



Eyiwunmi AKINSANMI

Home Country

Nigeria

Degree

PhD in Electrical
Engineering

Expertise

Engineering and Public
Policy

Research Focus

Optoelectronics-Based
Solar Applications

Host University

Carnegie Mellon University,
United States

Fellowship Awarded

2010

Eyiwunmi Akinsanmi was born in Lagos, Nigeria where she grew up in a large family of four girls and two boys, of which she is the youngest. She likes to write and says if she hadn't chosen a career in engineering she would have chosen literature. She also enjoys travelling and trying new types of food, and she recently took up tennis.

The year she turned 18 Eyiwunmi accepted a presidential scholarship to study electrical engineering at Howard University in Washington, DC. She graduated summa cum laude in 2007 and started a career as a hardware design engineer working for Dell Inc and one of their OEM partners, Foxconn, a Chinese technology manufacturing firm. She began pursuing her PhD in engineering and public policy at Carnegie Mellon University because she feels a compelling urgency to help make an impact on the development of her home country.

At Carnegie Mellon her research objective is to investigate how recent advancements in optoelectronics-based solar applications can be harnessed together with the growing mobile telephone network in sub-Saharan Africa to provide educational and developmental opportunities on that continent. Her research sits at a unique confluence of manufacturing, education and cutting-edge solar technology advancements – her aim is not only to discover the factors needed to seed a viable solar-manufacturing industry in Africa, but also to leverage technical and manufacturing expertise to model the economic viability of new cost-cutting advances in solar technologies.

She also hopes to design and implement a curriculum for teaching mobile phone application development in partnership with a local educational institution and with the support of local software companies. She feels her research has the potential to make an immediate economic impact in Nigeria and in many other developing nations.

When she completes her doctorate in the United States Eyiwunmi intends to teach in Nigeria, where she has already co-founded a non-profit organization called Nigerians4Change that has established a scholarship for girls in high school designed to help increase the number of young women who choose careers in science and engineering.