



2010 AWARD Fellow Folake Olukemi Samuel

Position:	Lecturer II
Institution:	Department of Human Nutrition, College of Medicine University of Ibadan
Country:	Nigeria
PhD:	Human Nutrition, University of Ibadan, 2005
Mentored by:	Dr. Tola Atinmo, Professor of Nutrition College of Medicine, University of Ibadan

Research area: Analysis of the nutritional value of common African foods to promote their use in rural Nigerian households.

Folake Olukemi Samuel recalls trying to figure out how the tomatoes got into an unopened tin. This was the beginning of her lifelong interest in food science and nutrition. Her focus is now on contributing to the nutritional well-being of fellow Nigerians, specifically by planning and implementing community-based interventions to promote the health, productivity, and development of women and children through improved nutrition.

Samuel is currently researching the reasons for the decline in the use of soybeans among female farmers and their households. “These women often plant soybeans to sell, and forget to eat themselves,” she says. “I am concerned about their nutritional status.”

Although not native to Nigeria, soybeans had been successfully introduced and proved acceptable. “Some institutions in Nigeria suggest including soybeans in bread and biscuits, but people in rural areas don’t bake,” she explains. She is exploring alternative products, such as a soybean replacement for maize pap, steamed beancake or *moi-moi* pudding, or a cheese-like food called *beske* that is fried.

As a junior lecturer, Samuel says her workload is heavy but she finds the job rewarding. “When I finish a community intervention and I see mothers and kids doing well, I know it’s been successful—and that brings me tremendous satisfaction. Also, I enjoy seeing my students getting nutrition-related jobs.”

Samuel eventually hopes to become a professor so she can contribute to nutritional research practice and policy that will ultimately have an impact in the community.

As an AWARD Fellow, Samuel looks forward to networking with other scientists, as well as the opportunity to access electronic libraries. She is enthusiastic about working closely with her mentor, seeing this as a remarkable benefit of the project.

Samuel is one of 180 African woman 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. For more information, please visit www.awardfellowships.org