



2010 AWARD Fellow Happiness Ogba Oselebe

Position:	Senior lecturer and Director, Biotechnology Research and Development Centre (BRDC)
Institution:	Ebonyi State University
Country:	Nigeria
PhD:	Genetics and Plant Breeding University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 2003
Mentored by:	Professor Efiom Ene-Obong, Vice-chancellor Cross River State University of Science and Technology Calabar, Nigeria

Research area: Plant Breeding and Biotechnology, with specific focus on Musa species (bananas and plantains) and rice.

Happiness Ogba Oselebe's recent appointment as Director of Ebonyi State University's BRDC came along with her election to the university's Governing Council—ensuring that this mother of six has plenty to keep her busy. But she readily took on these responsibilities, along with her job of teaching undergraduate and post-graduate students and supervising master's and PhD candidates.

Oselebe's team propagates elite plantain and banana cultivars. They also select and develop high-yielding, drought-tolerant rice varieties, and multiply them in a BRDC Rice Foundation Seed Production project. These products are distributed to smallholder farmers at subsidized prices. She wants to encourage women to embrace plantain and banana cultivation as an income-generating venture. In addition, she wants them to have pure seeds of proven rice varieties for cultivation, to ensure that they get value for their labor.

This energetic and high-achieving AWARD Fellow says she wanted to be a medical doctor as a teenager, but life took a different turn and she decided to pursue a career working with plants, where genetics and plant breeding fascinated her. Eventually, she plans to pursue her dream at the molecular level. In 2009, Oselebe was awarded a fellowship through the Norman E. Borlaug International Agricultural Science and Technology Program for Women in Science.

Oselebe is involved in other "extra-curricular" activities as well. "Occasionally, I have accompanied the Governor's wife on her frequent visits to rural women and children, to put an agricultural perspective to what she does. I have also spoken at women's forums during their annual meetings, on issues dealing with family life, girl-child education, and food production."

Oselebe says she hopes her experience as an AWARD Fellow will equip her with more confidence as she tries to develop stronger leadership skills. "AWARD will enable me to gain knowledge and skills from my mentor so that I can effectively mentor younger and upcoming scientists. I also look forward to meeting other African women scientists and professionals and learning from their experiences."

Oselebe is especially interested in AWARD's Research Proposal Writing Course. "One of my greatest desires is to learn to write winning grant proposals," she says.

Oselebe 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
