



Master's Degree in Women's and Gender Studies

Violet Barasa

I would like to thank the Erasmus Mundus universities' consortium through GEMMA for offering me a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to pursue a Master's degree in Women's and Gender Studies, in Hull and Utrecht universities, that has opened for me doors I never imagined possible before.

Let me begin with the experiences outside the classroom: being a part of GEMMA was exciting as I met enthusiastic like-minded students and faculty staff who shared the dream of an equal world where no one would face discrimination on the basis of their gender. The men and women on the program espoused and lived these ideals that further shaped our individual and collective strive toward achieving our mandates to end gender inequalities in our work out in the field.

The modules covered in the GEMMA program equipped me with **in-depth gender analytical skills and methodology**, writing and reporting as well as communicating information clearly and succinctly with different audiences and in various contexts. I am indebted to this program for opening my eyes to see how research and development that is gender blind can negatively impact on women and their communities; to know that development is gendered and so is its impact. As a **researcher who constantly works with poor communities in rural areas of Africa and Asia**, this knowledge couldn't be more relevant to my work today. I make it my personal and professional commitment to think about gender and integrate it into every level of my work, and it does make every difference!

Out here in the world, GEMMA graduates rock! I recently found out that my colleague on GEMMA got employed at the same time as me by the same employer; how great is that! Our skill sets makes us stand out from the crowd particularly in research-based organizations. I currently work for the **International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) as gender researcher for Africa and Asia**, providing technical support and designing tools and methodological frameworks to integrate gender in all ILRI's research for development.

Thank you GEMMA for giving true meaning to my dreams!!