



Mojisola Olanike  
Adegunwa  
**2015 AWARD Fellow**

*"We use the cassava and yam peels to grow mushrooms—turning waste to wealth."*

Position	Lecturer I
Institution	Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB)
Country	Nigeria
PhD	Food Quality Control and Assurance, FUNAAB, 2008
Mentor	Professor Olusegun Atanda, Dean, College of Natural and Applied Sciences, McPherson University, Ogun State, Nigeria
Research Area	Assessment and awareness of food safety knowledge, attitudes, and hygiene practices among food handlers, mainly women, in smallholder and medium-sized food enterprises.

Mojisola Olanike Adegunwa was raised in a family of six in Ago Iwoye and later Abeokuta in Ogun state, Nigeria. After secondary school, she obtained a national diploma in Food Science and Technology before enrolling at FUNAAB for a BSc in Food Science and Technology. After pursuing an MBA in Marketing at Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago Iwoye, Adegunwa returned to FUNAAB and obtained an MSc in Food Quality Control and Assurance. After completing her master's, she began her PhD in the same field. For her doctoral research, Adegunwa studied 40 cassava varieties with resistance to cassava mosaic disease. These were characterized and processed into sour starch while the best six varieties were used to produce sour bread.

In 2006, Adegunwa took a teaching position at Tai Solarin University of Education and enrolled in a postgraduate diploma in education at Olabisi Onabanjo University, where she emerged as the best student in her class. She is currently a lecturer in the Hospitality and Tourism department at FUNAAB, where she teaches at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. She is also involved in the Cassava: Adding Value for Africa (C:AVA) project, whose aim is to improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers through the production of high-quality cassava flour. The project also aims to ensure the safety and quality of these products.

Her current research is on producing high-quality cassava flour by adding it to wheat to produce pastry products. "The goal is to find out what companies are looking for in the flour and what quality attributes farmers require," Adegunwa says. She is interested in relating her work to helping people, especially women, prepare food that is safe to eat. "I want to create awareness using this food quality control management system, targeting rural households to ensure that they do not just produce food, but produce quality food," she says. She is also involved in Gratitude (Gains from Losses of Root and Tuber Crops),

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**AWARD is a career-development program that equips top women agricultural scientists across sub-Saharan Africa to accelerate agricultural gains by strengthening their research and leadership skills through tailored fellowships. AWARD is a catalyst for innovations with high potential to contribute to the prosperity and well-being of African smallholder farmers, most of whom are women.**

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a project that seeks to help farmers get value out of the postharvest waste from roots and tuber crops. "We use the cassava and yam peels to grow mushrooms—turning waste to wealth," she explains. As a food quality expert, Adegunwa has led a team in training women on safe processing of gbodo, a dried yam that can be further processed into elubo (flour).

Adegunwa wants to become a world-renowned professor of food quality control and safety. "I want people to know me as a food quality control expert," she asserts. She also aspires to become a leader of women who will have an impact on youth. "This is why I am a lecturer," she says. "I want to be a role model for my students." She expects the AWARD Fellowship to help her gain the confidence and skills she needs to improve her networks and achieve her long-term goals. "This was the fourth time I had applied for the fellowship," she reveals. "I thought it was a prank when I got the news that I had been accepted!"

Adegunwa's inspiration comes from her mentor. Like him, she would like to mentor young scientists, be a leader, and write grant-winning proposals. She expects the AWARD experience to help her achieve these goals. She is aware that to become a professor, she needs to publish articles in peer-reviewed journals. Fortunately, she writes as a hobby. "I enjoy writing and I already have more than 30 papers published in peer-reviewed journals—my ritual is writing for three hours every morning," she states. "That is how I manage to write."