



2011 AWARD Fellow
Evelyn Asante-Yeboah

Position	Assistant manager
Institution	Resource Management Support Centre
Country	Ghana
MSc	Geo-Information Science for Natural Resource Management University of Twente, Netherlands, 2010
Mentor	Professor Samuel K. Opong, Head Department of Wildlife and Range Management Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology

Research area: Contribution of on-farm tree management to climate change adaptation in Ghana.

Evelyn Asante-Yeboah recognizes that agroforestry—the bridge between forests and agriculture—in Africa is critical to ensuring food security for current and future generations while protecting natural resources. “Managing trees on farms is so important, especially in Ghana where agriculture is seen as the most important economic sector, accounting for almost half of the country’s GDP and export earnings,” says Asante-Yeboah.

A passionate environmentalist, Asante-Yeboah is very concerned about climate change. “I want to understand farmers’ perceptions about the trees on their farms and the link to climate change,” she says. “If they are educated about the affect of trees on climate change, they won’t be so tempted to destroy them. I’m also very interested in land tenure systems and rights, as well as benefit-sharing systems and their effect on Ghanaian forestry.”

In traditional land use systems, she explains, the government pays farmers to plant trees, but at the end of such projects, often there are no trees standing. “Farmers pull them out to plant food crops.” She promotes a more effective approach: give farmers land and have them plant both trees and food crops. “Farmers are then given other degraded forest land once the trees have stabilized in the previous land.” She wants to encourage farmers to plant economically viable fruit tree on their farms, which also contribute to climate change adaptation.

Asante-Yeboah says she derives the greatest satisfaction from her work when people recognize the quality in what she has done. “It makes me want to keep going when others acknowledge my efforts.” She is particularly proud that the research she conducted for her postgraduate degree on carbon sequestration and biodiversity conservation was published as a book and has attracted the interest of many researchers. “I really put my best into that work and want to do more of the same,” she says. “In my future research, I would like to focus on evaluating tree-management systems, including government and community forest plantations.”

A young community activist, Asante-Yeboah recently established Nature Watch Ghana, a volunteer association that is conducting environmental research. “We are developing funding proposals right now and we look forward to working with other NGOs and the government,” she explains.

As an AWARD Fellow, Asante-Yeboah hopes that the fellowship will help her attract funding for research work. "It is difficult to conduct research on your own and to obtain funding if you are not doing it toward a degree. AWARD will be a good platform for me to meet people through networking who have broader knowledge in my field." She is also thankful for the access to electronic libraries that AWARD provides, which she says will help her identify research gaps in agricultural/natural resource management and climate-change research projects.

Asante-Yeboah 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
