

Gender Responsive Agriculture Systems Policy (GRASP) Fellowship

Fellow Profile

Position

District Fisheries and Livestock
Coordinator

Mentor

Dr. Kolawole Odubote, Fellow,
Zambia Academy of Sciences

Institution

Ministry of Fisheries and
Livestock

Area of Interest

Address existing gender gaps
within the livestock sector
by incorporating gender
in the country's Livestock
Development Policy to ensure
both women and men's interests
are taken into account in
livestock production systems

Country

Zambia

Education

MSc, Research Methods,
Jomo Kenyatta University of
Agriculture and Technology
(Kenya), 2012

Mayoba Barbara Moono 2022 AWARD Policy Fellow

"We must emphasize the necessity of designing agricultural and food system policies that integrate gender equality to foster women empowerment."

A fascination for computers and technology during her teenage years led Mayoba Barbara Moono to believe she was destined for a career as a computer scientist. However, after failing both Mathematics and Physics courses during her first year at the University of Zambia, she was not selected for the Computer Science course. So, fate had another plan for Mayoba: a return to her childhood dream of becoming an agriculturalist. "Our household always had some agricultural activity taking place in the backyard, so I developed an interest in agricultural sciences at a young age," she states. "I performed so well in Biological Sciences at university, it made me rethink my career path."

Six years later, in 2009, Mayoba graduated from the University of Zambia with a Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Sciences, majoring in Animal Science. Following this, she obtained a Master's degree in Research Methods from Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology in Kenya. To support

her goal of establishing a long-term career in animal science, Mayoba is currently undertaking her PhD in Animal Genetics at the University of Zambia, researching the crossbreeding of indigenous Zambian chicken breeds for improved growth performance traits.

In addition to her PhD research, Mayoba works with the Policy and Planning Department of the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock as a Fisheries and Livestock Coordinator in the Chembe District of Luapula Province. A key aspect of her work involves ensuring that fisheries and livestock policies are effectively interpreted and implemented by officers in the veterinary, fisheries, and livestock development departments so that ministerial objectives are achieved.

Another government policy Mayoba is working hard to realize focuses on increased participation of women in the fisheries and livestock sub-sectors.

To help achieve this goal, Mayoba has been using a gender mainstreaming approach to ensure women are provided with fisheries and livestock training and extension services. Women are also encouraged to fully participate in decision-making in their livestock cooperatives and access Constituency Development Funds (CDF) for empowerment activities. Yet, inadequate expertise, cultural practices and traditions, and limited land tenure among women are hindering the project's success. As such, more government focus and policies in the area are needed. "I believe that a gender-responsive policy would ensure the interests of both men and women are well catered for," she states. "This would unlock the enormous potential and capacity that the sector has for reducing poverty, improving the socio-economic status of smallholder farmers, and contributing to the country's economic progress."

Mayoba aims to address existing gender gaps within the livestock sector by incorporating gender in the country's Livestock Development Policy. Doing so would "ensure that livestock production systems are gender-responsive, empowering both men and women," she reveals. However, it's not only among farmers that enhanced gender equality is required: "the under-representation of women in animal science is a challenge that needs to be addressed,"

Mayoba states. This imbalance, she continues, creates an intimidating atmosphere in the workplace and hinders women's confidence. To help overcome this, Mayoba reveals that she turns to other women in her field for support and advice. Additionally, her Mentor, Dr. Kolawole Odubote, comes in handy with professional advice for career growth.

"I see the GRASP Fellowship as a milestone on a path to achieve my career goals," Mayoba reveals. "I hope to become an expert in designing and implementing gender-responsive agricultural policies in my area of specialization," she states. Ultimately, Mayoba wants to emphasize to stakeholders and those working in policymaking "the necessity of designing agricultural and food system policies that integrate gender equality to foster women empowerment."

Mayoba Barbara Moono is among a growing number of women selected for the Gender Responsive Agriculture Systems Policy (GRASP) Fellowship. GRASP Fellowship is a career development program growing a pool of confident, capable, African women to lead the design and implementation of gender-responsive policies in Africa. The Fellowship is an initiative of African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD), funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).