



TODAY'S SCHOLARS, TOMORROW'S LEADERS

Five physicists and mathematicians, from Nigeria, Sudan and Vietnam, won the 2015 Elsevier Foundation Awards for Early Career Women Scientists.

Four physicists and a mathematician have been named winners of the 2015 Elsevier Foundation Awards for Early Career Women Scientists in the Developing World, in recognition of research that has strong potential social and economic benefits.

The winning scholars are from Nigeria, Sudan and Vietnam and were honoured for accomplishments in nanoparticle physics, atmospheric physics, medical physics and computational mathematics. The Elsevier Foundation awards are given in partnership with the Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World (OWSD) and TWAS. The women received their awards on 14 February at the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Annual Meeting in San Jose, California.

The winners are:

- **Mojisola Oluwyemisi Adeniyi**, head of the Atmospheric Physics/ Meteorological Research Group, Department of Physics, University of Ibadan, Nigeria [lower-atmospheric physics]. For her research using modeling to understand weather and climate, as well as atmospheric radioactivity, lightning and food security. Her research has shed light on when to best plant staple crops in Nigeria.
- **Nashwa Eassa**, assistant professor of physics, Al Neelain University, Khartoum, Sudan [nanoparticle physics]. For her research on a type of high-speed semiconductor, focusing on how to lessen the film that accumulates on its surface and interferes with the flow of electrical current.

She is also involved in a project developing methods for using solar radiation to treat water and for splitting water molecules so that hydrogen can be collected.

- **Dang Thi Oanh**, head of the Division of Science, Thai Nguyen University of Information and Communications Technology, Vietnam [computational mathematics]. For developing algorithms that are used to solve problems that are normally too complicated for computers. Her work has helped to improve the accuracy of these methods, typically used for solving problems in fields such as artificial intelligence.
- **Rabia Salihu Sa'id**, deputy dean of student affairs, Bayero University, Nigeria

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▼ The winners of the 2015 Elsevier Foundation Awards for Early Career Women Scientists in the Developing World, from left, Rabia Salihu Sa'id; Mojisola Usikalu; Nashwa Eassa; Mojisola Oluwyemisi Adeniyi; and Dang Thi Oanh. [Photo: The Elsevier Foundation]



INSPIRATION ON FILM

A short film by Nicole Leghissa of Trieste, Italy, captures the inspiring stories of five women scientists from the developing world who won the 2015 Elsevier Foundation awards. "When you receive an award, especially an international award, you are empowered, you are energized to do more," says Nigerian physicist Mojisola Usikalu.

See the new film at: www.tinyurl.com/ElsevierAwardees

[atmospheric physics]. For research that seeks to solve Nigerian environmental challenges, such as decreasing deforestation, by turning carpenters' waste into briquettes to replace firewood. She is currently working on a project to gather atmospheric data, and is a mentor in science projects that encourage youth participation.

- **Mojisola Usikalu**, senior lecturer in physics, Covenant University, Nigeria [medical/radiation physics]. For her research on how radiation affects health, finding that exposure to microwave radiation, for example, could increase anxiety and reduce sperm counts in animals. She also promotes physics in her home country through programmes that guide young women into studying university-level physics.

The 2015 Elsevier Foundation awards competition focused on physics and mathematics, and a selection a panel of eminent scholars and mathematicians selected each winner based on her achievements. The prize included USD5,000 and all-expenses-paid attendance at the 2015 AAAS Annual Meeting. Also, the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics [ICTP], based in Trieste, Italy, is offering each of the winners free attendance and accommodation at one of its workshops or conferences.

"OWSD is very proud to have been a key partner in these awards over the last five years. Each year, five very talented women scientists have been selected from countries with challenging conditions for science in general and for women in particular," said Professor Fang Xin, president of OWSD. "Furthermore, this year's awards are in maths and physics,

two fields that typically have a low take-up rate for women. The fact that the awards are presented during the AAAS Annual Meeting gives the awardees high visibility and they will make many important contacts here to further their research. I extend my full congratulations to this year's inspiring winners."

"TWAS is committed to reducing the gap between men and women in the science and engineering professions, so that we can better achieve sustainable development in all nations," said TWAS executive director Romain Murenzi. "The 2015 Elsevier Award winners, through their excellent research and commitment to education, represent the important progress we are making. Clearly, these young women will be leaders in their fields of research and in their countries."

▀▀ This award will demonstrate how women can contribute to our society for the greater good. ▀▀ *Rabia Salihu Sa'id*

David Ruth, executive director of the Elsevier Foundation, said: "We are very honoured to be able to recognize these remarkable women who are working to overcome obstacles and make valuable contributions in their respective fields. These women are leaders and we are delighted to be able to celebrate them at this year's AAAS meeting."

Sa'id, a mother of six children, acknowledged the importance of winning such awards in encouraging girls to reach for the stars. "In some areas of our country, girls' education is struggling to be recognized," Sa'id said. "This award will demonstrate how women can contribute to our society for the greater good."

Eassa stressed the impact of the award. "The prize is very encouraging for Arab women", she said, "and will show girls in my country that they can achieve their career goals, too." ▀

