



2011 AWARD Fellow
Olajumoke Adeyeye

Research area: Problems and prospects in the use of indigenous knowledge in livestock rearing and milk processing among women farmers and pastoralists in Nigeria.

Olajumoke Adeyeye wants to have an impact on smallholder farmers in Nigeria, most of whom she says are women eking out a living and needing help. As the fourth born in a family of six children, Adeyeye credits her parents as encouraging their children to pursue higher education—all of her siblings have also graduated from university. Adeyeye’s sister influenced her decision to study animal sciences, and she is glad she took that advice.

Adeyeye did her bachelor’s and master’s degrees at the University of Ibadan in her hometown. She also holds a master’s in business administration from OAU. Upon graduation, she pursued a career in information science, since she says it cross-cuts every aspect of agriculture. “I concentrate on information and communications technologies that ease the workloads of smallholder farmers.” She says farmers use mobile phones, headsets, and other technologies to share agricultural information, techniques, and data on pesticides, among other things.

Adeyeye is working with a team to establish a program to investigate the use of indigenous knowledge in agricultural activities among women farmers and pastoralists in selected areas. They hope to work on how to integrate this knowledge with modern-day research in order to encourage farmers to adopt research findings more quickly, to ultimately eradicate poverty and hunger among these women. Adeyeye’s team has also created a micro-credit program for female farmers in southwest Nigeria—where women often have difficulty accessing loans. The beneficiaries are also taught leadership skills and business literacy, including market access information.

“I have noticed that in Nigeria, most policies are gender neutral and even gender blind,” says Adeyeye. “I am working to encourage the government to mainstream gender into agricultural projects and policies.”

Adeyeye was recently selected to participate in the Young Women, Empowerment and Development Project in Sub-Saharan Africa, which is co-financed by the Spanish International Cooperation Agency for Development and executed by the *Fundación Mujeres* and *Fórum Mulher*. The program supports 75 African

Position	Program officer
Institution	LaRen Consulting, Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife
Country	Nigeria
MSc	Information science, University of Ibadan, 2005
Mentor	Simisola Mercy Odeyinka, Professor Department of Animal Sciences, Faculty of Agriculture, OAU

and Spanish women to undertake a master's program in empowerment and leadership in development projects. Adeyeye is also working on submitting PhD funding proposals to leading schools of development studies, such as the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague, Netherlands. She plans to focus on agricultural innovation, food security, and poverty alleviation.

While acknowledging the challenge of maintaining a healthy work-life balance, especially considering she has a demanding career, a husband, and two young children, Adeyeye is determined to have an impact on the issues that African women face. She expects the AWARD Fellowship to help her build networks with other women, "who want to be agents of change." She hopes to increase her efficiency in science writing, and looks forward to working with her mentor, an animal sciences specialist who told her about AWARD and encouraged her to apply.

"My passion as an agriculturalist and development worker is to see women grow to be the best they can be," Adeyeye concludes. "I am resolved to see stereotypes broken so we can have a balanced and more equitable society."

Adeyeye is one of a growing number of African women agricultural scientists who have won an AWARD Fellowship. AWARD is a professional development program that strengthens the research and leadership skills of African women in agricultural science, empowering them to contribute more effectively to poverty alleviation and food security in sub-Saharan Africa. AWARD is generously supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the United States Agency for International Development. For more information, visit www.awardfellowships.org
