

## Gender Responsive Agriculture Systems Policy (GRASP) Fellowship

### Fellow Profile



**Position**

Research Fellow

**Institution**

Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER)

**Country**

Nigeria

**Education**

PhD, Agricultural Economics, University of Ibadan (Nigeria), 2018

**Mentor**

Dr. Siyanbola Omitoyin, Senior Lecturer, Department of Aquaculture and Fisheries Management, Faculty of Renewable Natural Resources, University of Ibadan

**Area of Interest**

Women empowerment and how it impacts the agricultural system

### **Temitayo Adeyemo**

2022 AWARD Policy Fellow

*"A career in agricultural research is one I love due to its ability to transform the lives of millions."*

"A career in agricultural research is one I love due to its ability to transform the lives of millions." These are the effusive words of Temitayo Adeyemo, who originally aimed to study medicine so she could become a pediatrician. However, due to a delayed result, she was not admitted to the medical degree program at the University of Ibadan. Still, she was offered a placement in their Faculty of Agriculture.

Disappointed but undeterred, Temitayo changed track and decided to study Agricultural Economics—a choice she remains proud of. "Many children in Nigeria are not getting the proper nutrition they need," she states. "I wanted to use my education to help change that narrative and improve agricultural system policies." To help further her knowledge, Temitayo went on to obtain a Master's and PhD in Agricultural Economics, both from the University of Ibadan.

Upon completing her PhD post-field presentation in 2017, Temitayo secured a Young Post-doctoral

Fellowship with BiomassWeb, Centre for Development Research (ZEF), University of Bonn in Germany. BiomassWeb was a research project that sought to improve food security in Africa while enhancing the potential of non-food biomass for economic development. Currently, she is a Research Fellow in the agriculture and food policy space at Nigeria's foremost think-tank, the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER). There, she provides empirical evidence for various issues in the agricultural system, to improve agricultural and food policy frameworks. As part of this work, she has developed a particular interest in the gender dimension of farming systems and associated livelihood outcomes.

"In the course of my education, I learned that men and women have different roles in farming systems," Temitayo states. She quickly realized that women's abilities were being overlooked and underutilized. "I saw that women can be productive, but often

need support – such as working in groups or having more labor mobility in rural areas – to reach their full potential.” As a result, she was inspired to do more research on ways to empower women working in agriculture to improve their livelihoods.

Temitayo reveals that striking a perfect balance between work and family has been tricky at times. “My biggest challenge was finding the right balance between work and family, as it was affecting my health,” she said. However, she has been able to overcome this by maintaining a healthy mindset. “I was told by some wise seniors that you must be able to say no, or else you will burn out. So, I decided to pace myself.” She notes that gender biases in the workplace have also proven a hindrance. “In our society, women have to do extra to show that we can perform the task or deserve the opportunity – especially when compared to our male colleagues.”

She is thrilled to have finally been selected as an AWARD Fellow. “I initially heard about AWARD in 2010 from colleagues who were previous beneficiaries of AWARD Fellowships,” Temitayo shares. She explains that she previously applied for a Fellowship aimed at young researchers but wasn’t selected. Fortunately,

she believes the GRASP Fellowship is better suited to her interests. “I was attracted to the Fellowship due to its focus on developing gender-focused policies – a theme that aligns with her career goals.” She notes she is especially keen to enhance her negotiation and leadership skills during the program.

Temitayo’s policy focus is on women empowerment and the impact that such empowerment has on their agricultural activities and outcomes. “Many times, women are involved in agricultural production, marketing, and processing, but the many sociocultural contexts limit the resources they can get, how far they can go, and what outcomes they can obtain.”

Temitayo believes the comprehensiveness of the GRASP Fellowship is a recipe for success. In addition to learning from other Fellows, “the mentoring program is one thing I am really excited about,” she enthuses. “The opportunity to get a formal mentor is great for my career development. Mentors are a must-have to guide and sharpen your visions.”

*Temitayo Adeyemo 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).*