



Afua Atuobi-Yeboah
2015 AWARD Fellow

Position	Project Supervisor
Institution	University of Ghana, Legon
Country	Ghana
MPhil	Nutrition, University of Ghana, 2010
Mentor	Dr. Seth Adu-Afarwuah, Lecturer, Department of Nutrition and Food Science, University of Ghana, Legon
Research Area	Empowerment of rural women through capacity building in agriculture extension, nutrition education, livelihood programs and research into agribusiness opportunities to promote income generation and the differential benefits on children's outcomes.



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Afua Atuobi-Yeboah hails from Kwahu in the Eastern Region of Ghana. She grew up eating banku, a traditional West African dish made of a mixture of maize and cassava and served with stew. "Growing up, I was very conscious of what people ate," she recalls, adding that she picked up good eating tips from her mother, a teacher who ensured that her four children had a nutritious breakfast before school. "She started us off with very healthy habits." This early sensitization led her to study Nutrition and Food Science at University of Ghana, Legon, graduating in 2007, followed by an MPhil in Nutrition in 2010.

During her third year of undergraduate studies, Atuobi-Yeboah was drawn to two research projects: Research to Improve Infant Nutrition and Growth (RIING) and Enhancing Child Nutrition through Animal Source Food Management (ENAM). "These projects exposed me to nutrition, agricultural extension, and demographic data collection," says Atuobi-Yeboah. "ENAM developed a nutrition manual and had a component of microfinance training." During her national service, Atuobi-Yeboah did a dietary valuation survey with the Dietary Validation Study, where she collected dietary data on adults in rural and urban areas of the Greater Accra Region to validate a food frequency questionnaire.

Atuobi-Yeboah's current research work involves building women's capacity to improve their livelihoods and food security while incorporating indigenous knowledge. Through this initiative, she is working to help farmers embrace agribusiness and diversify their crop and animal production income streams. "We train farmers to view farming as a business to promote income generation and ensure food security in both lean and bumper crop seasons," she says.

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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.

AWARD is generously supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the United States Agency for International Development and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa. For more information, visit www.awardfellowships.org

Her work allows her to interact closely with smallholder farmers while performing cooking demonstrations, helping women to start backyard gardens, and giving them seedlings of such nutrition-rich foods as aleefu (amaranth), ayoyo (corchorus), cocoyam leaves (*kontomire*), onions, sweet potato, and tomatoes. “We were able to feed the children, sell some of the produce, and use the proceeds to construct chicken coops,” she says.

Atuobi-Yeboah is currently working as a part-time tutor on a distance education course in Ghana. She is looking for funding to pursue her PhD in the near future, which would enable her to work as a full-time lecturer so she can have more influence on decision making. Although she has presented her findings at conferences, she would like to publish her work. “I believe publications will have an impact on policy,” she states. “I have a voice, but if I don’t publish my findings, no one will hear it.”

She is already seeing the benefits of AWARD in her research, especially because her mentor has introduced her to SAS, a statistical analysis tool. In addition, she is gaining a lot from the robust discussions she and her mentor have when they meet. “I also plan to give a presentation on AWARD to share with my colleagues,” she says. “I look forward to working directly in the field with undergraduate students so they can get first-hand experience and an idea of what outreach is like.”

As a young scientist, Atuobi-Yeboah has faced some difficulties, such as a shortage of funding. With support from her thesis supervisor and the African Graduate Nutrition Students Network (AGSNet), Atuobi-Yeboah raised funds to attend the Africa Nutrition Epidemiological Conference at the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa in 2012. “But despite challenges, I have found people who are ready to support me,” she adds. She is hoping to write a proposal to help her get funding to pursue a PhD in the near future. She looks up to professionals in the field such as Anna Lartey, Director of Nutrition at FAO in Rome, as well as her mentor and her current supervisor, an AWARD alumna who introduced her to the fellowship program.

The community is always at the center of her work. “It’s wonderful to see results in the field and know that the smallholder farmers are learning from us,” she says, underlining why her work with communities is so rewarding.