



2010 AWARD Fellow
Olapeju Onadipe

Position:	Assistant project coordinator/Research associate
Institution:	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)
Country:	Nigeria
MPH:	Master of Public Health, University of Ibadan, 2008
Mentored by:	Professor Sanni Lateef Oladimeji University of Agriculture and Project Coordinator Common Fund for Commodities, IITA

Research area: Value chain development of indigenous crops in sub-Saharan Africa especially West Africa; food consumption and nutrition of women of reproductive age and children under five years of age.

Olapeju Onadipe's current work involves the coordination of a multi-country project (Benin, Nigeria, Sierra Leone) value chain development of indigenous crops, which is sponsored by the Dutch government under the Common Fund for Commodities in West Africa. The project aims to improve the livelihoods of farmers, processors, and local marketers in the cassava sector, thereby increasing food security. The project uses public-private partnerships, with the IITA as the project executing agent.

Onadipe worked as a senior research supervisor at the IITA from 2000-2007. In 2008 she was appointed to her current position, while concurrently studying for a master's degree in Public Health, with a specialty in health education and promotion. She is now completing her PhD studies in Nutrition and Dietetics, focusing on carotenoid retention and consumer acceptability of gari from bio-fortified (yellow-fleshed) cassava roots.

Onadipe's work brings together the best of both worlds for her. "I love research and development, being innovative and creating new things, and it excites me to see rural women improve their livelihoods," she says. She has developed high-quality cassava flour and trained women on how to create recipes for its use.

As an AWARD Fellow, Onadipe plans to strengthen her confidence and capacity in development project management through training offered by the fellowship. "Managing a multi-country project is putting my leadership skills to the test and they need enhancement," says Onadipe. "I want to learn to collaborate better and develop different working styles."

Onadipe is also looking forward to being mentored by a senior scientist as part of the AWARD program. "Mentoring will help me translate my skills, experience, and talents into action. I also need guidance on narrowing my interests appropriately and setting priorities."

Onadipe 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, visit www.awardfellowships.org
