



Faith Yesutor Agbozo
2015 AWARD Fellow

“I want to be an accomplished scientist and researcher in nutrition and agriculture, who will make a difference wherever I find myself, and especially in my community.”

Position	Lecturer
Institution	University of Health and Allied Sciences
Country	Ghana
MPhil	Nutrition, University of Ghana, 2012
Mentor	Mary Glover-Amengor, Senior Research Scientist and Head, Food, Nutrition, and Socio-Economics Division, Ghana Food Research Institute (Center for Scientific and Industrial Research)
Research Area	Assessment of nutrition and health needs of individuals and communities, and collective planning and implementation of sustainable intervention strategies to improve quality of life.

Faith Yesutor Agbozo and her sister were raised by their maternal grandmother in Takoradi, a town located on the southwestern coast of Ghana, because their mother was studying and later posted to work in a rural area.

Agbozo first trained as a nurse after secondary school, completing the diploma after she had begun her undergraduate degree. “Although I qualified to join university, I wasn’t admitted because I didn’t have anyone to coach me on the appropriate courses to choose,” she recalls. Still determined to go to university, she chose to pursue a BSc in Home Science, graduating in 2009 with first-class honors.

“With my nursing background as, I wanted to take a course that was family related,” Agbozo says. She sought guidance and found out which courses had elements that could enhance the lives of households and families, choosing home science. “I narrowed it down to nutrition because nurses with this expertise were few and my career progression was guaranteed,” she adds.

Her undergraduate project was on nutrition knowledge, diet quality, and nutritional status of the elderly in the Ga West municipality of Greater Accra. She found that although their knowledge about diet and nutrition was fair, most were undernourished and their dietary practices were poor. This was because many of the females were living alone and had to fend for themselves, while the males had people caring for them, eating what was provided.

Agbozo continued working as a nurse, and the year after completing her bachelor’s, she registered for an MPhil in Nutrition at the University of Ghana. She compared two child growth promotion programs in Greater Accra—one fairly new and the other, a traditional program that had been implemented in child welfare clinics for over three decades.

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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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The new program involved using trained community volunteers to educate mothers, rather than conventional medical workers, since there were not enough of them to go around. “I wanted to know if the knowledge of the mothers in the new program was better than that of mothers in the traditional program and if the children were growing better under the new program,” she explains. She found that mothers in the new program had better knowledge, but the child feeding practices were not really different between the two programs.

After her completing her master’s, Agbozo stopped practicing nursing and is currently a lecturer at the University of Health and Allied Sciences, teaching public health nutrition to undergraduates. In February 2015 she was awarded a German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) scholarship to do a PhD in Public Health at the University of Heidelberg in Germany, and is due to start in October of 2015. “I plan to leave my children with my parents until the first quarter of 2016 when I return to Ghana for fieldwork,” she explains. However, she will take the children with her when she goes back to Germany to complete her studies.

Agbozo is currently conducting baseline studies for several projects in line with the university’s research agenda—assessing the prevalence of low birth weight deliveries and of obesity, diabetes, and hypertension, and assessing the impact of school feeding programs and nutrition education programs. She is also part of a project educating school children on the benefits of eating fruit and vegetables.

Agbozo is eager to achieve a greater appreciation of the linkages between agriculture and nutrition. Her aim is to reduce malnutrition by educating farmers on the right foods to grow, and the right quantities to eat, especially targeting vulnerable groups such as pregnant women and infants and young children.

She expects the AWARD Fellowship to help her improve her networking. She also hopes to gain skills in statistical analysis and scientific writing through the AWARD courses.

She says balancing family life with work and school has been a challenge, especially since she has three children under the age of four, with the youngest only an infant. She looks forward to improving this balance as her children grow and to mentoring younger colleagues.

Agbozo’s long-term goal is to become a full professor. “I want to be an accomplished scientist and researcher in nutrition and agriculture, who will make a difference wherever I find myself, and especially in my community,” she concludes.