



**2010 AWARD Fellow**  
**Victoria Adeyemi Adeyemo**

<b>Position:</b>	Graduate assistant
<b>Institution:</b>	Obafemi Awolowo University
<b>Country:</b>	Nigeria
<b>BSc:</b>	Agricultural Economics Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, 2005
<b>Mentored by:</b>	Professor Adelou Babatunde Ayanwale Agricultural Economics Obafemi Awolowo University

*Research area: Impact of the social exclusion of vulnerable groups and women on the effectiveness of a major agricultural development, poverty-alleviating program in Nigeria.*

“Lessons learned” from a failed agricultural development project don’t satisfy Victoria Adeyemi Adeyemo; this determined agricultural economist wants the lessons applied to ensure that women and vulnerable groups are included in future planning and decision making that affect their lives.

A master’s student in agri-business management and finance, Adeyemo is examining the outcomes of Fadama II—a large-scale agricultural development program launched in 2004 aimed at harnessing the potential of lowland flood plains to increase agricultural productivity. She is examining social inclusion, determining to what extent women and vulnerable groups benefited from the project.

Fadama I—the first phase that began in 1993—focused mainly on crop growers, excluding herders and other agriculture stakeholders. Just as the farmers’ crops began to thrive, the herders unleashed their livestock on the fields. Both farmers and herders died in the ensuing violence.

“The project exacerbated the very poverty it sought to alleviate,” says Adeyemo. The program ended in 1999 and in 2004 the government introduced Fadama II; this time, they want to get it right. The concept of social inclusion was consciously considered and implemented. Adeyemo is evaluating the impact that social inclusion can have on poverty alleviation. “I’m comparing the progress of 150 farmers—mostly women and vulnerable groups—who are in the program, with 150 who are not participating,” she explains.

As an agricultural economist, Adeyemo wants to tackle the root causes of poverty. “Agriculture is a mainstay in Nigeria, but there’s no use increasing production if farmers can’t market their produce and earn reasonable incomes,” she says. “The business of agriculture is what fascinates me.”

Adeyemo sees great potential in Nigeria’s fishing industry. She worked as a marketing executive for a consulting firm in the industry for a year before returning to university in 2007 to begin her master’s degree, and plans to specialize in agri-business management and finance.

Encouraging fellow agricultural students is one of the most satisfying aspects of her work, says Adeyemo. "Many young Nigerian women are in agriculture by accident. Most students find themselves in the faculty because they didn't get admitted to their preferred faculty," she explains. "I tell them that attitude is everything, and that agriculture can be a wonderful career. I know I have something in me to pass on."

As an AWARD Fellow, Adeyemo looks forward to being mentored by a senior scientist. She wants to develop her self-confidence and her skills so she will be equipped to apply for more responsible positions. "I am one of three female lecturers in a department of 15 staff members," says Adeyemo, who believes AWARD will empower her to be more competitive. "The fellowship will enable me to move up the leadership ladder and help others who are coming behind."

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

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