right. She is wearing a dark turtleneck sweater. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color.

**Volatsara Baholy Rahetlah**  
**Full Professor**  
**University of Antananarivo**  
**Madagascar**

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**I hope that the GRASP Fellowship will give me access to knowledge to develop agricultural policies consistent with environmental, ecological, and food security in Madagascar.**

Volatsara is a Teacher-Researcher at the University of Antananarivo. Her expertise covers various themes around agroecology, primarily climate change, smart agriculture, and food security. She is also interested in gender issues and excels in coordinating community projects to empower rural women. One of her priorities is transferring practical knowledge for a more equitable and sustainable future, especially for young people and women. Volatsara hopes that the GRASP Fellowship will help her improve her training and support capabilities and consolidate her understanding of environmental and agricultural policies in Madagascar.







Marina Ny Aina Rakotondrasoa  
Enterprenuer  
Massöva  
Madagacsar

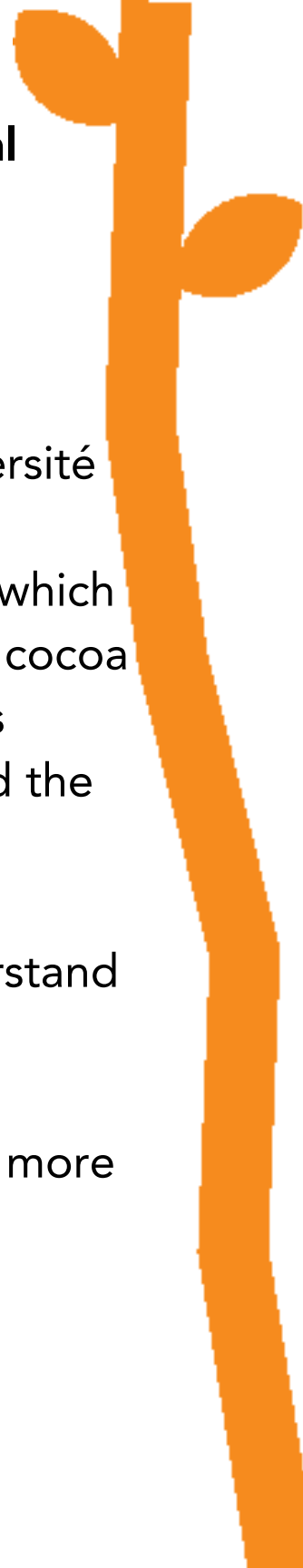
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**I aim to improve agricultural production techniques for consumers and the environment.**

After studying Agronomy at the Université Athénée Saint Joseph Antsirabe in Madagascar, Marina set up Massöva, which manufactures processed coconut and cocoa products. As an entrepreneur, she has developed strong leadership skills and the ability to manage businesses and communities. Through the GRASP Fellowship, she hopes to better understand the agricultural sector's political and regulatory aspects and develop her persuasive skills to make her business more successful.





A black and white portrait of a woman with long, dark hair, smiling gently. She is wearing a patterned top and a pearl necklace. The background is blurred.

**Felamboahangy Henintsoa Rasoarahona**  
Researcher  
University of Antananarivo  
Madagascar

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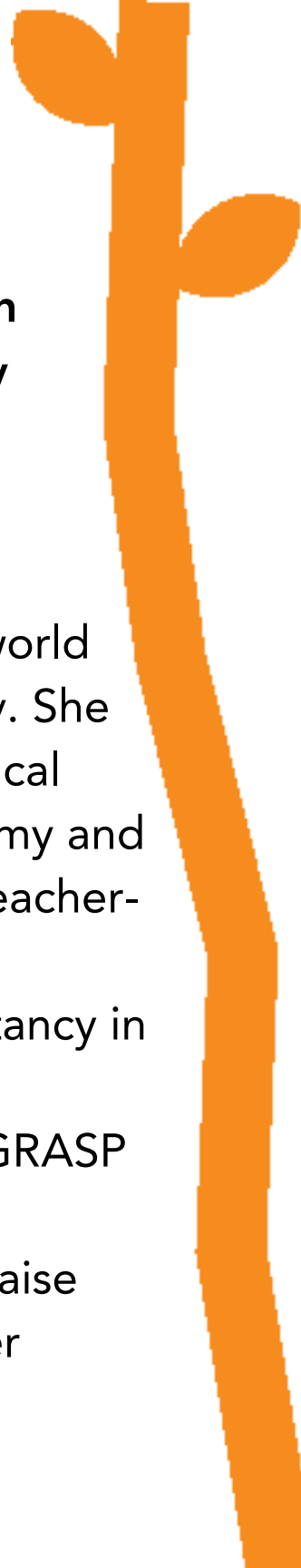
[www.awardfellowships.org](http://www.awardfellowships.org)





**I have a dual degree in Agronomic and Chemical Sciences. I began working in a pharmaceutical laboratory and later focused on nutrition. It became my passion.**

Rasoarahona's passion for the rural world led her to build a career in agronomy. She first trained in Agronomic and Chemical Sciences, then specialized in Agronomy and Nutrition. She currently works as a Teacher-Researcher at the University of Antananarivo while providing consultancy in the fields of nutrition, gender, and agronomy in Madagascar. With the GRASP Fellowship, she hopes to deepen her knowledge of nutritional policies to raise awareness among policymakers in her country.

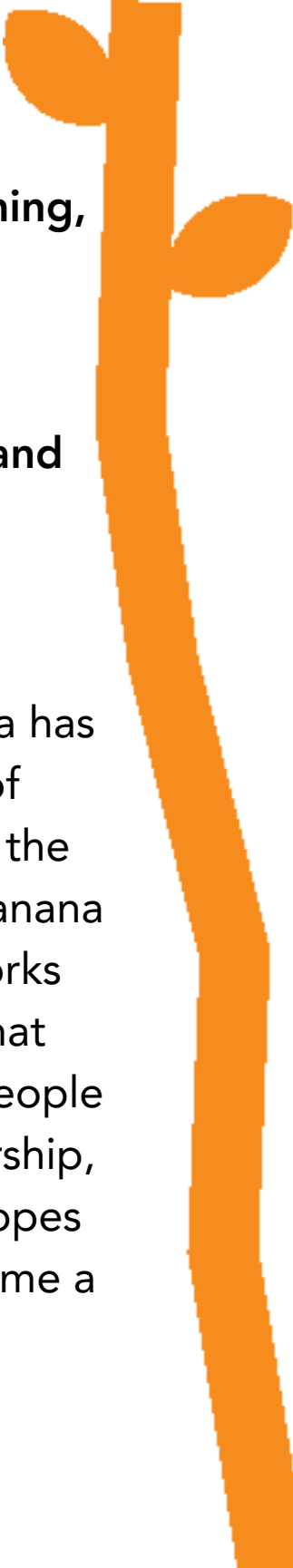


A black and white portrait of a woman with dark, shoulder-length hair, smiling. She is wearing a patterned shawl over a white top and a small hoop earring. The background is blurred, showing other people in a social setting.

**Julia Hanitriniaina Randrianarivelo**  
**Head of Blue Economy Department**  
**Ministry of Fisheries and the Blue Economy**  
**Madagascar**

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**“ I advocate for improving rural women's livelihood in the farming, animal husbandry, and fishing industries in the Atsinanana region in Madagascar. I am constantly encouraging them and promoting the value of their work. It is a tremendous challenge!**

Passionate about the blue economy, Julia has worked for twenty years at the Ministry of Fisheries of Madagascar. As the Head of the Blue Economy Department for the Atsinanana Region on the island's east coast, she works on coordinating development projects that provide training and support to young people and women on literacy and entrepreneurship, with a view to their emancipation. She hopes the GRASP Fellowship will help her become a better communicator and develop her leadership abilities.



A black and white portrait of Doreen Tekedese, a Black woman with long, dark, curly hair. She is smiling and looking slightly to the right. She is wearing a light-colored top with a dark, patterned shawl draped over her shoulders and a thin necklace with a small pendant.

**Doreen Tekedese**  
**Gender Equity, Social Inclusion, and Agri-business**  
**Coordinator**  
**International Development Enterprise- iDE**  
**Mozambique**

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**I do not leave women behind because they cannot read or write. If women can farm, they also can develop business plans and succeed.**

Doreen is a gender equity and social inclusion expert passionate about empowering women and securing gender equality. In her pursuit of inclusivity, a career highlight has been training illiterate women to prepare business plans so they can launch and support successful business ventures. She aims to devise and influence more gender-responsive policies.







**Nilda Rosa Francisco**

**Researcher**

**Mozambique Institute of Agricultural Research**

**Mozambique**

**2023 AWARD Policy Fellow**





**As women researchers, we must seek to give more meaning to our role in society by constantly challenging the status quo and coming up with innovative and sustainable solutions that local farmers can embrace.**

Nilda is an animal health researcher working with the Mozambique Institute of Agricultural Research. Focusing on the economics of animal health and production, Nilda acts as a bridge between livestock farmers and researchers by collecting primary data on livestock production and management challenges. As an AWARD Policy Fellow, she hopes to advance her work by collaborating with other researchers and policymakers and learn how to formulate and implement policies that address livestock production and management through a gender lens.

A black and white portrait of Claudette Imanishimwe, a woman with short, dark, braided hair, smiling. She is wearing a light-colored blazer over a dark and light striped top, and large pearl earrings. The background is blurred, showing indoor lighting and foliage.

**Claudette Imanishimwe**  
**Governance and Advocacy Advisor**  
**SNV**  
**Rwanda**

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**I am passionate about increasing women's membership, entrepreneurship, and leadership in our cooperatives.**

Claudette is a governance and advocacy advisor for an SVN Rwanda project promoting regenerative agriculture. During her work on the project, she has seen how few women hold leadership roles in farmer-led enterprises. As a Fellow, she hopes to develop her skills in policymaking to advocate for women's participation.







Adelphine Mukashema  
Entrepreneur  
Soroptimist Club Muhanga  
Rwanda

2023 AWARD Policy Fellow

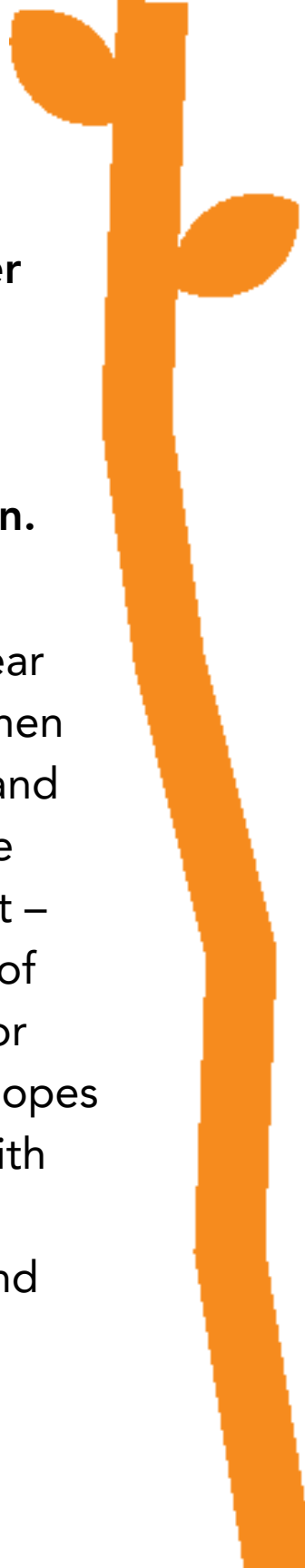
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[www.awardfellowships.org](http://www.awardfellowships.org)



**I am enthusiastic about empowering women to have greater access and control over land so they can enjoy the full benefits of their efforts in agricultural development – without being sidelined by men.**

Adelphine has spent much of her 28-year career advocating for the rights of women and children. Working for civil society and non-profit organizations in Rwanda, she believes there is room for improvement – especially in the equitable distribution of productive resources, including land, for rural and disadvantaged women. She hopes the GRASP Fellowship will equip her with the necessary skills to become a better advocate for women's rights on land and income from agricultural produce.






A black and white portrait of Caritas Kayilisa, a woman with short, dark, curly hair, looking directly at the camera. She is wearing a dark-colored shirt with a light-colored floral pattern. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with foliage.

**Caritas Kayilisa**  
**National Project Manager**  
**FAO, Rwanda**  
**Rwanda**

**2023 AWARD Policy Fellow**

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**“ I want to work on a new model to demonstrate the correlation between the empowerment of women and the reduction of malnutrition in rural households.**

Caritas has dedicated the past 12 years of her career to integrating gender equality into Rwanda’s agriculture sector. She feels her most impactful assignment has been coordinating and implementing Rwanda’s first gender mainstreaming strategy for agriculture while working as a consultant for UN Women. As an AWARD Policy Fellow, she hopes to gain insights from her mentor and other Fellows that will help her implement her research on the relationship between women’s empowerment and the reduction of child stunting in rural areas.



**Christella Mukakalisa**  
**Agricultural Advisor**  
**KODIKA Farmers' Cooperative**  
**Rwanda**

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**Women still have an issue of low self-esteem, and that's why they lack in decision-making positions.**

Growing up in the rural area of Rwanda's Southern Province, Christella saw her mother practice subsistence agriculture. These early experiences fueled her ambition to pursue a career in agriculture. After studying agriculture at university, Christella is now an advisor to a farmers' cooperative in Rwanda's Western Province. She is passionate about supporting female farmers in increasing their participation in leadership roles in farmers' cooperatives and building a more sustainable food system. As an AWARD Policy Fellow, Christella hopes to build her network and enhance her leadership skills.





A black and white portrait of a woman with dark hair pulled back, smiling slightly. She is wearing large hoop earrings. The background is dark and out of focus.

**Diane Sayinzoga**  
**Head of Special Economic Zones and Export**  
**Facilitation**  
**Rwanda Development Board**  
**Rwanda**

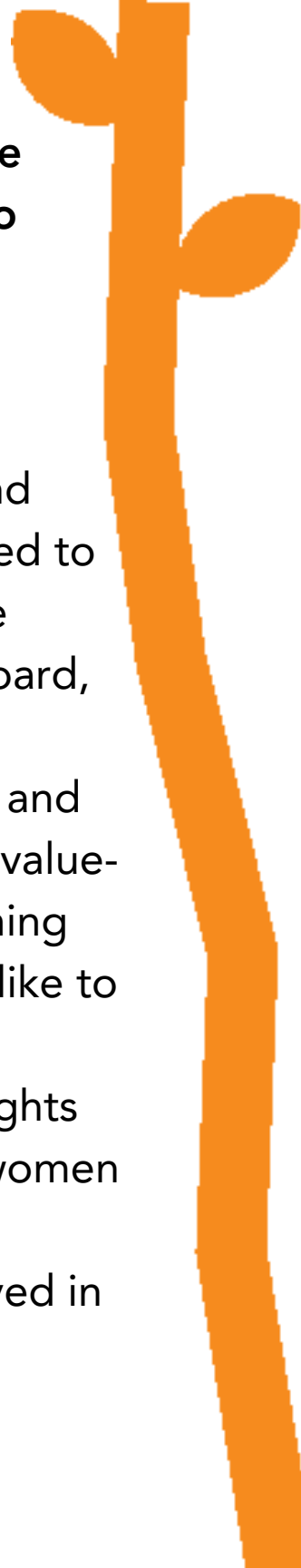
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**I want to see what policies the government can implement to facilitate value addition, such as transforming locally produced products.**

For the past 16 years, Diane's energy and knowledge have been primarily dedicated to serving the Government of Rwanda. She works with the Rwanda Development Board, where she helps develop and promote internal and foreign trade opportunities and special economic zones. Diane believes value-added production is critical to transforming Rwanda's agricultural sector and would like to see more women involved. To help her achieve this goal, she hopes to gain insights during the Fellowship on empowering women better. With this knowledge, she can encourage them to become more involved in agri-processing and engage in virtual marketing of their agricultural products.



A black and white portrait of Helene Uzayisenga, a young Black woman with her hair in braids, wearing a light-colored button-down shirt. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is blurred, showing other people in a group setting.

Helene Uzayisenga  
National Representative  
Young Professionals for Agricultural Development  
Rwanda  
2023 AWARD Policy Fellow

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**I believe the Fellowship will provide a strong package of skills to enable me to achieve my dreams.**

Helene strives to increase youth involvement in agriculture globally. She is currently the national representative of Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD) in Rwanda, an international movement for young people in the agricultural sector. Her policy focuses on increasing awareness of agricultural opportunities among youth and mobilizing them to take up agricultural activities. Through the GRASP Fellowship, she hopes to gain more insights into analyzing gender policies and programs, and she believes the Fellowship will ultimately support her in achieving her career ambitions.





**Sandrine Urujeni**  
**Chief Operations Officer**  
**National Agricultural Export Promotion Board**  
**Rwanda**

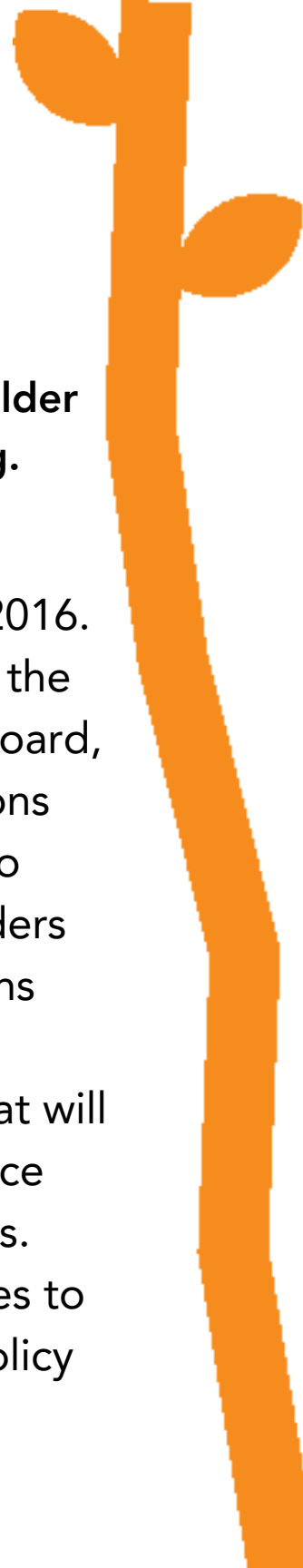
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**Our agricultural sector is mainly based on subsistence farming. I always look for policies that can guide us on how to turn smallholder farming into commercial farming.**

Sandrine has been at the intersection of policymaking and implementation since 2016. Currently the Chief Operations Officer at the National Agricultural Export Promotion Board, she coordinates and oversees all operations regarding potential export crops. She also ensures that growers and other stakeholders adequately adhere to rules and regulations related to all agri exports. Sandrine is enthusiastic about working on policies that will help transform agriculture from subsistence farming to commercial farming operations. Through the GRASP Fellowship, she hopes to strengthen her skills and experience in policy design to drive positive change.







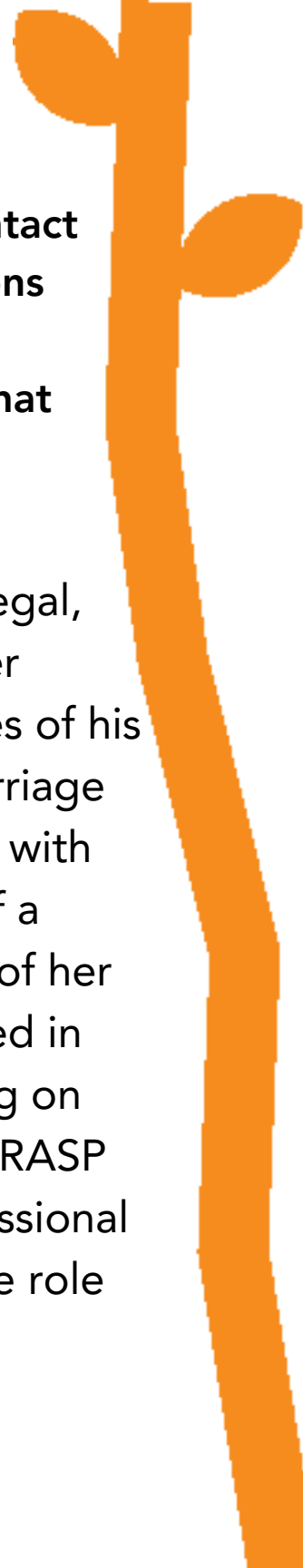
**Coumbaly Diaw**  
**Expert in Gender and Sustainable Food Systems**  
**FAO**  
**Senegal**  
**2023 AWARD Policy Fellow**

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**Although we [women] are in contact with communities, policy decisions are made at the national level. Women need to be present at that level.**

Originally from the northern part of Senegal, Coumbaly's love for farming began in her childhood with her father's nostalgic tales of his native Walo village. Despite an early marriage and personal difficulties, she persevered with her studies before finding the support of a mentor in Italy who changed the course of her life. Back in Senegal, she became involved in non-governmental organizations focusing on agricultural development. For her, the GRASP Fellowship represents a significant professional opportunity and platform to promote the role of women in decision-making.







**Khadidiatou Ndoeye**

**Lecturer**

**National School of Agriculture of Iba Der Thiam**

**University of Thiès**

**Senegal**

**2023 AWARD Policy Fellow**

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**We need quality seeds to grow quality crops and ensure food security.**

Khadidiatou joined agriculture through her interest in genetics. She has explored areas enabling plant improvement through genetics and molecular biology for over two decades. She is particularly proud to have collaborated, between 2010 and 2016, with the University of Virginia in the United States and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to develop a curriculum around seeds. She now coordinates this curriculum at Iba Der Thiam University in Thiès, Senegal. Enthusiastic about biotechnologies, she was a pioneer in promoting them to achieve food self-sufficiency in Senegal.





**Ndeye Astou Kebe**  
Coordinator of the Private Sector and Civil  
Society Organizations  
United States Agency for International  
Development (USAID  
Senegal

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**Agricultural development is  
vital to a country's  
development.**

With a decade of experience supporting the private agricultural sector, Ndeye specializes in training and access to innovative financial products. At the heart of her activity is participation in evidence-based reforms and policies focusing on gender equality and social inclusion. As an AWARD Policy Fellow, Ndeye wants to enhance her efforts to promote the emergence of a new generation, conscious and determined, composed of women and young people on family farms, which she considers to be the keystone of agricultural development.







**Adama Guèye**  
**Director of Studies**  
**Center for Incubation and Business Development**  
**(Innovdev) of Cheikh Anta Diop University of**  
**Dakar**  
**Senegal**

**2023 AWARD Policy Fellow**

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**Women lack access to resources, and with the little income they earn, there is not much they can do, yet they are the backbone of farming households.**

Adama, an Economist and Gender Equality Activist, is forging her way into Senegalese agriculture. With an MSc in Economic Policy and Project Management, she started at the Senegalese Institute of Agricultural Research before becoming a Researcher specializing in horticulture and pesticides. Now focused on gender policies, her fight for women's equality in agriculture led her to the GRASP Fellowship, from which she hopes to gain skills for developing equitable policies. She aims to fill the gaps for a more robust and fairer African agricultural sector.



A black and white portrait of a woman with dark skin and her hair styled in many small braids. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. She is wearing a light-colored collared shirt and large, thin, circular earrings. The background is out of focus, showing some architectural elements.

**Diariétou Sambakhe**  
Researcher  
Regional Study Center for Improving Drought  
Adaptation  
Senegal

**2023 AWARD Policy Fellow**

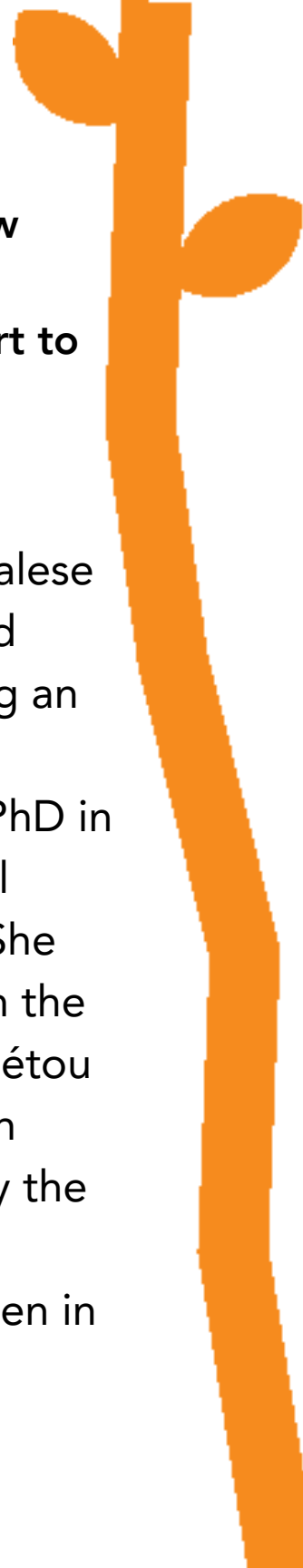
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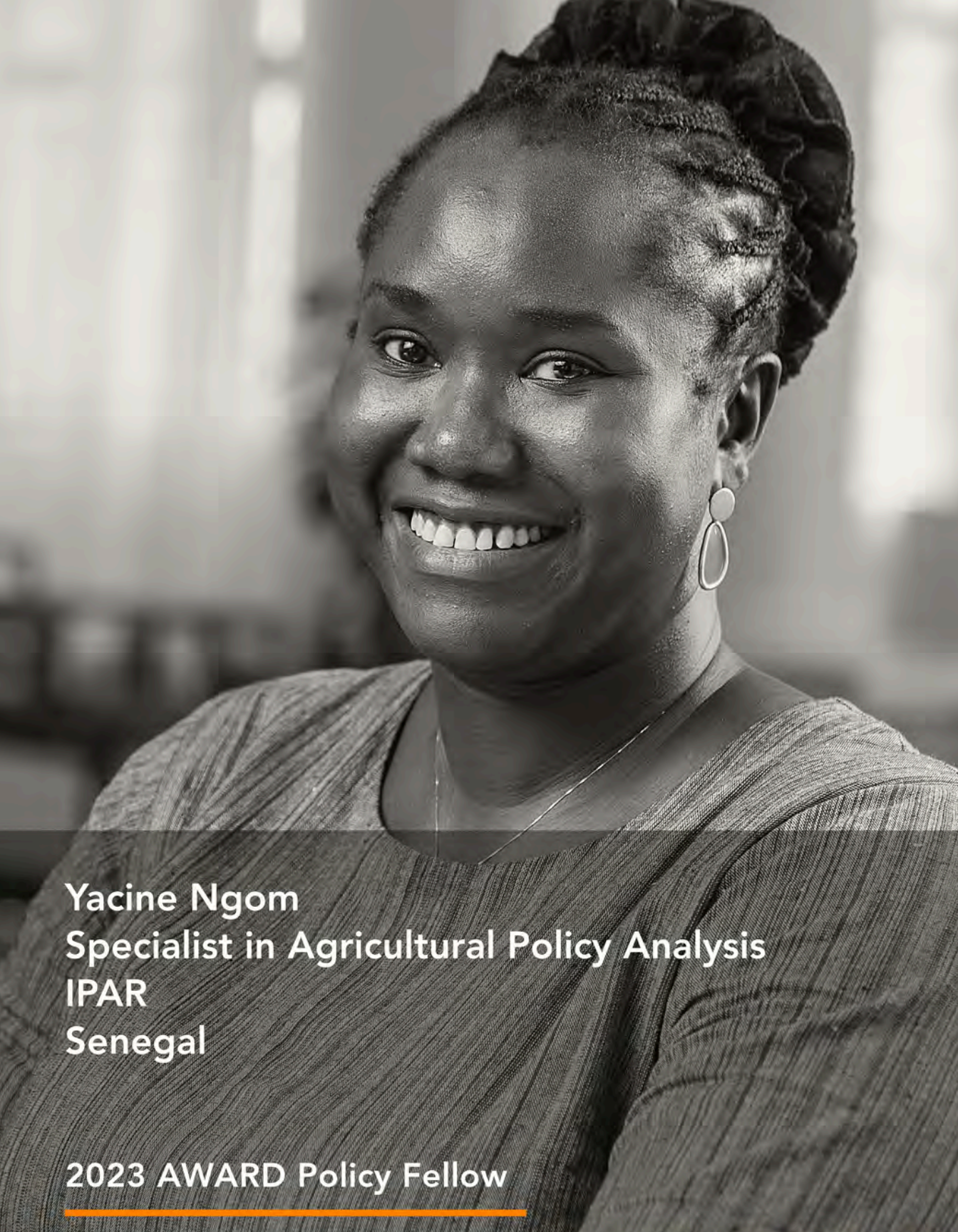




**Fieldwork makes you realize how much women contribute to agricultural production from start to finish. And yet, their work is not valued nor promoted.**

Diariétou is trying to revolutionize Senegalese agriculture by relying on mathematics and statistics, her true passion. After achieving an MSc in Mathematics from Gaston Berger University in Saint-Louis, she obtained a PhD in Biostatistics Applied to Agronomy at Paul Valéry University in Montpellier, France. She returned to Senegal after her studies with the determination to make a difference. Diariétou challenges gender stereotypes in an often male-dominated field and is motivated by the GRASP Fellowship to improve her self-confidence and promote the role of women in agriculture.





**Yacine Ngom**  
**Specialist in Agricultural Policy Analysis**  
**IPAR**  
**Senegal**

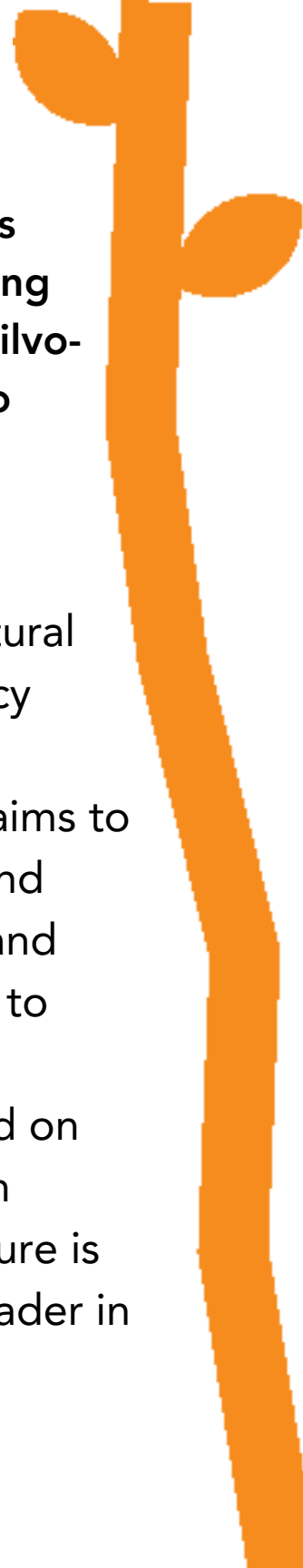
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**I hope to help address the needs and interests of women and young people in the Senegalese agro-silvo-pastoral and fishing industries to boost their revenues.**

Yacine is a sociologist committed to the transformation of the Senegalese agricultural sector. As a Specialist in Agricultural Policy Analysis at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), she aims to improve access to financing for women and youth working in the agro-silvo-pastoral and fisheries sectors in Senegal. Her dream is to create sustainable opportunities to help increase the income of those who depend on these vital sectors. Her commitment to an equitable and prosperous agricultural future is undeniable, making her an undisputed leader in her field.









African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) envisions transformative change toward gender-responsive solutions that will catalyze lasting impact for equitable agri-food systems for women and men smallholders. We are investing in women's leadership to foster equality in AR4D, equipping AR4D professionals to integrate gender in their work, strengthening institutions to adopt gender-responsive policies and practices, and impacting the enabling environment to enhance gender responsiveness.

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