



2014 AWARD Fellow
Cleopatra Felecia Jallay

Position	Planning Officer
Institution	Ministry of Agriculture
Country	Liberia
MSc	Sociology, Agricultural Extension Education and Communication Management, Haryana Agricultural University, India, 2013
Mentor	Sayba Yawai Tamba, Food Security Analyst, Ministry of Agriculture
Research Area	Identification of socio-economic and academic factors affecting undergraduate agricultural students' educational and occupational aspirations.

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Cleopatra Felecia Jallay and her siblings were raised by their paternal grandmother, a teacher who encouraged all of her charges to get a good education. “She was my first teacher, and she taught me how to spell my name,” she recalls fondly.

Jallay first studied sociology at the University of Liberia, in an effort to understand people. Today, as a planning officer at the Ministry of Agriculture, she finds this background helpful. “My research involves engaging women farmers and youth, and teaching them how to be empowered in the field of agriculture,” she says. “My goal is to persuade them to see agriculture as a valid means of economic gain.” She is also a “champion of change” with Africa Lead, a USAID-sponsored program in sub-Saharan Africa that trains leaders in food-security issues.

Several years ago, Jallay won a scholarship to study at Haryana Agricultural University in India and recently completed a master’s degree in Sociology, Agricultural Extension Education, and Communication Management. Born and raised in Monrovia, Liberia, she found it challenging to be in such a different environment for two years, but she quickly learned to adapt. “My studies broadened my knowledge in the field of agriculture, and I see more to be done through research in Liberia to improve the sector,” she says. “Liberia is blessed with good soil, and has the land area to support agricultural activities. It’s possible to obtain a good livelihood here by working in agriculture.”

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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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As a planning officer, Jallay conducts capacity-building workshops for farmers. “I provide them with information and encourage them to grow vegetables, but they need to grow more than just what they can eat—they need to make a living out of their labor while getting the nutrients from what they plant,” she explains. “They are very accepting and are eager to learn more.”

Jallay was awarded a fellowship from the Norman E. Borlaug International Agricultural Science and Technology Program for Women in Science in 2009, which enabled her to take a short course in integrated pest management at Michigan State University. She hopes her work at the Ministry of Agriculture will help to empower women as she strives to see food security in Liberia improved.

Jallay is grateful for the support she receives from her husband, family, and supervisors. Although her long-range plan is to pursue a doctorate, she feels the time is right to stay home and contribute to Liberian society, including through her home and church. “I was away for two years studying, so it’s time for me to focus here at home.”

As an AWARD Fellow, Jallay looks forward to being mentored and taking advantage of the various training courses and networking opportunities that the program offers. “I look forward to establishing contact with AWARD Fellows in Liberia,” she says. She plans to share what she learns from all of the AWARD activities with her colleagues.