

Gender Responsive Agriculture Systems Policy (GRASP) Fellowship

Fellow Profile

**Position**

Agroforestry Scientist

Institution

National Agricultural Research
Organisation

Country

Uganda

Education

MSc, Environmental Forestry,
Bangor University (UK), 2009;
Agricultural Development,
University of Copenhagen
(Denmark), 2010

Mentor

Dr. Barbara Zawedde
Mugwanya, Director of
Research, Mukono Zonal
Agricultural and Research
Development Institute

Area of Interest

Gender advocacy to improve
the flow of information about
gender to key policy influencers
in agricultural value chains in
Uganda

Susan Nansereko

2022 AWARD Policy Fellow

"Many of us from different countries share experiences. I look forward to learning what others have done to solve different challenges in their respective countries."

Like many students in Uganda, Susan Nansereko's path into higher education was dictated by a combination of grades and her guardians' wishes. "I was advised by my guardians to study medicine," she admits. However, after receiving her grades in physics, chemistry, biology, and subsidiary mathematics, that plan "did not work out because of my grades."

To secure a place at Makerere University, the most promising alternative option was to study agriculture on a newly launched Community Forestry Course – which, she reveals, "was not what I originally wanted." However, by the time she graduated in 2004, Susan's feelings were wholly different. "I never minded studying agriculture, and I do not regret that I did not study medicine," she says. In fact, she went on to obtain two Master's degrees: one in Environmental Forestry from Bangor University in 2009 and a second in Agricultural Development from the University of Copenhagen in 2010. She is currently studying

for a PhD in Plant Breeding and Biotechnology at Makerere University.

After her bachelor's degree, Susan first served as a volunteer for about three years at the National Forestry Resources Research Institute (NaFORRI) before securing a job with the National Forestry Authority (NFA) where she served as a Forest Supervisor overseeing the Lake Victoria Shore Range forests in Masaka District. Susan rejoined NaFORRI in 2008 as a Research Technician and was later promoted to Research Officer.

Despite her extensive experience in forestry research, Susan explains that she doesn't have much experience in the policy arena – primarily because this is not an area Susan has had many opportunities to explore. At NaFORRI, Susan has seen different programs start and end – some of which, she recalls, have had themes to do with policy. However, a lack of policy

expertise among the program teams has meant that related successes have been minimal.

Susan has kept track of the AWARD Fellowships through its newsletter and website since 2012. Although she had been unsuccessful in previous applications, Susan was finally accepted onto the AWARD GRASP Fellowship in 2022. Through the GRASP Fellowship, Susan hopes to strengthen her research on gender advocacy, where she intends to improve the flow of information about gender to key policy influencers in agricultural value chains in Uganda.

“The knowledge, exposure, and the network of other Fellows – seeing that someone else is experiencing the same challenges – is a form of motivation,” she

affirms. “Many of us from different countries share lessons and experiences. I expect that some of the challenges faced in the Ugandan agricultural sector could have been previously solved elsewhere – so I look forward to learning what other Fellows have done to solve different challenges in their respective countries.”

In addition to learning from other Fellows, Susan also believes that the knowledge and guidance imparted by GRASP trainers and mentors will be invaluable. “When I don’t understand, I will seek clarification. As a mentee, I will learn from those who are already there and know how to deal with different situations,” she states.

Susan Nansereko 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).