



**2011 AWARD Fellow**  
**Oluwakemi Enitan Fapojuwo**

<b>Position</b>	Senior lecturer
<b>Institution</b>	University of Agriculture, Abeokuta
<b>Country</b>	Nigeria
<b>PhD</b>	Agricultural extension and rural development University of Ibadan, 2007
<b>Mentor</b>	Janice Olawoye, Professor, University of Ibadan

*Research area: Focusing on empowerment and capacity building of rural women.*

Oluwakemi Enitan Fapojuwo recalls being very interested in agriculture even as a youngster visiting her grandfather's cocoa farm. Combined with her interest in women's issues, she decided to pursue a career in agricultural extension and rural development in an effort to alleviate the problems faced by smallholder farmers in Nigeria, most of whom are women.

"My goal is to help them have a better life by enhancing their income-generating capacity," she says. "When you ask these women if they are working, they say 'No, I am a full-time housewife', but they are actually heavily involved in farming, processing and selling produce. They do so much work with little return."

The eldest in a family of four girls, all of whom are university graduates, Fapojuwo married after completing her master's degree and was widowed just two years later. "God has been faithful. Raising my now teenage daughter, combined with my career as an academic, has been quite challenging, but interesting and rewarding at the same time," she says.

In her research, Fapojuwo and her team are working with rural communities to see how they are adjusting to climate change. "Most farmers don't use the term 'climate change', but they do see what's happening—such as higher temperatures, reduced rainfall and crop losses. I am encouraging them to grow neglected crops like melons and to go into processing." Farmers have more access to credit when they come together, so she encourages them to form cooperative groups. "Women farmers are open and willing to learn, and are eager to cooperate, especially if they are presented with potential solutions to their problems," she notes.

Fapojuwo is also studying gender mainstreaming, looking at what policies are in place to support women, and how community-based institutions and organizations can bring out the best in them. "Most of my students are women and I really enjoy working with them. I like to see how far we have come as women, and how far we can go," she says.

Fapojuwo says it is challenging for women researchers to attain senior positions at the university, such as department head, since science is still very much considered "a man's world", but she is pleased that she and

her female colleagues have a voice and are making progress. “We are gradually taking leadership positions, and I find great satisfaction when the outcome of my research is publicized and used by rural women,” she says.

With more than 25 scientific journal publications to her credit, Fapojuwo plans to compete for an AWARD-sponsored research attachment at an international institution. She also sees AWARD as a great opportunity to increase her visibility and improve her networking with other agricultural researchers. “The program has already been a serious eye-opener for me as I have met so many scientists from different countries,” she says. “Through AWARD’s courses, I have also learned to deal with conflict and to be more assertive.”

Her AWARD Mentor, a professor whom she met during her master’s program, was very supportive when Fapojuwo lost her husband. “She encouraged me to finish my PhD even during that crisis,” she says. “When I applied for the fellowship, I knew Professor Olawoye was the best mentor to choose, especially since she herself has a good work-life balance and I want to emulate her.”

*Fapojuwo 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](http://www.awardfellowships.org)*

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