

Gender Responsive Agriculture Systems Policy (GRASP) Fellowship

Fellow Profile



Position
Project Coordinator

Institution
Ministry of Agriculture and
Livestock / RIZ PLUS Project

Country
Madagascar

Education
MSc in Political Science, Univer-
sity of Antananarivo, 2022

Mentor
Dr Andry Raodina, Director of
Studies, Institute of Political
Studies, Madagascar

Research Area
Advocacy and project management

Volatiana Razafindratoanina 2023 AWARD Policy Fellow

"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 Razafindratoanina owes her passion for farming to her family – her grandparents in particular – and the rural producers she interacts with. An Agronomist since 2008, she has held several jobs in rural development. As Regional Director of Agriculture and Livestock in the Analamanga region in central Madagascar, Volatiana played an essential role in relations with national and international partners from the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock.

In 2022, as part of her continuing support for agricultural producers, she became Project Coordinator for Rural Livelihoods Productivity and Resilience Project RIZ PLUS in Madagascar, a program funded by the World Bank. With an aid package of US\$200 million for 2023-2027, the project aims to increase the productivity and resilience of rural livelihoods and food systems in the Sofia and Alaotra Mangoro regions in central and northwest Madagascar. "I dream of a project that will have a real impact on the

lives of rural producers, including women, as well as on the lives of players across agricultural value chains who have an influence on gross domestic product, trade balance, and food security. The RIZ PLUS project will help initiate activities to drive local and rural development and boost the agricultural industry," she states.

Volatiana is also interested in political activities such as lobbying and advocacy for agricultural development and gender programs. She regrets the lack of parliamentary decisions in favor of women and wants to be a voice for women who lack autonomy. "Gender issues are important to me. The autonomy of women in rural areas, who represent 60% of the population, is a means to combat inequality and vulnerability," she declares.

Rice cultivation in Madagascar clearly reflects the lack of recognition of women's roles. The industry in which chauvinism persists is still largely dominated

by men. Women, however, supply most of the labor across agricultural value chains, including commercialization and consumption. As an Agronomist, Volatiana plans to demonstrate that valuing women will positively affect agricultural productivity. She is convinced that women can be economic agents and leaders and that they can play an active role in the implementation of agricultural projects and the population's nutrition security.

Volatiana hopes to hone her negotiation and persuasion techniques thanks to the GRASP Fellowship and its mentoring program. She plans to put such skills to use in political realms and to target her advocacy efforts at decision-making bodies. Negotiation and debate are very important to her, especially in the world of institutional relations and when dealing with government, technical, and financial partners for development projects.

Volatiana Razafindratoanina 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).