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# Gender Responsive Agriculture Systems Policy Fellowship

## 2022 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 inaugural cohort of the GRASP Fellowship comprises 48 Policy Fellows from six countries, including Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Uganda and Zambia, drawn from 42 diverse organizations, including the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and government agencies.



A black and white portrait of Augustina Quaynor, a Black woman with short, dark, curly hair, smiling at the camera. She is wearing a patterned top. The background is blurred, showing some foliage.

Augustina Quaynor  
Assistant Program Officer  
Foundation for Security and Development of Africa  
Ghana

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**I understand the challenges young farmers face, and I want to help them get financial support to study agriculture or start an agribusiness.**

Augustina developed an interest in supporting young people in agriculture when she could see the youth in her community struggling to get financial support for their education. She sees the GRASP Fellowship as an opportunity to gain more knowledge and improve her research and advocacy skills, and eventually be able to engage more effectively with policymakers to implement policies and interventions for young farmers.



A black and white portrait of Clara Agyeman-Attafuah Darko, a woman with short, dark, curly hair, smiling slightly. She is wearing a sleeveless top with a bold, abstract pattern and large, circular earrings. The background is a plain, light color.

Clara Agyeman-Attafuah Darko  
Regional Agriculture Engineer  
Ministry of Food and Agriculture  
Ghana

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**My goal is to improve access to agricultural mechanization, especially for women farmers and processors, to reduce drudgery in agriculture, increase yields, and reduce post-harvest losses.**

A specialist in food and post-harvest engineering, Clara's career path was determined when her chosen university – Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) – offered her a place on their Agriculture Engineering program, rather than the Civil Engineering course. She is focusing on supporting enhanced farm machine production in Ghana. This, in turn, will provide food processors with greater access to locally produced machinery.






A black and white portrait of a smiling woman with short, curly hair, wearing a patterned shawl. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and foliage.

Comfort Yelipoie  
Agricultural Officer for Seed and Adaptive Research  
Ministry of Food and Agriculture  
Ghana

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**Agriculture is like creating something. The idea of having control over what you grow, which then gives you something to eat – along with working with soils – is what motivates me.**

Comfort has a true passion for agriculture, which allowed her to excel in her studies and work experience. She is particularly keen to understand how the policies of her directorate will positively impact the lives of those they are working for, especially smallholder women farmers in food security crop production. Taking part in the GRASP Fellowship has also ignited Comfort's passion for educating others about food systems, and she credits the program with motivating her to pursue this.



A black and white portrait of Portia Williams, a Black woman with long braids, wearing glasses and a white top with a dark strap. She is smiling and looking slightly to the right. The background is dark and out of focus.

**Portia Williams**  
**Research Scientist**  
**Science and Technology Policy Research Institute**  
**of the Council for Scientific and Industry Research**  
**(CSIR-STEPRI)**  
**Ghana**  
**2022 AWARD Policy Fellow**

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**In the face of a changing climate, we must support the poorest and most vulnerable by building a resilient agricultural system.**

Portia is keen on tackling gender imbalances through her work. At the Science and Technology Policy Research Institute (STEPRI) of the Council for Scientific and Industry Research (CSIR), she is leading a project to empower women in the face of the current climate crisis. She is building the capacity of development planners at the local level on how to mainstream social transformation and gender issues into their development planning activities.



A black and white portrait of Rose Aawulenaa, a woman with short dreadlocks, smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a patterned top with intricate designs. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with trees and foliage.

Rose Aawulenaa  
Enterprise Development Specialist  
Plan International Ghana  
Ghana

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**When you get to work with rural people, especially women, and you're able to make the needed impact in their lives, the smile alone on their faces brings some fulfillment.**

At Plan International, Rose works as the Enterprise Development Specialist for a Global Affairs Canada-funded project called 'WISE' – Women's Innovation for Sustainable Enterprises. The project aims to help improve women's social position, create economic opportunities for them. She hopes that the skills and knowledge she will obtain as a Fellow can help her raise awareness among rural communities about the 2019 Land Bill and develop her lobbying and advocacy skills.





A black and white portrait of Ann Gichure, a woman with short, dark, curly hair, smiling at the camera. She is wearing a dark, textured scarf and a dark jacket with visible straps and buckles on the shoulders. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and foliage.

**Ann Gichure**  
**Lecturer**  
**Maasai Mara University**  
**Kenya**

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**What powers me is finding solutions – from grassroots to national level – that benefit the daily lives of our people.**

Ann's career path was inspired by a desire to influence the thinking, research, and policy around value addition in the agriculture sector to boost farmers' welfare, improve food security, and spur economic development. As a Researcher and Lecturer, Ann is keen to address the gaps in the agriculture value chain – especially post-harvest losses and market forces, which result in farmers not receiving the money they deserve for their efforts.



A black and white portrait of Beatrice Muriithi, a woman with short, dark hair styled in a bun, smiling at the camera. She is wearing a light-colored blazer over a dark top with a white floral pattern. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and foliage.

Beatrice Muriithi  
Research Scientist  
International Centre of Insect Physiology  
and Ecology (ICIPE)  
Kenya

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**My conviction has always been that research is the greatest way I can help impact the lives of smallholder farmers and transform agriculture in Africa.**

Beatrice's research focuses on promoting active youth and women participation in high-value agri-enterprises. But, incorporating her research findings into policies has been a challenge.

Through the GRASP Fellowship, she aspires to enhance her ability to create and execute policies that are gender-responsive and transformative.





Dorcas Kalele  
Research Fellow  
Africa Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS)  
Kenya

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**I would like to push for incentives and infrastructure which can support rural farmers, especially women, in better management of post-harvest losses – ultimately enhancing their farm incomes, improving food security, and eradicating poverty.**

Seeing farmers overcome numerous odds fueled Dorcas Kalele's motivation and passion for agriculture. She is currently a Research Fellow at the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS) and is responsible for coordinating a multi-country project aimed at supporting the adoption of smart-hybrid solar drying technologies by smallholder farmers to address post-harvest losses. Keen to continue her work, she has chosen to focus on policies that support smallholder farmers to reduce post-harvest losses and overcome climate change.





A black and white portrait of Judith Libaisi, a woman with short, dark, curly hair, smiling and looking slightly to the left. She is wearing a patterned top with a geometric design. The background is blurred, showing foliage.

Judith Libaisi  
Agroecology and Agrobiodiversity Advisor  
SNV  
Kenya

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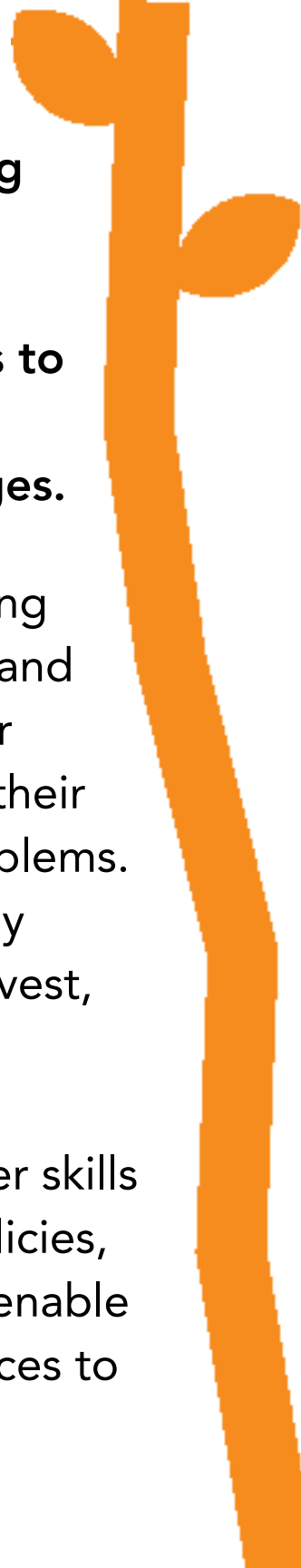
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**I am living my dream, working with smallholder farmers- celebrating their gains and partnering with other players to find solutions to food producers' everyday challenges.**

Judith realized she had found her calling when studying Agricultural Education and Extension. She particularly enjoyed her interactions with farmers, celebrating their wins and finding solutions to their problems. Now working with SNV, she particularly enjoys getting women and youth to invest, believe in agriculture, and generate meaningful incomes. She hopes the Fellowship will aid her in harnessing her skills to influence gender transformative policies, and help her design projects that will enable women farmers to contribute their voices to climate-smart agriculture.





A black and white portrait of Lilian Ndungu, a woman with dark, curly hair, looking directly at the camera. She is wearing a dark top and a necklace with large, light-colored beads. The background is a plain, light color.

**Lilian Ndungu**  
**Agriculture Technology and Policy Advisor**  
**Tony Blair Institute for Global Change**  
**Rwanda**  
**2022 AWARD Policy Fellow**

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**The sustainable and lasting adoption of the correct technology for agriculture transformation can only be realized if backed by sound and inclusive policies.**

Lilian Ndungu's area of focus is improving the design of frameworks for gender-inclusive digital agriculture policies and creating guidelines for their sustainable implementation. She notes that gendered inequalities are particularly amplified in education and literacy, access to technologies and information, and resources such as markets. As such, she hopes to influence the design of policies that will lead to the digital transformation of smallholder farming systems and livelihoods.



A black and white portrait of a smiling woman with dark skin and short, dark hair. She is wearing a patterned top and a thin necklace. The background is blurred, showing foliage.

Lynda Kebaso  
Sub-County Agriculture Officer  
Bungoma County Government  
Kenya

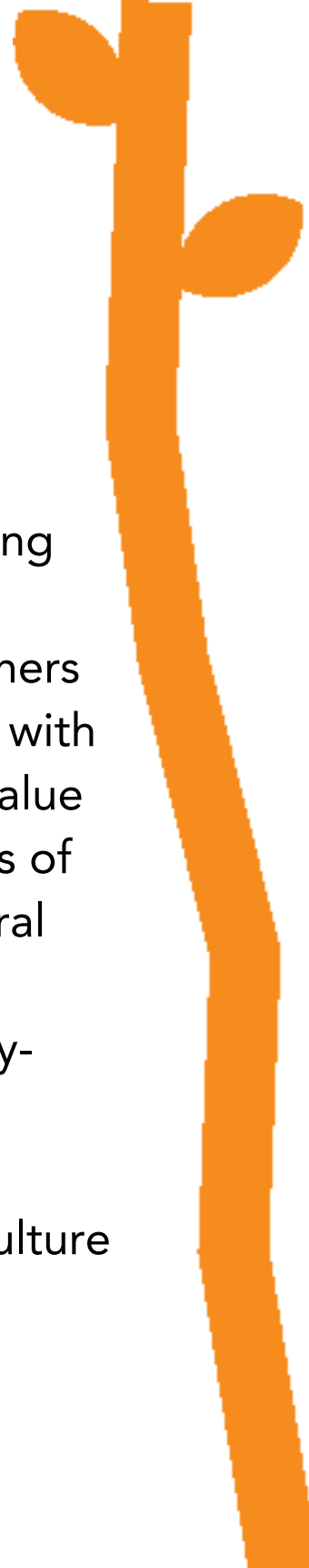
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**I am a farmer and enjoy agriculture as a profession. Combining this into my profession has made it the best choice of my life.**

Working in agriculture has been a calling for Lynda. As Sub-County Agriculture Officer, she has been able to help farmers strengthen partnerships and networks with other stakeholders in the agriculture value chain. Inspired by her own experiences of gender imbalance within the agricultural sector, she also works with women's groups, such as women-led community-based organizations. As such, Lynda's policy focus is on enhancing women's participation in leadership roles, agriculture finance, land tenure, agriculture productivity, climate change, and mechanization.





A black and white portrait of a woman with dark skin and her hair styled in braids. She is smiling and looking directly at the camera. She is wearing a light-colored, patterned garment. The background is out of focus, showing some foliage.

**Maxmillah Malongo**  
**County Assistant Director of Agriculture**  
**Homa Bay County Government**  
**Kenya**

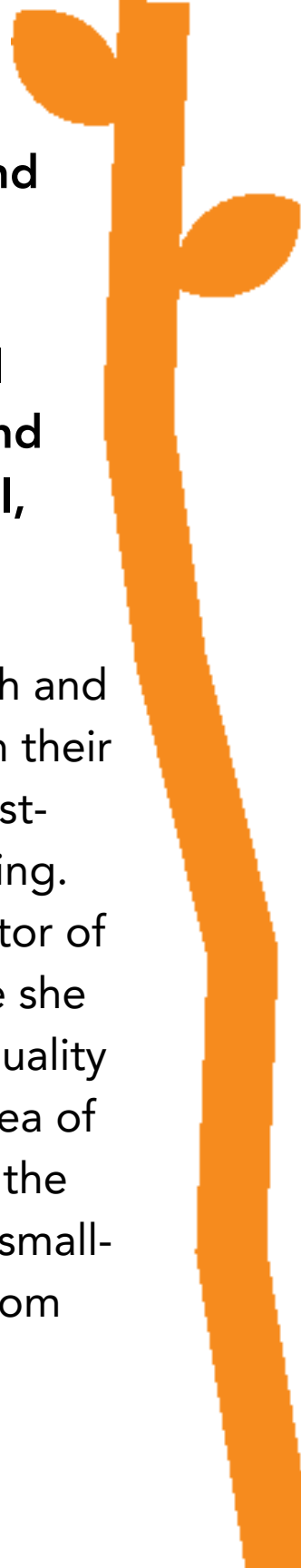
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**I want to see more women and young farmers participate in agriculture – particularly in adopting modern agricultural climate-smart technologies and penetrating regional, national, and international markets.**

Growing up in Western Kenya, Maxmillah and her siblings spent out-of-school hours on their family farm. As such, she experienced first-hand the challenges of smallholder farming. Today, she is the County Assistant Director of Agriculture for Homa Bay County, where she is well placed to advocate for gender equality in the county's agriculture sector. Her area of focus is on agricultural policy relating to the intensification and commercialization of small-scale production – encouraging a shift from subsistence farming to commercial agriculture.





A black and white portrait of Rebecca Wanjiru, a woman with her hair in a bun, wearing a patterned shawl over a dark turtleneck. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and foliage.

Rebecca Wanjiru  
Urban Food Systems Expert  
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)  
Kenya

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**It troubles me that we throw away perfectly good food while other people are going hungry.**

From the first time she stepped onto the school farm plots, Rebecca knew that agriculture was the career she wanted to pursue. In her role as an Urban Food Systems Expert in the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), she collaborates with local governments and communities to develop food system policies and implement projects that promote food and nutrition security, minimize negative environmental impacts, and support small businesses to run profitable enterprises. Her policy focus is on devising food recovery initiatives to reduce food waste in urban areas. She hopes that this will have a positive impact on improving food and nutrition security in urban areas.





Romana Mbinya  
Lecturer

Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of  
Science and Technology  
Kenya

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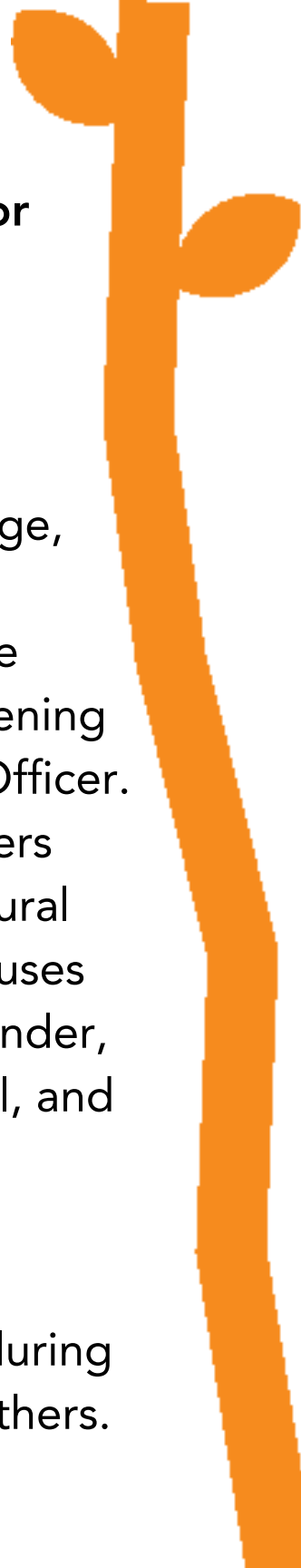
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**If I'd had a mentor, it wouldn't have taken long for me to break the glass ceiling. That is why mentorship matters to me.**

With a love of farming from an early age, Romana knew exactly what path she wanted her life and career to take. She enjoyed working with farmers and listening to their experiences as an Extension Officer. She also worked hard to ensure mothers with young children to access agricultural training. As a Fellow, her research focuses on highlighted issues of policy and gender, particularly touching on social, cultural, and economic issues that restrict women's ability to implement climate-smart technologies. She is grateful for the opportunities to work with a mentor during the program and act as a mentor to others.





A black and white portrait of a woman with her hair in braids, smiling. She is wearing a dark blazer over a light-colored top. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with trees.

Scholastica Musyimi  
Agribusiness Development Officer  
Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock,  
Fisheries and Cooperatives  
Kenya

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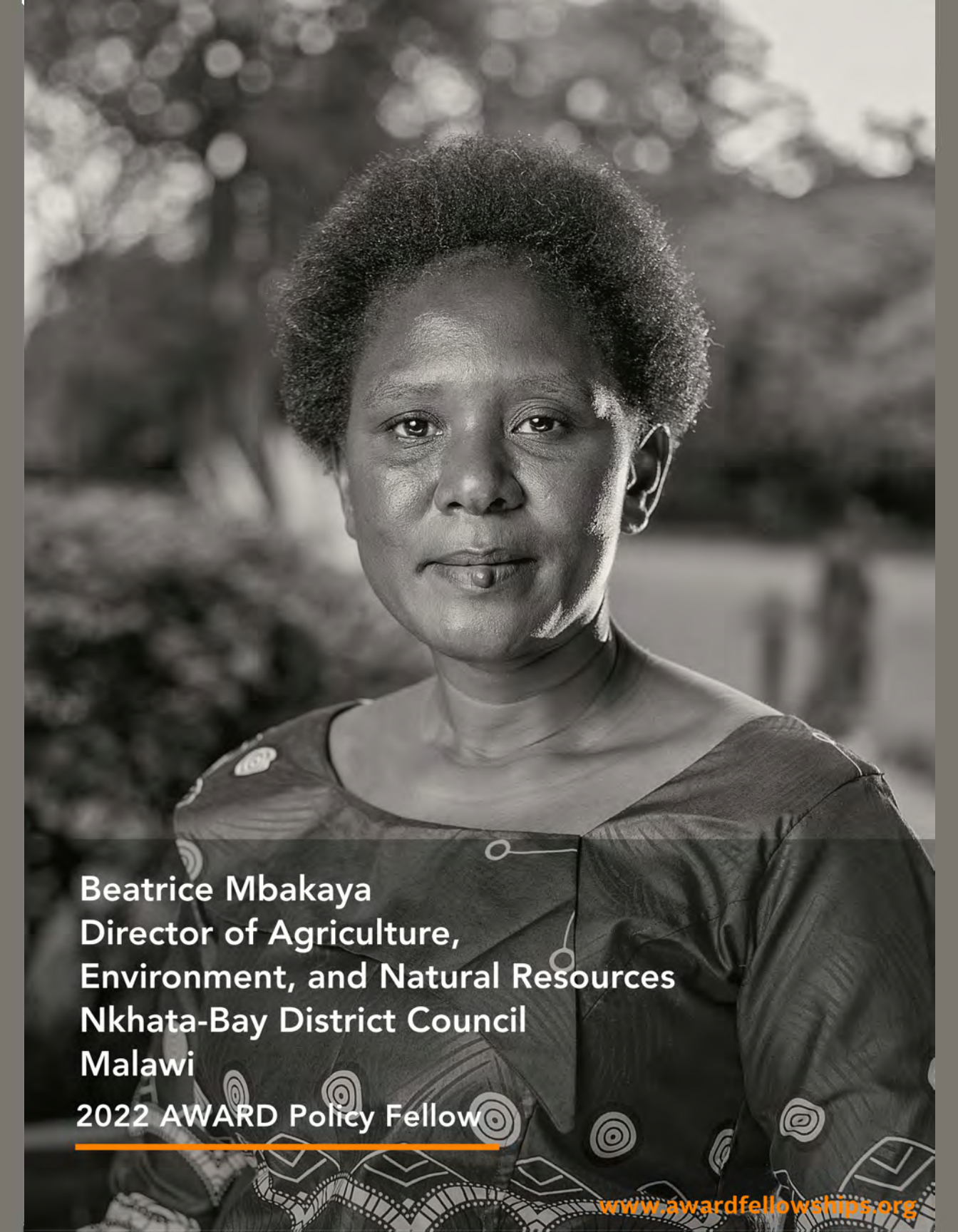


**I am proud to help farmers achieve food and nutrition security and increase household incomes while also bringing more women and youth into the agriculture sector.**

In her current role as Agribusiness Development Officer, Scholastica is responsible for coordinating various agribusiness affairs. In all of these, she strives to incorporate elements of women empowerment. Her policy focus is on bringing gender issues to the forefront of smallholder agricultural activities, policies, and strategies. She is particularly looking forward to enhancing her leadership and communication skills, and learning from her mentor and other Fellows so she can progress her work around gender policy during the program and beyond.






A black and white portrait of Beatrice Mbakaya, a woman with short, dark, curly hair, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. She is wearing a dark-colored top with a light-colored geometric pattern. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and foliage.

**Beatrice Mbakaya**  
Director of Agriculture,  
Environment, and Natural Resources  
Nkhata-Bay District Council  
Malawi

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**“ I see the GRASP Fellowship as a great opportunity for me to energize myself to continue pushing for my dream of setting up a non-governmental organization.**

Beatrice first heard about the AWARD GRASP Fellowship through a colleague that was previously selected for an AWARD program. Beatrice's research focus is on promoting active youth and women participation in high-value agri-enterprises. She is aware that her dream to start a non-governmental organization necessitates input from experienced gender experts and that the processes involved in registering and the various other tasks are a tall order.



**Carolyn Munthali**  
**Principal Fisheries Officer**  
**Department of Fisheries**  
**Malawi**

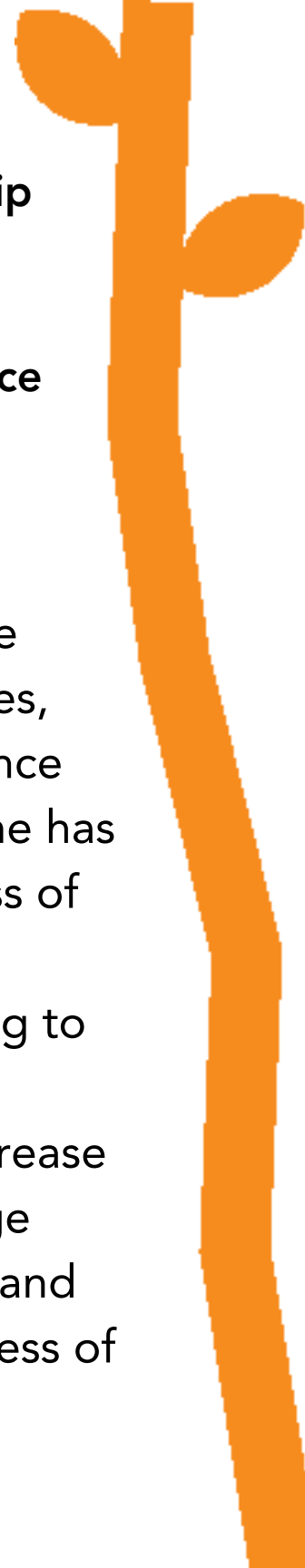
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**I want to use the skills I gain through the GRASP Fellowship to make a difference in my country by helping fishing communities develop resilience and the adaptive capacity to climate change shocks.**

As a Principal Fisheries Officer for the government's Department of Fisheries, Carolyn has gained valuable experience working with fishing communities. She has been working hard to raise awareness of climate change as she believes the fisheries sector is too slow in adapting to its effects. After completing the Fellowship, Carolyn would like to increase media visibility around climate change adaptation issues in the aquaculture and fisheries sector and promote awareness of climate smart interventions.





A black and white portrait of Chikumbutso Mtemwa, a woman with short dark hair, smiling. She is wearing a dark blazer, a pearl necklace, and a pearl earring. A small brooch is pinned to her blazer. The background is a blurred outdoor scene.

**Chikumbutso Mtemwa**  
Director, Gender and Inclusive Finance  
Palladium  
Malawi

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**We cannot discuss gender finance without considering the agriculture sector, where women do more than 60% of labor.**

Chikumbutso's career in the agricultural space has been driven by passion. Using her financial expertise to help women farmers access finances has ignited her passion for gender equality in the agriculture sector. Alongside this work, she also participates in policymaking forums covering agri-finance issues. She looks forward to developing on both a personal and professional level, initiating ideas, and taking more of an active role in policymaking for gender within the agriculture space.





A black and white portrait of Grace Chilongo, a smiling woman with braided hair, wearing a light-colored blazer over a dark top. She is standing outdoors with foliage in the background. Her hands are clasped in front of her.

Grace Chilongo  
Lecturer  
Share World Open University  
Malawi

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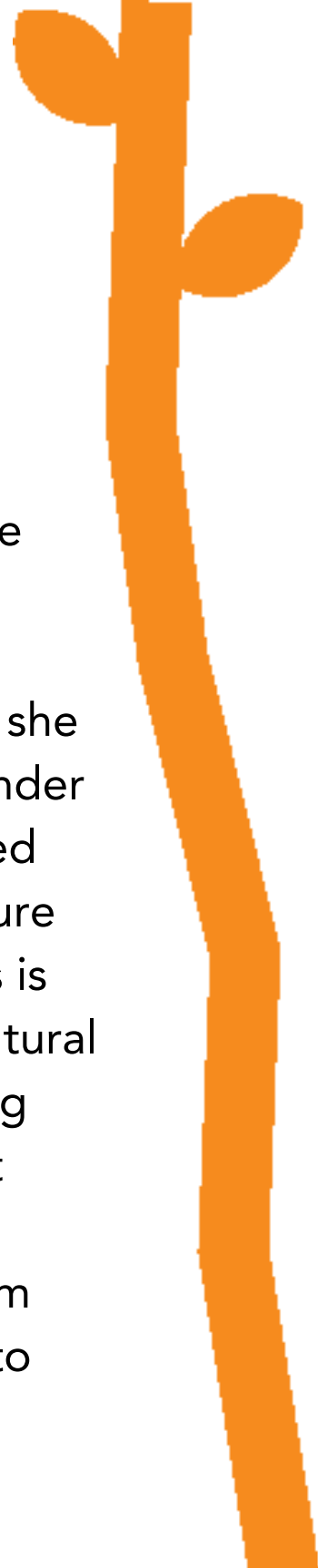
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**Women in Africa are really the pillar of the society and are the most productive segment of society**

Growing up in a community where extreme weather events weakened the capacity of already fragile institutions, Grace saw first-hand their inability to respond to their effects. As a woman, she was also acutely aware of how her gender was more vulnerable to disaster-related impacts, especially regarding agriculture productivity. Today, her primary focus is helping to create a sustainable agricultural system by empowering and supporting women to be leaders of climate-smart agriculture in their communities. As a Fellow, she is hopeful that the program will equip her with the skills required to work on gender-responsive policies.



A black and white portrait of Linda Chinangwa, a woman with dark, curly hair, smiling. She is wearing a light-colored, textured sweater. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with trees and foliage.

Linda Chinangwa  
Manager- Poverty Environment Action  
for Sustainable Development Goals  
Project  
United Nations Development Programme  
(UNDP), Malawi  
Malawi

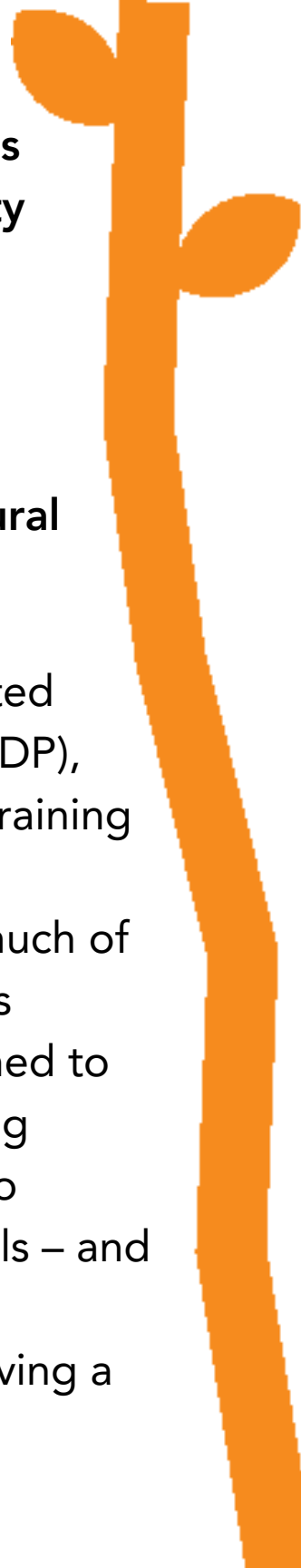
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**A fulfilling part of my career has been participating in community training aimed at promoting gender transformative and poverty reduction initiatives, narrowing the gender gap in agriculture, and improving natural resources management.**

Through her involvement with The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Linda has seen how entrepreneurship training has empowered women to engage in agribusiness. Prior to the Fellowship, much of her experience in the policy sphere was through participation in training designed to guide executive decision-making among policymakers. As a Fellow, she hopes to enhance her policy implementation skills – and plans to advocate for agriculture and development policies that aim at achieving a gender balance in Malawi.





A black and white portrait of a woman with short, curly hair, smiling. She is wearing a dark blazer over a light-colored polka-dot shirt. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with trees.

**Ponyadira Corner**  
**Lecturer**  
**Lilongwe University of Agriculture and**  
**Natural Resources (LUANAR) - Natural**  
**Resources College Campus**  
**Malawi**

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**Humans are a key element to either the sustenance or degradation of our environment. We ought to be good stewards of the environment and natural resources around us.**

Ponyadira works as a lecturer in environmental sciences at Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) – Natural Resources College (NRC) campus – and believes it's important to educate young minds on the importance of preserving our natural ecosystems. Most of the courses that she teaches incorporate some policy elements, and as such, conducting basic research and analysis of policies is paramount. In light of this, her research focus is on policy harmonization in Malawi's environment and natural resource management (ENRM) sector.





A black and white portrait of Sarah Ephrida Tione, a Black woman with short, curly hair, smiling. She is wearing a light-colored collared shirt and a dark scarf. She has large hoop earrings with a decorative element at the bottom. The background is a plain, light color.

Sarah Ephrida Tione  
Principal Economist  
Ministry of Agriculture  
Malawi

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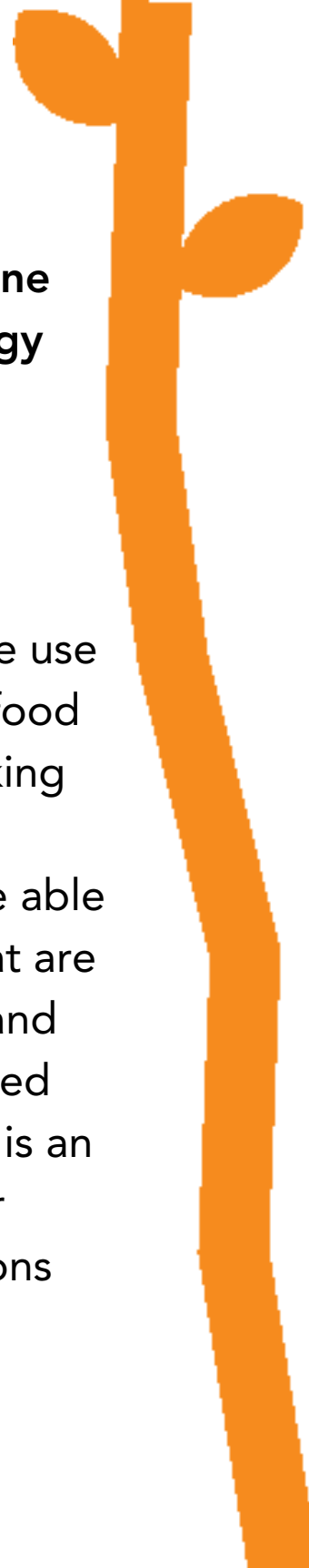
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**I believe research should be done to inform policy. This is a synergy that is key for development.**

Sarah focuses on enhancing equitable ownership of, access to, and sustainable use of agricultural land to improve African food systems. Sarah is confident that by looking into gender-inclusive policy design, implementation, and review, she will be able to learn the analytical research skills that are key for policy analysis in food systems and agriculture. That is why she is also excited about the Fellowship. She believes this is an excellent opportunity to strengthen her ability to prioritize inclusive policy options and promote Malawians' needs.



A black and white portrait of a young Black woman with short, braided hair, smiling at the camera. She is wearing a patterned top with circular and dot motifs. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees.

**Tendai Museka**  
**Head of Programs and Policy**  
**Civil Society Agriculture Network (CISANET)**  
**Malawi**

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**When practiced properly, agroecology provides diversified ecosystems which become the source of diverse and rich diets, improving health outcomes for the most vulnerable, including women and children.**

Tendai only became heavily involved in the agricultural sector two years ago, however she is already making a big impact through her efforts in the policy arena. Since joining CISANET, one of her primary goals has been to address barriers in food systems as they influence nutrition. After learning about the Fellowship, Tendai immediately recognized it as an opportunity to enhance her policy analysis skills and learn how she can better influence others. Her research is centered on agroecology and sustainable diets.





A black and white portrait of Aisha Hadejia, a smiling woman with glasses and a patterned headwrap. She is wearing a patterned top. The background is blurred, showing some foliage.

Aisha Hadejia  
Associate Partner  
Sahel Consulting Agriculture and Nutrition Ltd  
Nigeria

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**I want to ensure various gender policies work together towards a common goal and are not just fragmented and disconnected.**

Aisha is passionate about promoting gender equality in agriculture, especially as women provide over 70% of the labor force but are often excluded from high-value businesses in the sector. Aisha's focus is to advance the inclusion of women in agriculture further. She believes that Nigeria's national gender policies should be harmonized, and there should be inter-ministerial collaboration toward achieving this.





A black and white portrait of Clara Ifeanyi-obi, a woman with long, wavy hair, wearing glasses and a striped shirt. She is smiling and looking slightly to the right. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees.

Clara Ifeanyi-obi  
Senior Lecturer  
University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State Nigeria  
Nigeria

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**It gives me a huge sense of fulfillment to know that, through my research, initiatives that improved livelihoods have been developed.**

After Clara took up a place in the Climate Impact Research Capacity and Leadership Enhancement (CIRCLE) program, she encountered two problems. Many farmers are aware of climate change but are reluctant to adopt adaptation strategies as they lack the knowledge to adapt, and many women in agriculture lacked the required support and resources. Hence, her focus is on how we can develop and implement gender responsive operational climate change adaptation can be developed and implemented.



A black and white portrait of Deborah Olaosebikan, a woman with short braided hair, smiling. She is wearing a patterned top and large earrings. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees.

Deborah Olaosebikan  
Senior Research Associate (Gender Specialist)  
International Institute of Tropical Agriculture  
(IITA)  
Nigeria

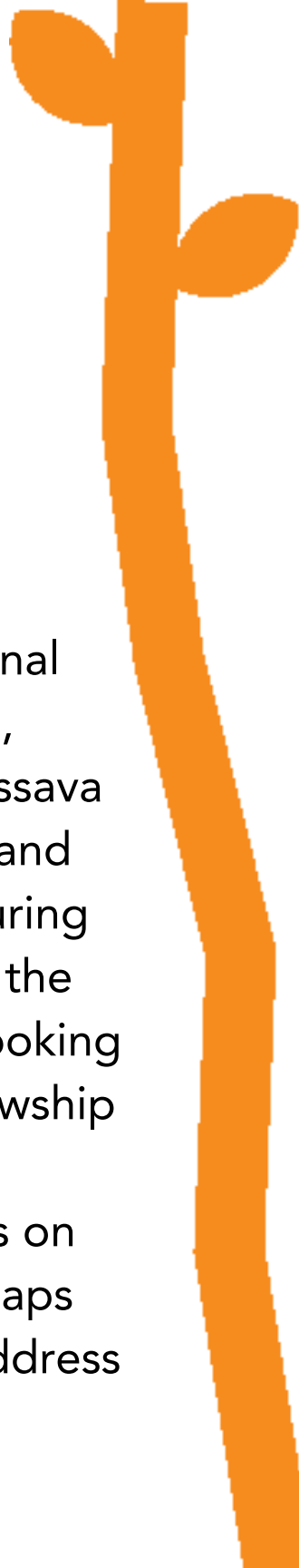
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**I fell in love with my course in my final year. I finally felt like I was in the right place: to provide useful information to farmers and help them form sound opinions and decisions.**

In her current role with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Deborah works on the 'Next-Gen Cassava project', which aims to develop new and improved cassava varieties, thus ensuring enhanced food security and improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers. Looking ahead, Deborah hopes that the Fellowship will provide her with the skills and knowledge to review existing policies on cassava and its products to identify gaps and strategize on the best ways to address these and make an impact.





A black and white portrait of a woman, Iyabode Roshidat, wearing a white hijab. She is smiling and looking slightly to the right. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and foliage.

**Iyabode Roshidat**  
**Assistant Chief Land Resource Officer**  
**Federal Ministry of Agriculture and**  
**Rural Development**  
**Nigeria**

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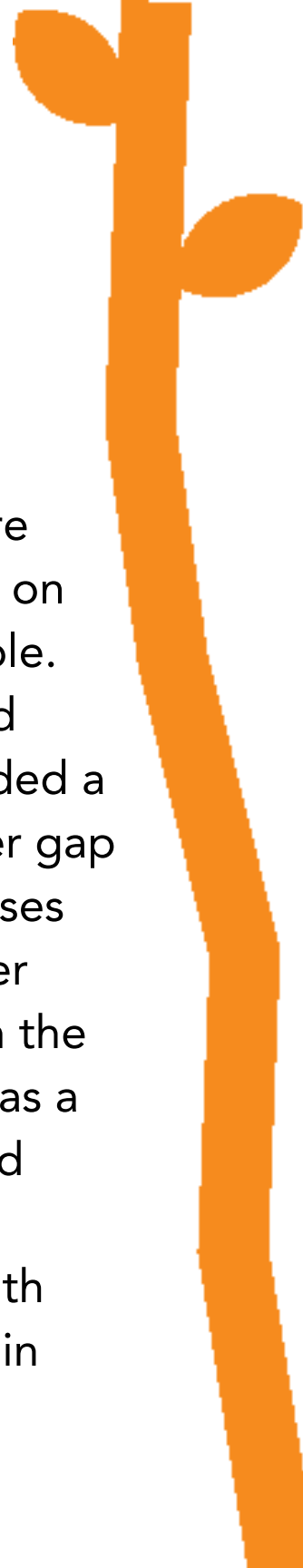
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**If women are empowered,  
their community and the  
nation are empowered.**

Iyabode strongly believes that empowering women in the agriculture field can have a positive ripple effect on communities and the nation as a whole. Her interest in policy, specifically land reform, was sparked when she attended a training event on bridging the gender gap within the sector. Her work now focuses on taking steps to negotiate for larger portions to be allocated to women in the community. She sees the Fellowship as a way to expand her knowledge around policy, build her leadership and communication skills, and connect with others working on similar challenges in Africa.





A black and white portrait of Patricia Ukegbu, a woman with long dark hair, wearing glasses and a patterned top. She is smiling and looking slightly to the right. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and foliage.

Patricia Ukegbu  
Senior Lecturer  
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike,  
Abia State  
Nigeria

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**Adolescents are the future,  
and their nutritional status is  
critical for the well-being of  
society.**

During Patricia's second year of studying for her undergraduate program in Food and Science Technology, she took a nutrition course – and promptly fell in love with the subject. She then realized that she wanted to dedicate her life to improving nutritional outcomes for others – particularly adolescents. Moreover, she appreciates the critical role adolescents play in sustaining future generations. She believes the Fellowship will help her understand gender responsive agriculture and learn how to promote policies that addresses issues around improving healthy diets for adolescents.



A black and white portrait of Sherifat Adegbesan, a woman wearing a light-colored hijab with a subtle pattern. She is smiling and looking directly at the camera. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees.

Sherifat Adegbesan  
Principal Fisheries Officer  
Ministry of Agriculture, Ogun State  
Nigeria

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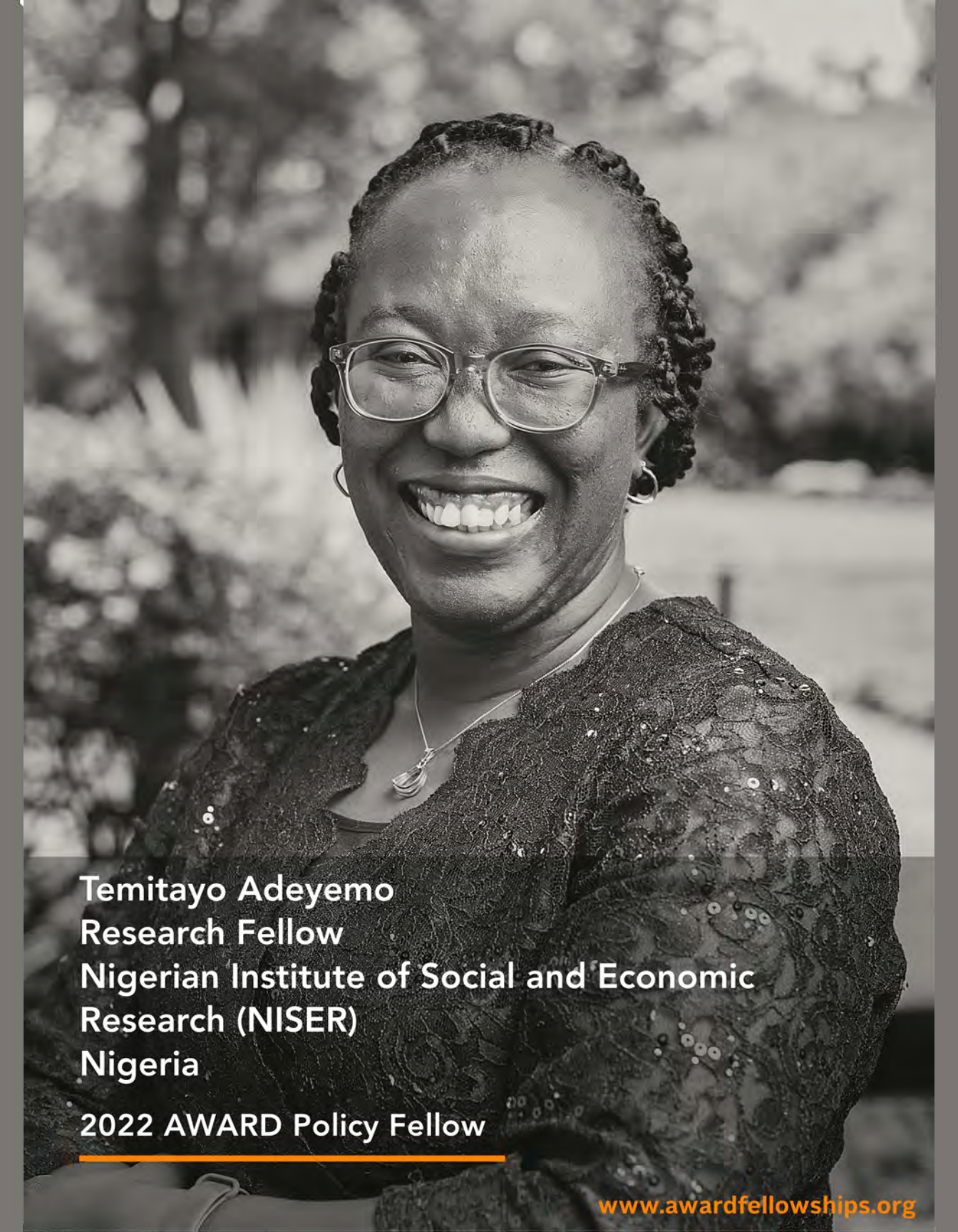


**Fish farmers complain that their harvests are purchased at low prices, so I will learn how to regulate, monitor, and control the prices of fish products.**

Sherifat's passion for agriculture began when she decided to study Applied Zoology. In her current position as a Principal Fisheries Officer, she is responsible for enforcing, regulating, monitoring, and evaluating government fisheries policies. As a Fellow, Sherifat's focus policy area is fisheries marketing – the activities and strategies used to promote, sell, and distribute fish and seafood products – an area dominated by women. She hopes her experience will enable her to develop a gender-focused policy that encourages women fish farmers.





A black and white portrait of a smiling woman with short, braided hair, wearing glasses and a dark, textured top. She is looking directly at the camera. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees.

**Temitayo Adeyemo**  
Research Fellow  
Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic  
Research (NISER)  
Nigeria

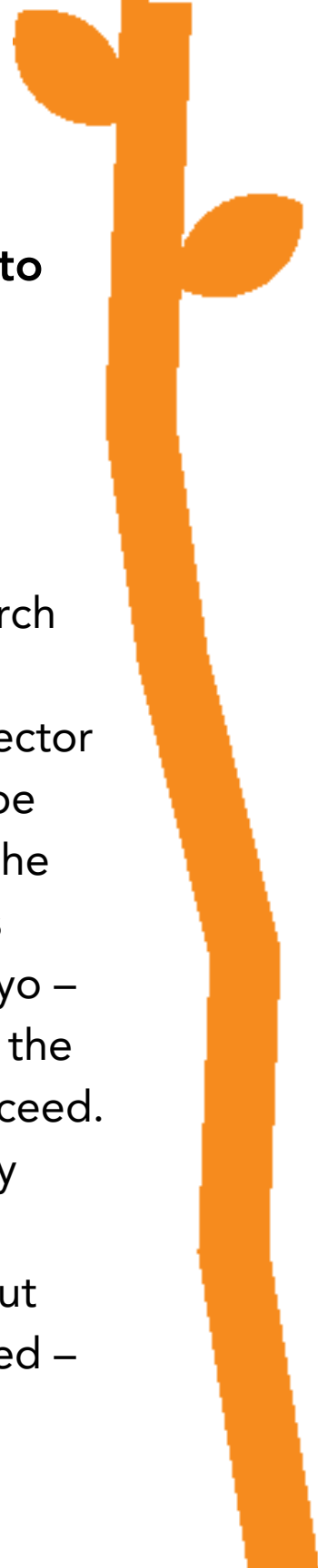
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**A career in agricultural research is one I love due to its ability to transform the lives of millions.**

As a Research Fellow at the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER), Temitayo explores the various issues facing those in the agricultural sector and how policies and frameworks can be adapted to overcome these. Through the course of her work, gender dimensions have become of key interest to Temitayo – and she’s keen to provide women with the support and access they require to succeed. The Fellowship’s gender focus is hugely appealing to Temitayo, and during the program, she hopes to learn more about ways women farmers can be empowered – and put these steps into motion.





A black and white portrait of a smiling woman, Treasure Lilian, wearing a patterned headwrap and a patterned top. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and foliage.

Treasure Lilian  
Lecturer  
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture,  
Umudike Abia State  
Nigeria

2022 AWARD Policy Fellow

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**I believe the Fellowship will help me become a confident researcher, skilled in leading transformative changes in the agrifood system through equity, empowerment, and effective rural pilots.**

As an Agribusiness Lecturer at the Michael Okpara University of Agriculture in Abia State, Treasure's post has afforded her opportunities to partake in research programs – such as one designed to increase the uptake of iron- and vitamin A-rich staple crops. However, after recognizing gender inequality issues within agriculture, she decided to make it her policy focus. With Knowledge and skills from the Fellowship, she hopes to develop her research and leadership skills to effect positive changes within the agrifood system.



A black and white portrait of Vera Onyeaka-Onyilo, a woman with shoulder-length braided hair, wearing a patterned top and a beaded necklace. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees.

Vera Onyeaka-Onyilo  
Knowledge Management, Communications and  
Policy Advisor  
International Fund for Agricultural Development  
(IFAD) Nigeria  
Nigeria

2022 AWARD Policy Fellow

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**Due to their gender, women are often denied credit or face barriers in obtaining it. I am committed to facilitating access to credit for women working in the agricultural sector.**

As a Knowledge Management, Communications, and Policy Advisor at the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Vera supports initiatives to improve smallholder farmers' food security and incomes, especially women. In addition, she recently conceptualized and facilitated the launch of the Nigeria Agriculture Gender Network for knowledge sharing and policy advocacy. Vera plans to continue building on her previous knowledge and experience, particularly so she can work with the government to reduce the financial credit barriers many women farmers face.





A black and white portrait of Faridah Bukirwa, a woman with short braided hair, wearing a checkered jacket with a white collar and a white top underneath. She is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a blurred indoor setting with ceiling lights.

Faridah Bukirwa  
Fisheries Inspector  
Ministry of Agriculture, Animal  
Industry, and Fisheries (MAAIF)  
Uganda

2022 AWARD Policy Fellow

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**Equipping women with skills and knowledge to reduce post-harvest losses will increase how much they gain from their businesses.**

Faridah's policy focus area is on improving women's contributions to artisanal fisheries and their role in aquaculture. As part of her role, she works with the central government to develop policies, regulations, and guidelines to improve the fisheries and aquaculture sector. Gender equality in the industry is a key interest for her, so she also works to develop policy interventions to support women's participation in the fisheries sector.





A black and white portrait of Gloria Arinaitwe, a woman with long, dark hair, looking slightly to the right. She is wearing a dark, textured jacket over a patterned top. The background is a light, textured wall.

**Gloria Arinaitwe**  
**Senior Dairy Inspector Dairy**  
**Development Authority (DDA)**  
**Uganda**

**2022 AWARD Policy Fellow**

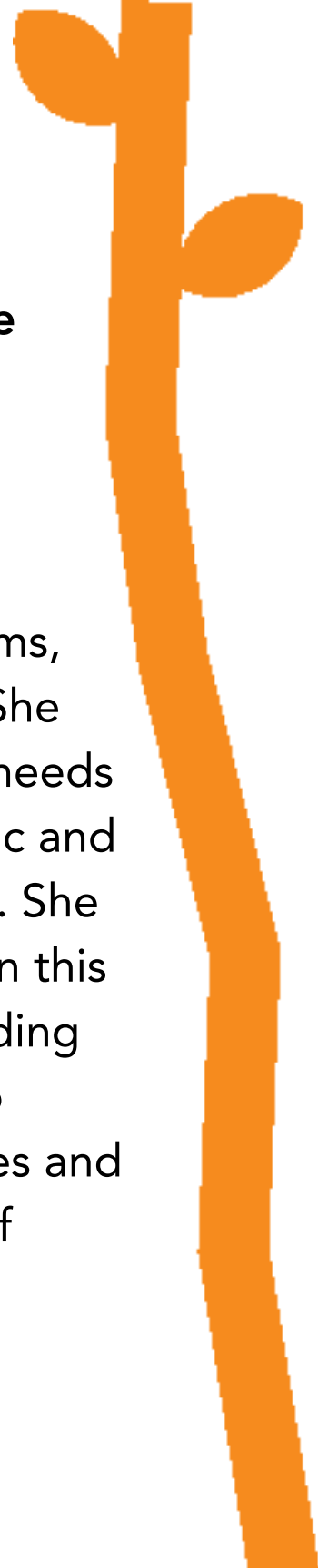
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**I love the fact that, at the policy level, you're designing actions to cause change. Without policies, we cannot do anything.**

Gloria's policy focus is on food systems, governance, and gender inclusivity. She believes this is a complex topic that needs to be better understood by the public and requires direction from policymakers. She is proud to have started some work in this area. She has provided capacity-building support to food value chain actors to improve their processing technologies and attain the Uganda National Bureau of Standards certification.



A black and white portrait of Monica Kansiime, a woman with short braided hair, smiling. She is wearing a patterned jacket over a dark top, a multi-strand beaded necklace, and large hoop earrings. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with trees and foliage.

Monica Kansiime  
Deputy Director- Development and Outreach  
CABI Africa  
Uganda

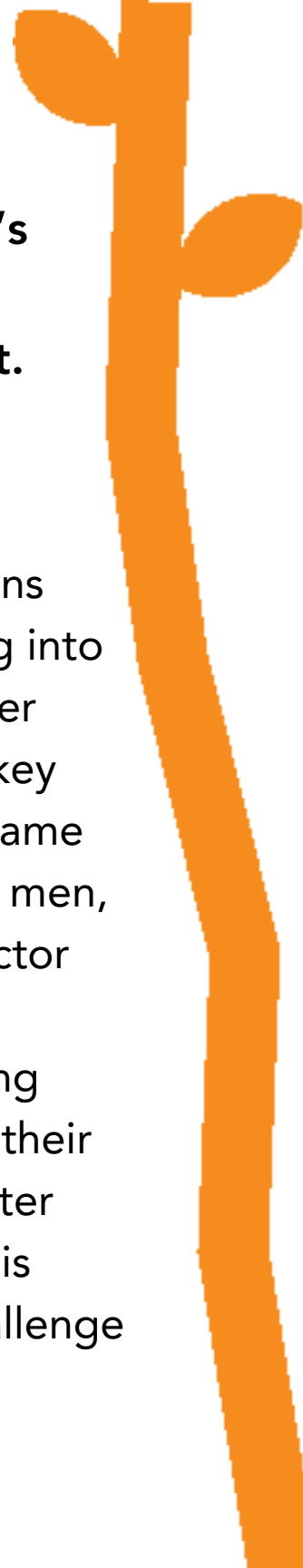
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**You can have food, but if it's not safe, then you are no better than being without it.**

While up to 80% of African farmers are women, Dr. Monica was under no illusions that she faced more challenges breaking into a leadership career in agriculture than her male counterparts, who tend to be the key decision-makers. The Fellow, who overcame many barriers in an arena dominated by men, has risen to the position of Deputy Director for CABI Africa. This is a post that she is relishing as a key decisionmaker – helping millions of smallholder farmers increase their livelihoods and contribute towards greater food security. Her selected policy focus is food safety, as she feels this is a key challenge faced by food production and supply.






A black and white portrait of Rashida Nakabuga, a smiling woman with a patterned headwrap and a dark jacket with a large bow at the collar. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and foliage.

**Rashida Nakabuga**  
**Country Director**  
**Rainforest Alliance**  
**Uganda**

**2022 AWARD Policy Fellow**

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



**I have seen a big gap for women and youth to participate in policy discussions, and it is where I derive my zeal to work**

In her current role as Country Director at Rainforest Alliance in Uganda, Rashida leads the implementation of the Rainforest Alliance certification program. One of her biggest accomplishments to date is steering smallholder farmer participation in the coffee policymaking process and expanding the program, which has enhanced market access for farmers. Rashida is also focused on reducing gender discrepancies within agriculture – particularly in the policy arena. Her selected policy focus involves working with a pool of women and youth to develop policy engagements.




A black and white portrait of Rosemary Isoto, a woman with short dark hair, wearing glasses and a dark polka-dot top with a large bow at the neck. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred outdoor scene.

Rosemary Isoto  
Senior Lecturer  
Makerere University  
Uganda

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**I particularly like working with young people because they are my country's new face and leaders. If I can change the mindset of any of them, I will have changed a whole nation for so many years ahead.**

Growing up and watching her parents use only indigenous knowledge to farm and provide for the family, Rosemary knew that agriculture was something she always wanted to do. The highlight of her career has been imparting her knowledge to the young people she teaches. Her research and recommendations have informed policy-related work on agricultural productivity, food security, and nutrition. She is very optimistic and hopeful that the knowledge she will gain from the Fellowship will be translated into something tangible for her career and for the institution she works for.

A black and white portrait of Susan Nansereko, a woman with her hair in braids, smiling slightly. She is wearing a dark top with a light-colored patterned shawl draped over her shoulders. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees.

**Susan Nansereko**  
**Agroforestry Scientist**  
**National Agricultural Research Organization**  
**Uganda**

**2022 AWARD Policy Fellow**

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**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.**

After gaining her bachelor's degree in community forestry, Susan first served as a volunteer for about three years at the National Forestry Resources Research Institute (NaFORRI), before working for National Forestry Authority. She rejoined NaFORRI in 2008 as a Research Technician, and later she was promoted to Research Officer. Through the GRASP Fellowship, Susan hopes to build 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.






A black and white portrait of Andela Kangwa, a smiling woman with short, dark, curly hair. She is wearing a patterned, short-sleeved top. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and a building.

Andela Kangwa  
Nutrition Specialist  
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)  
Zambia

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**“While good policy documents are being written, there is a gap when it comes to implementation – and it’s important to learn how to close this.**

Throughout her career – particularly while working for Zambia’s Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock – Andela has gained experience in the policy arena. Andela’s policy focus is on enhancing food safety through improved policy implementation and food safety regulations enforcement, as well as increased awareness of food handling from farm to fork. “We have some good regulations, but still see food quality and safety being compromised,” she notes.



A black and white portrait of Bwile Musonda, a woman with voluminous curly hair, smiling at the camera. She is wearing a dark blazer over a leopard-print top. A Chanel brooch is pinned to her lapel. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

**Bwile Musonda**  
**Gender Specialist**  
**TechnoServe Zambia**  
**Zambia**

**2022 AWARD Policy Fellow**

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**I'm inquisitive and love working with people – learning their challenges and sharing new ideas and concepts.**

As a Gender Advisor for the non-profit organization TechnoServe Zambia, Bwile supports small and growing food processing businesses in adopting gender-responsive business practices – creating opportunities for both women and men to thrive in the food processing value chain. She believes that this Fellowship is a highlight of her career as it will enable her to methodically learn about gender-responsive agriculture policymaking process, thus will qualify her expertise.





**Emelin Mwenda**  
**Principal Agricultural Research Officer**  
**Zambia Agricultural Research Institute (ZARI)**  
**Zambia**

**2022 AWARD Policy Fellow**

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**Through the GRASP Fellowship, I hope to grow professionally and become a confident scientist who can drive the gender agenda.**

At the Zambia Agricultural Research Institute (ZARI), Emelin's work involves devising and adapting crop and soil technologies to increase agricultural productivity and diversify production, including developing low-cost sustainable farming systems for all. However, she has faced career challenges with the negative impact of the patriarchal system on women's empowerment. Thus, building her experience in the policy arena is something Emelin would like to achieve as a GRASP Fellow – to influence gender responsive policies that recognize both the priorities and realities of men and women.





A black and white portrait of Justina Chivanga, a woman with short, curly hair, smiling. She is wearing a dark top with a decorative, beaded necklace. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with trees and a building.

**Justina Chivanga**  
**Senior Plant Health Inspector**  
**Department of Plant Quarantine and**  
**Phytosanitary Service, Ministry of Agriculture**  
**Zambia**

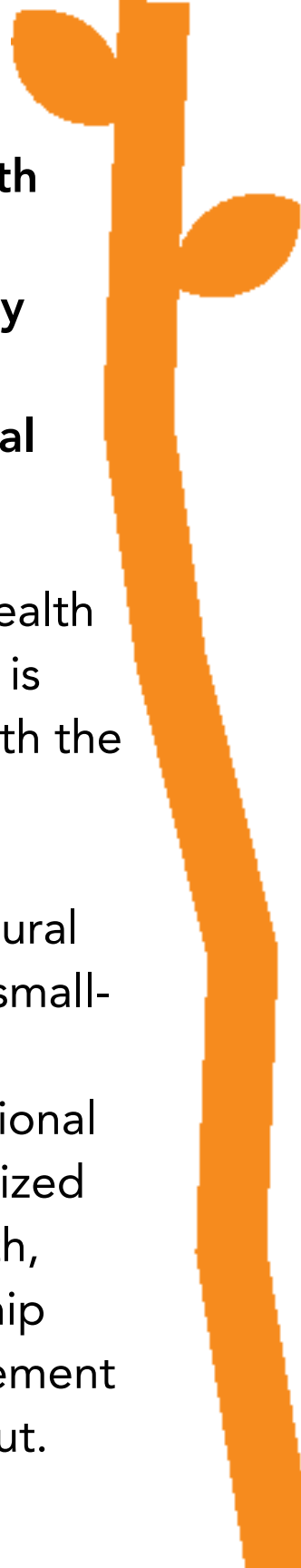
**2022 AWARD Policy Fellow**

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**By providing women and youth with relevant information, education, and resources, they can easily enhance their capacity to access international agro-markets.**

Justina has been working as a Plant Health Inspector since 2011. As a Fellow, she is looking forward to being equipped with the relevant knowledge and skills that will enable her to suggest, design, and implement gender-responsive agricultural policies to improve the livelihoods of small-scale farmers. Her focus is aimed at improving access to local and international agro-markets for small- and medium-sized entrepreneurs, including women, youth, and small-scale farmers. The mentorship aspect of the Fellowship is another element that Justina is particularly excited about.





A black and white portrait of Mayoba Barbara Moono, a woman with short, curly hair and glasses, smiling. She is wearing a light-colored, high-collared top with a small, repeating pattern. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and foliage.

**Mayoba Barbara Moono**  
**District Fisheries and Livestock Coordinator**  
**Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock**  
**Zambia**

**2022 AWARD Policy Fellow**

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

After developing an interest in agricultural sciences at a young age, Mayoba went on to study Agricultural Sciences. As a Fisheries and Livestock Coordinator for Zambia's Ministry of Agriculture, she is working hard to realize focuses on increased participation of women in the fisheries and livestock sub-sectors. Through the Fellowship, she aims to address existing gender gaps within the livestock sector by incorporating gender in the country's Livestock Development Policy, to ensure that livestock production systems are gender-responsive.



A black and white portrait of Mwaka Luguru, a woman with her hair in braids tied up with a white flower. She is smiling and wearing large hoop earrings and a necklace. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and foliage.

**Mwaka Luguru**  
Senior Community Development Officer  
Kitwe City Council, Department of Housing  
and Social Services  
Zambia

**2022 AWARD Policy Fellow**

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**Having knowledge around gender-responsive policies, social inclusion, equity, equality, and policy formulation is important for empowering more young people and community members in understanding and appreciating the importance of gender issues.**

After studying agricultural science throughout secondary school, Mwaka fell in love with the subject. Now working as a Senior Community Development Officer, she aims to provide alternative livelihoods for vulnerable groups, especially women, through diversified income sources. She is excited to gain more knowledge and skills on gender-responsive policies, social inclusion, equity, equality, and policy formulation and its effective implementation through the Fellowship.





A black and white portrait of a smiling woman with short hair, wearing a patterned scarf and a dark jacket. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with trees and foliage.

Natasha Mwila  
Rural Development Policy Advisor  
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale  
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)  
Zambia

2022 AWARD Policy Fellow

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**Women's participation in leadership positions is low, especially in agricultural research institutions. We need to identify where opportunities lie for them.**

As a Rural Development Policy Advisor for Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Natasha evaluates current policies linked to various components of rural development in Zambia and develops strategies on how best to address them. Her path to success has faced its obstacles, particularly with regard to gender. Therefore, her policy focus is to evaluate current policy strengths and weaknesses in relation to women's participation in leadership roles and provide optimum solutions to address identified gaps.





A black and white portrait of a woman with braided hair and glasses, smiling. She is wearing a dark turtleneck sweater. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and foliage.

**Nelia Nkhoma Phiri**  
**Seed Researcher**  
**Ministry of Agriculture**  
**Zambia**

**2022 AWARD Policy Fellow**

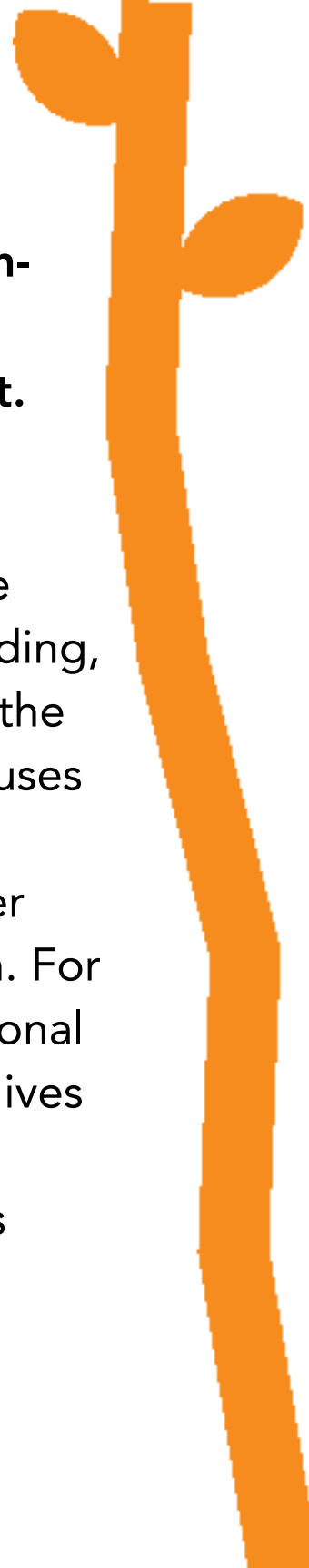
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**The GRASP Fellowship is a game changer and a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to learn how to do things right.**

With her upbringing on a subsistence farm fueling an interest in plant breeding, Nelia works as a Seed Researcher at the Ministry of Agriculture. Her work focuses on improving access to productive resources and services for smallholder farmers, especially women and youth. For Nelia, the Fellowship offers an additional opportunity to positively impact the lives of rural women farmers through influencing improved gender policies relating to crop breeding.



A black and white portrait of Precious Mwalungali, a woman with short, dark, curly hair, wearing large hoop earrings and a leopard-print top. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is blurred, showing some foliage.

Precious Mwalungali  
Principal Agricultural Economist  
Ministry of Agriculture  
Zambia

2022 AWARD Policy Fellow

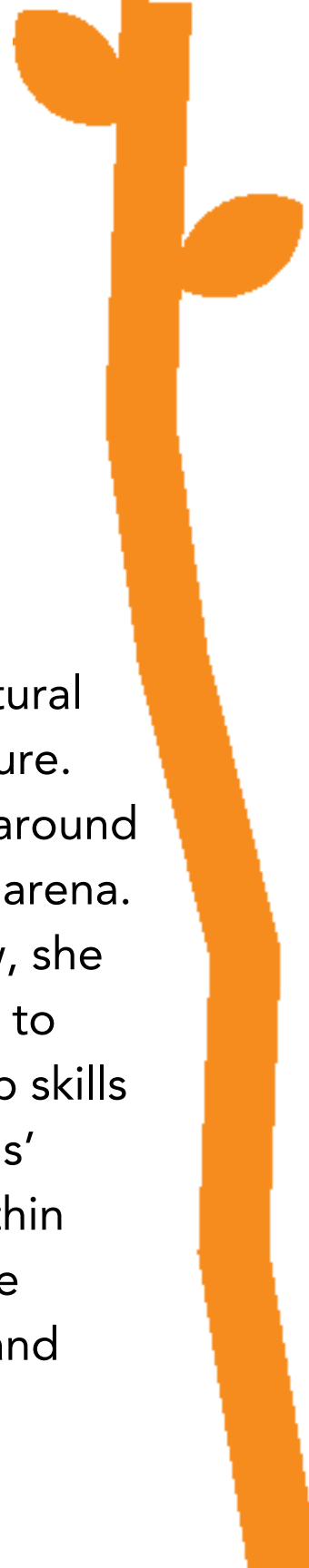
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**The GRASP Fellowship is a platform where I can immerse myself and tap into innovative skills regarding the formulation of impactful gender-responsive policies.**

Precious works as a Principal Agricultural Economist in the Ministry of Agriculture. Her career thus far has afforded her around a decade of experience in the policy arena. Overjoyed to be selected as a Fellow, she views the program as an opportunity to enhance her resilience and leadership skills and tap into innovative skills. Precious' research focuses on interventions within the Ministry of Agriculture to increase household resilience, food security, and nutrition among smallholder farmers.





A black and white portrait of Sylvia Harrison, a woman with short, curly hair, looking directly at the camera. She is wearing a dark, short-sleeved top and a thin necklace with a small pendant. The background is blurred, showing some foliage and a building.

Sylvia Harrison  
Lecturer/Researcher  
University of Zambia  
Zambia

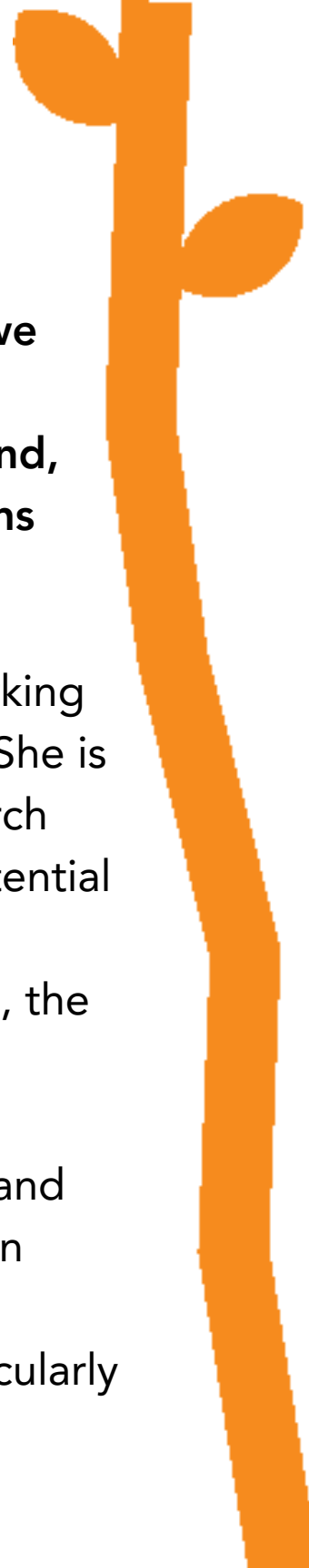
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**To develop and refine policy interventions for women and other marginalized groups involved in livestock rearing, we must better understand their roles in livestock production and, furthermore, what interventions work best to empower them.**

As one of the few animal breeders working in Zambia, Sylvia is somewhat unique. She is currently leading a collaborative research program on enhancing the genetic potential of indigenous chicken breeds to boost production and productivity. For Sylvia, the Fellowship will allow her to understand further how marginalized groups can contribute to enhancing food security and provide opportunities for her to grow in areas such as project management, communication, and leadership – particularly in her role as mentor.











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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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