

Testimonials from Former Mentees

Brendaline, Cameroon: My experience with AAAWE has been mouth-watering. Below is just the tip of the iceberg. As a result of the mentorship program, my confidence in my abilities has increased significantly. The personalized guidance and constructive feedback I received from my mentor helped me recognize my strengths and identify areas for improvement. Through various exercises and discussions, I gained a clearer understanding of my skills, which boosted my confidence in tackling complex tasks and taking on new challenges. Learning practical strategies for maintaining a healthy work-life balance and enhancing my writing skills, especially crafting impactful articles, has made me feel more capable and prepared for my professional endeavors. Before the program, I knew little about how to seek and write a winning grant and little about how to look for postgraduate programs; research methodology was a great challenge for me, and balancing work and life, especially as a woman scholar, was a particular challenge. I can testify that this program has addressed most of these issues through online webinars and talks. I am particularly grateful to the facilitators, Mrs. Nkechi and Madam Monica, for their tireless and explicit explanations. I also want to thank the World Bank for its support and contributions to the program. I won't end this testimony without thanking the brain and leader behind this beautiful initiative, Professor Elizabeth Asiedu. AAAWE is a platform anchored on quality and excellence, pushing women economists to achieve their academic dreams and passions. I will continue to speak positively about this initiative today and tomorrow, and I will invite those who haven't yet joined to meet us on our way up. It is a moving train for empowering women economists from Africa.

Fydney, Rwanda: I want to sincerely thank Prof Asiedu for pioneering this program and also for granting us Dr. Tatenda Zinyemba, who is a vigilant, pragmatic, and relentless mentor I have never seen before. She shaped me and motivated me to complete addressing external examiners' comments on my PhD thesis as soon as possible in December 2023. By the end of January 2024, I had finished and sent it again to my university (University of Rwanda). Shortly after, on April 19, 2024, I successfully defended my PhD thesis at the African Centre of Excellence, Energy for Sustainable Development, College of Science & Technology under the University of Rwanda. I am now waiting for the University Senate Council to schedule my graduation date. I am forever grateful to Prof Elizabeth Asiedu, our dear mentor, Dr. Tatenda Zinyemba, and my fellow mentees (Mabolaji, Nigeria, and Happyness, Tanzania). Ours was a strong, amazing team, built on authenticity and honest conversations that are often missing in the workplace or African societies. Long live Prof Elizabeth Asiedu, and long live Dr. Tatenda! May God Almighty reward you immensely for what you have done for me personally. I am at a loss for words. Hopefully, we will meet face to face someday and share big hugs for everything.

Tamika, Malawi: The mentorship program has helped me accomplish both my personal and professional goals. Professionally, it gave me practical insights and skills that improved my understanding of economic analysis, governance, and program management. These new skills have directly boosted my performance in my current role and opened up new opportunities for career advancement. On a personal level, the program has increased my confidence in my abilities and motivated me to pursue my goals with greater clarity and focus. My mentors' constructive feedback and guidance have played a key role in refining my goals and developing actionable plans to succeed them. One of the most beneficial aspects of the mentorship program was the personalized guidance and the opportunity to learn from experienced

professionals. The one-on-one mentorship sessions provided tailored advice that helped me navigate specific challenges and identify growth opportunities in my career. Additionally, the program's focus on practical, hands-on learning allowed me to apply new skills and knowledge directly to my work, making the learning experience highly relevant and impactful. Networking with other participants and mentors was also invaluable, as it expanded my professional connections and opened doors to future collaborations. Through discussions with my mentor, I learned practical strategies for managing my time more effectively and setting boundaries between work and personal life, significantly enhancing my overall well-being and productivity. Additionally, the program helped me improve my writing skills, particularly in crafting articles. I received guidance on structuring my writing, refining my arguments, and making my content more engaging and impactful. These skills have been instrumental in helping me publish a well-researched and compelling article, contributing to my professional growth and establishing my voice in my field.

Chiamaka, Nigeria: My experience with the AAAWE Mentorship Program 2025 has been truly transformative. It came at a defining stage of my academic and professional journey, deepening my confidence as a researcher and connecting me with a supportive community of African women economists. The monthly seminars have significantly shaped, developed, and refined me into a more excellent and well-rounded economist. My mentor's guidance was mainly instrumental in helping me structure and deliver my presentation effectively at the AFEA Conference in Nairobi, my first international trip, made possible through AAAWE's generous sponsorship. This experience marked a significant turning point in my career, and I remain deeply grateful to AAAWE for believing in my potential and investing in my growth.

Djinta, Togo: My overall experience with the AAAWE Mentorship Program 2025 was deeply enriching and transformative. The program offered me the opportunity to strengthen both my research and professional development through consistent guidance and constructive feedback from my mentor. Our exchanges helped me refine my research objectives, improve the clarity of my writing, and gain practical insights into publication strategies and career advancement. I particularly appreciated the supportive environment and the sense of belonging within the AAAWE network, which fostered meaningful connections with other women economists across Africa. Overall, the mentorship experience has significantly enhanced my confidence, visibility, and motivation to pursue impactful research and leadership in economics.

Judith, Ghana: I am genuinely grateful to be part of the AAAWE Mentorship Program 2025. It has been an incredible experience that has broadened my understanding of women's roles in economics and inspired me to give back to society. What I appreciate most is the program's impact beyond the professional realm. It has taught me valuable skills in balancing work and life, prioritizing tasks, and multitasking effectively. I am so thankful for the opportunity to learn from experienced professionals and connect with like-minded individuals. My mentor, Prof. Theresa Blankson, went above and beyond in sharing her knowledge and experience. Her mentorship not only enhanced my understanding of the field but also instilled in me the confidence to pursue my goals with renewed passion and purpose.

Talent, Zimbabwe: My overall experience with the AAAWE Mentorship Program 2025 was very beneficial. I did not have anyone locally who could assist me with IV regression analysis, and the mentorship filled that gap. The mentor was highly knowledgeable and also provided guidance on spatial analysis, which was extremely helpful for my research. The feedback I received was detailed, clear, and actionable,

allowing me to complete my work more efficiently. Additionally, learning how someone outside my immediate network approaches presenting and describing research was invaluable. Engaging with a mentor from outside South Africa challenged me to communicate my work more clearly to an unfamiliar audience, which will strengthen my ability to present internationally. Finally, having a mentor who appreciates and has navigated challenges as a woman in economics was particularly encouraging. It provided a unique perspective, making the mentorship experience even more meaningful.

Judy, Kenya: The mentorship program was a transformative journey for me. It not only helped me clarify my research interests and goals but also strengthened my confidence in presenting my ideas and connecting with other scholars. The mentors' support and encouragement were instrumental in motivating me to pursue my academic ambitions more strategically. I genuinely value the exposure, learning, and sense of community that the AAAWE program created.

Dorcas, Ghana: My experience with the mentorship program has been truly transformative in my professional development. It gave me renewed hope and revived my passion for completing my PhD, especially after I had lost motivation and energy from being in the program for a long time. Through the mentorship, I was also able to make an informed decision when considering changing my research topic. Moreover, it helped me engage in deep self-reflection, understand myself better, and learn how to plan my days in ways that align with my strengths and how my mind works. Importantly, with my mentor's guidance, I improved my communication with my supervisor—I was able to regain his attention and rebuild our working relationship after a period of disinterest and poor communication. Additionally, the program has provided me with the opportunity to be part of a community that offers genuine support—mentors and mentees—for my overall development and well-being. I am very grateful to AAAWE.

Lydia, Kenya: My overall experience with the AAAWE Mentorship Program 2025 has been truly transformative, both academically and professionally. The program has equipped me with invaluable skills in balancing academic responsibilities with personal and professional life, enhancing my ability to manage time and priorities effectively. I have gained confidence in scientific communication, learning how to present ideas clearly, write with precision, and engage meaningfully in academic discussions. Additionally, I have become more proficient at integrating Artificial Intelligence tools into my research and studies, significantly improving my efficiency and analytical capacity. One of the most memorable highlights was attending my first academic conference through AAAWE, where I had the opportunity to present my work, network with experts, and receive constructive feedback that has shaped my research direction. Overall, the mentorship experience has broadened my perspective, strengthened my academic foundation, and inspired me to pursue my career goals with renewed focus and confidence.