

Gender Responsive Agriculture Systems Policy (GRASP) Fellowship

Fellow Profile

**Position**

Assistant Program Officer

Institution

Foundation for Security and
Development of Africa

Country

Ghana

Education

MA, Research and Public Policy,
University of Ghana (Ghana),
2019

Mentor

Ms. Theodora Anti, Executive
Director, Foundation for Security
and Development in Africa

Area of Interest

Promoting access to funds and
interventions for agriculture
businesses to improve the lives
of young people

Augustina Quaynor

2022 AWARD Policy Fellow

"I understand the challenges young farmers face, and I want to help them get financial support to study agriculture or start an agribusiness."

Augustina Quaynor developed an interest in agriculture at an early age. "Farming was a family business," she reveals. "We sold obatanpa (open-pollinated variety) maize seeds to farmers. However, my interest in supporting young people in agriculture developed when I could see the youth in my community struggling to get financial support for their education." She explained that this was often due to high post-harvest losses on family farms, which impacted households' livelihoods, and inadequate wages paid to young people when providing labor to other farmers. Without sufficient financial support, these young people are not able to pursue their dreams. As such, she explains, "I developed an interest in assisting young people to access funds so they can start an agribusiness or study agriculture."

Despite this interest in agriculture, Augustina decided to take a different route when applying for university: she opted to study for an undergraduate degree in Sociology and Adult Education at the University of

Ghana, followed by a Master's in Research and Policy at the same university.

Nevertheless, after graduating in 2019, she was drawn back into agriculture and her dream of supporting young people. Augustina worked with the Center for Youth Development Services for the first year after graduation under the African Union Volunteers Program in Zambia. In her position, she assisted a consultancy firm in a nationwide survey to inform the development of the National Youth Policy. She also supported the team in implementing The Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) youth networks in Botswana, Namibia, and Zambia, to advocate for implementing CAADP policy in these countries.

Augustina currently works for the Foundation for Security and Development in Africa (FOSDA), developing programs to empower and train young people in advocating with policymakers. One of

these is FOSDA's Ghana Youth Development Project, that is working to build the capacity of young people through established youth networks to influence national policies and legal frameworks. The project has also led to the creation of the Substantial Ladies in Governance group with the aim of championing gender equality in Ghana.

After reading about the GRASP Fellowship online, Augustina knew she had to apply. She is thrilled to have been selected and to have a chance to learn more about the research, communication, and networking opportunities that the Fellowship offers. "This is a great opportunity for me to gain more knowledge and improve my research and advocacy skills. Then, I will be able to engage more effectively with policymakers to implement policies and interventions for young farmers, particularly to help them address the impacts of climate change and post-harvest losses."

Working with her Mentor and Executive Director of FOSDA, Theodora Anti, as part of the Fellowship is particularly exciting for Augustina, as she knows she will gain much in terms of knowledge, support, and guidance. She is also looking forward to collaborating with the other Fellows on the program, as "working in teams always inspires me," she enthuses. "I believe this Fellowship will assist me in meeting more diverse people in the agriculture sector. I hope to learn from them, and obtain insights around the implementation of research projects."

Augustina Quaynor is among a growing number of women selected for the Gender Responsive Agriculture Systems Policy (GRASP) Fellowship. GRASP Fellowship is a career development program growing a pool of confident, capable, African women to lead the design and implementation of gender-responsive policies in Africa. The Fellowship is an initiative of African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD), funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).