



IITA

Youth Agripreneurs

Agriculture is the future

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Three IYA members selected as Young Africans making a difference in Agribusiness



Nobel Prize winner, Dr Adesina (3rd from right) with Agripreneurs from Africa

The African Development Bank (AfDB) has selected some members of IITA Youth Agripreneurs (IYA) as part of the young people making farming 'cool' in Africa.

The list which was released ahead of the 2017 World Food Prize event that was held in Iowa, United States of America had Evelyn Ohanwusi from Nigeria, Loveth Sesuur Mile from Nigeria and Noel Mulinganya from DR Congo making the list.

Evelyn Ohanwusi is the Interim Head of the Youth in Agribusiness office, a newly institutionalized office at the headquarters of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in Ibadan, Nigeria.

She is a founding member of the IITA Youth Agripreneurs (IYA) program in Ibadan which started in 2012 and has since become a strong advocate for youth and women in agribusiness.

The IYA model has gained recognition and was adopted by the African Development

Bank in the implementation of the Pan-African Youth in Agribusiness program – the AfDB's ENABLE Youth (Empowering Novel Agribusiness Led Employment for youths) program.

Her effort in ensuring that young people get the opportunity to explore and earn a decent living through agriculture has yielded some remarkable results. Many independent agribusiness enterprises has spanned off from the trainings and resource mobilization facilitated by Evelyn and her team.

"My aspiration is to see that the youth I work for and with actually become billionaires and millionaires from agriculture. My dream is to see that my generation helps Africa regain its glory as the food basket of the world," she says.

"I am amazed at my own level of interest in agriculture. I studied Quantity Surveying as my first degree, but I never knew agriculture could be more interesting than what I learnt while growing up. Agribusiness is the way for me."

Sesuur Loveth Mile has a Bachelors in Agriculture from the University of Agriculture, Makurdi, Benue State. She is the Head of Production and Operations of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture Youth Agripreneurs incubation platform in Abuja, where she supervises all production activities and operations of the group, including fisheries and livestock, crop production and processing activities along the agricultural value chain.

She is the co-founder of CAAS Nigeria Limited, an enterprise involved in grain aggregation and supply. She has her eye on increasing availability of quality grains to meet processing and consumption needs in Nigeria.

"We are working on grain aggregation and supply. We have received practical training on the production of maize, sorghum, soybean, and other crops under the IITA Youth Agripreneur platform in Abuja. We have plans to expand to include more grains and even aggregate tubers in subsequent years of doing business," she says.

"As an agripreneur, I have been exposed to the wealth embedded in agriculture. I have networked with youths of like mind who in turn have reinforced my drive to provide quality food for Africa."

Noel Mulinganya graduated from the Catholic University of Bukavu with a Bachelors' degree in Agronomy and Crop production in June 2012. Thanks to his commitment to agriculture and his ability to work with farmers, he was awarded a full MSc scholarship by IITA to study soil science (integrated soil fertility management option) at Kenyatta University in Nairobi, Kenya, between September 2012 and December 2014.

Noel is the leader of the Kalambo Youth Agripreneurs, a group of 20 young graduates aged between 25 and 35 years from different academic backgrounds engaged in collective agribusiness enterprises in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

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From a three-hectare farm, the group has progressively increased the business portfolio along the full agricultural value chains by identifying and developing models for 11 profitable enterprises. These enterprises include; commercial production of roots, tubers and grains such as cassava, maize, beans, soybean, sorghum, and maize. Other enterprises include processing for value addition, commercial fish and fingerlings production, produce marketing, and service provision. The group is already creating a business network. "Agribusiness has opened opportunities

and avenues in the lives of my colleagues and me in ways we never expected or dreamt about. Agribusiness is really the solution to check youth unemployment in Africa," he says.

Under his leadership, IKYA has recorded much success with the production of high quality cassava flour which is being exported to Rwanda. Also, as a model group in DR Congo, IKYA has trained over 1,000 women and youths on best agronomic practices and processing techniques. Noel's vision is to scale out the IKYA model through the Young

Agripreneurs network acting in synergy with different segments of the value chain. He is convinced that in two years' time, the youth centre will serve many youth and women's groups and reduce youth unemployment through agribusiness in DR Congo.

For more click on <https://www.afdb.org/en/2017-world-food-prize-week/bios-of-agripreneurs/>

You are an inspiration to your colleagues - Dr Sanginga



Ngozi Chituru conducting the DG round their processing facility

The Director General of IITA, Dr Nteranya Sanginga has said he is impressed with the progress recorded so far by the team of young Agripreneurs in the running and operation of their business.

Frotchery Foods which is located in Akobo, Ibadan, is owned by three young graduates; Ngozi Chituru, Babatunde Ismail and Oni Hammed who recently completed their 18 months incubation program with the IITA Youth Agripreneurs.

Dr Sanginga who was on a backstopping mission to Frotchery Foods factory on Thursday, September 29, said the team were part of the courageous young graduates who have yielded to the call of creating jobs for themselves and other unemployed young people in the agricultural sector.

He added that the Institute will not rest on its oars in ensuring that the agricultural sector is revitalised with the engagement

of young people. He stated that the team will also serve as role models for other unemployed young people who are yet to have a change of mindset about the agricultural sector.

Speaking on their journey so far, Hammed Oni said the partners during the incubation period at IITA, discovered that they share similar goals about agribusiness with interest in food processing and decided to band together to form Frotchery Foods. He added that

although the experience outside the walls of IITA, has been a bit challenging but quite interesting and worth the risk.

"The training in IITA was an eye-opener into what to expect while operating in the real world. It prepared us for the challenges ahead and that is why we are here now", he stated.

While appreciating IITA for the opportunity given to them to explore various agribusiness enterprises during their training, he called on other agencies and corporate bodies to support the effort of IITA in assisting the younger generation in Africa through job creation in the agricultural sector.

Frotchery Food which is one of the spin-offs recorded by IYA in 2017 commenced commercial production of smoked catfish using the smoking kiln technology.

The business of the Frotchery Foods' team got financed after they developed a bankable business plan and met other stringent measures laid down.

The team have established market linkages within Ibadan and its environs and the business is striving and has also recorded an increase in demand.

Dr Sanginga in his statement reiterated IITA's support, stating that IITA will continue to provide technical assistance in ensuring the success of all IYA spin-offs.

DDG Partnership for Delivery visits the Agripreneur's team in Kenya; encourages them as they experience drought



Dr Dashiell with some of the KHYG team in Kibwezi

IITA's Deputy Director General in charge of Partnership and Delivery, Dr Ken Dashiell on Thursday, September 14 visited the IYA group in Kenya.

The Kenya group known as the Kibwezi Hortipreneur Youth Group (KHYG) was established in 2015 and it is located at the

University of Nairobi Dryland Research station in Kibwezi, Makueni County.

During his visit, Dr Dashiell commended the team for their self-reliance, and entrepreneurial spirit despite encountering challenges while discharging their duties. He noted that

their determination to excel in agribusiness is worthy of emulation by the other groups.

Dr Dashiell who was taken on a tour round the facilities of KHYG - the greenhouse, water supply system, fish ponds and the depot - spent over four hours enlightening the group on how to address the challenges being encountered.

KHYG is currently experiencing unprecedented drought which has caused a lot of damage to their crops. To address this, the team fetches water from the drying Kibwezi River to store in some of their fish ponds which are now used for temporary

water storage for their crops. This situation is expected to continue till the end of October when the rainy season will start. Despite the challenges, the team is working towards ensuring that the facility at the University of Nairobi transitions into a youth agribusiness park.

IYA Kinshasa exhibits at the International Agricultural Fair



Visitors at IYA Kinshasa exhibition stand

The IITA Youth Agripreneurs in Kinshasa (IYAKIN) were part of the young people who exhibited their products and displayed other innovations in the agricultural sector during the second

edition of the International Agricultural Fair in Kinshasa (FAIKIN).

The ten days agricultural fair tagged; "Innovate, Do and Invest in Agribusiness",

was attended by small and medium scale farmers, processors, scientists, agro-industrial companies, financial and technical agencies.

FAIKIN is an annual event organized by the provincial Ministry of Agriculture in Kinshasa and aims to achieve food security, revitalizing the agriculture sector, reduce poverty, malnutrition, and job creation.

During the exhibition at the fair, IYA Kinshasa sensitized the visitors at their stand on the potentials of cassava with various cassava based products on display. They were also able to sensitize unemployed young people on self-employment, entrepreneurship and job creation through experience sharing and case studies at the side event organized at the fair.

The conference gave IYAKIN the opportunity to relate with professionals in the agricultural sector and explore areas of partnership and common interests.

IYA trains GRC staff



On-field training for the GRC team

The mechanization unit of IYA recently trained the staff of IITA's Genetic Resource Center(GRC) on small-scale mechanization. Tagged; "Enhancing

Research through Mechanization", the training was aimed at sensitizing the staff on the use of machines and herbicides in weed management. Speaking during the

to also provide professional support. The trainees were impressed while stating that they were confident the training will assist in making their field tasks faster and efficient.

training, Dr Alfred Dixon said the training came at a point when IITA was moving towards the transition from hoes and cutlasses to world class mechanization of all field activities. He urged the participants to make good use of the knowledge acquired during the training.

The training took place between 13-15th of September and had 18 participants in attendance. The training also involved practical sessions on different machines and equipment.

Experts like Prof Friday Ekeleme and Dr Peter Kolawole were on ground

I never believed in myself - Miriam Samekpolo



Miriam

Samekpolo Miriam is a graduate of horticulture from the Federal University of Agriculture (FUNAAB) in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. She joined the IITA Youth Agripreneurs in April 2016 as part of the third generation of Agripreneurs known as the Green Magic.

Miriam and her team were selected to strengthen some existing enterprises of the Agripreneurs after the deployment of some members of the group to some parts of Nigeria.

She was chosen to join the vegetable enterprise which at that time needed help to resuscitate the dwindling yields of vegetable crops. Much was expected from Miriam and this according to her was a task which brought fear, uncertainty, but hope.

"We were trained by our senior colleagues on the vegetable value chain and it was quite interesting. We learnt different techniques and practices in managing and sustaining a vegetable field. With all

this, I still really did not believe in myself because I felt all the practices were just experiences that might not be useful for me to revive the enterprise or later in the future. I became scared. I went to the vegetable field on several occasions all alone during odd hours to map out how I could perform the 'magic' expected from me", she said.

She stated that events and occurrences however changed her opinion and allayed her fears about herself and the vegetable enterprise.

"I have had lots of experiences but I will like to share the recent one. The Capacity Development Unit of IYA approached me and asked me to prepare for a training that was held between 25 and 26th of September and I did. Infact I was prepared to put in my best. The trainees came from Port-Harcourt for training on vegetable value chain. The team comprised of a Doctors - I mean PhD holders, an auditor and an accountant. They were much older and had vast knowledge and wealth of experiences than I expected and I was skeptical about going forward to train these people. At some point, I was almost going to feign sickness a day to the training because I was not sure of my ability to teach or impact in the trainees but there was nothing I could do as all the excuses I raised were turned down.' The training was for two days and I

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was amazed at the excitement and encouragement I received from the trainees. They asked questions when they needed to know more and I was able to answer each and every question perfectly. I became the master of the game. They were impressed and eager to go back and practice what I had taught them. The most exciting part was when they came and asked my senior colleagues if they could release me for some time to help them establish their farm", she added.

Miriam and her team manage a 200m² greenhouse and have been able to revive tomato production with a weekly harvest and supply to their customers. Between September and October, Miriam and her team have sold over 1 ton of tomato.

She is passionate about the vegetable enterprise and makes sure that she has something to sell every day from her field. Using the irrigation system, the vegetable field now produces crops like

spinach, cucumber, okra, hybrid pawpaw, sweetcorn, pepper, lettuce, cabbage and coriander all year round.

"So far, IYA has brought out the best in me. During the course of this, I kept thinking to myself, so all this experience was not a waste after all, so people could identify with what I have and request for my services. This made me realize that I could own my farm one day or better still, act as a consultant on vegetable enterprise" she said.

Don't wait for things to happen, make things happen - Dr Sanginga



Dr Sanginga addressing the Youth Corp members



A panel discussion during the workshop

The Director General of IITA, Dr Nteranya Sanginga has advised Youth Corps members to come up with innovative ideas that can be supported and out-scaled for job creation and engagement in agribusiness.

Dr Sanginga stated this on September 20 while addressing the serving corps members at a seminar organized by the 2016 Batch B set at IITA, Ibadan Nigeria.

The Corps members organized a training titled; "Attracting and Retaining Youth in

Agriculture", to create awareness about agribusiness and introduce youths to the viable agricultural value chain.

The seminar also focused on how the youth can get involved in agriculture, and learn from the experiences of other youths who have gone into agribusiness, while identifying how they can contribute towards agricultural development regardless of their discipline.

Speaking further at the seminar, Dr Sanginga commended the Corps

members for their zeal and initiative in organizing the seminar. He urged them to come up with unique creative ideas which can be supported for out-scaling.

The Coordinator for Oyo State NYSC Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED), Miriam Umogah, who represented the NYSC State Coordinator said the Federal Government puts so much importance on youth empowerment, with emphasis on agriculture. She commended IITA for instilling the spirit of selflessness in the youths.

The former speaker of Oyo State House of Representative, Hon Kehinde Ayoola, while speaking on the topic; "Understanding the agricultural value chain: Seeing the big picture," encouraged the youths to see agriculture as a business and an opportunity to create a decent living as government is getting more interested in agriculture and even providing start-up capitals for young people.

The Head of Capacity Development Unit, IYA, Owoeye Molayo speaking on mindset change said agriculture should not be a career for the old rather youths should see it as an opportunity for wealth creation.

Speaking on the experience of an agripreneur, Tope Omotolani from Farm Crowdy Nigeria, urged the youths to pick an interest in any value chain and try to excel in it. She announced that Farm Crowdy will be willing to sponsor 50 Youth Corps members in IITA who love agriculture, by identifying any crop they would like to work with and 100 hectares of land, under the supervision of IITA.

Three young CEOs of different agribusinesses - Hammed Oni from Frotchery Farms Ltd, Jacinta Eze from Agropreneur Naija, and Adenuga Adeniyi from Tepebo International Ltd all took turns to share their experiences with the corps members.

Shell Petroleum explore areas of partnership with IITA Youth Agripreneurs

One of the largest oil producers in Nigeria, Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria is exploring the incubation platform of IYA for its agribusiness innovations, an opportunity that allows young people to be productively engaged and maintain the right drive in agriculture.

Representatives of Shell Petroleum, the Adviser on Partnership and Liaison; Dr Ayobami Ikuemonisan, and Ms Anike Kakayor, the Coordinator of Partnership, Social Performance and Investment paid a working visit to the IITA station in Onne on Tuesday, 19 September to interact with the Agripreneurs and gain insight into the IITA Youth Agripreneurs model.

Welcoming the delegates, the Head of IITA Onne station, Dr Okechukwu Richardson expressed pleasure in working with Shell Petroleum again after the end of the Cassava Enterprise Development project (CEDP) which lasted for five years.

Shell Petroleum worked with IITA in 2004 to implement the Cassava Development Enterprise Project aimed at increasing the economic opportunities through sustainable and competitive cassava production, marketing and agro-enterprise development in selected communities of 11 states in the South-East and the South-South geopolitical zones including the Niger-Delta region.

Timi Obaila, while giving a presentation on the IYA model said IYA has created a lot of impact through its training, mentoring and mindset change mechanism. This mechanism according to him is being used to transform some youth in the Niger-Delta region to prospective agribusiness experts. Giving a testimony on the impact of the IYA model, New-world Ugbameta said he



Shell petroleum team at IITA and IYA's exhibition stand



IITA and IYA team in a group photo session with the team from shell Petroleum

is now passionate about establishing his own fish enterprise after his incubation with IYA. Ugbameta is one of the youths being trained by the Agripreneurs under

the Chevron sponsored Community Youth in Agribusiness Project in Warri, Delta State.

IYA signs MoU with NYSC; donates cassava stems to Corps members

The IITA Youth Agripreneurs (IYA) Abuja has donated 800 bundles of cassava stems to the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in Abuja.

IYA in 2015 signed an agreement with NYSC to provide training support and inputs for the serving youth corps members in exchange for a piece of land to carry out their activities. The IYA Abuja team had been experiencing challenges in acquiring land around the Federal

Capital Territory (FCT) metropolis before the partnership which is expected to be of benefit to both parties.

To foster the agreement, NYSC leased twenty hectares of land to IYA in Kwali, a suburb in Abuja for cassava cultivation. Under the agreement, cassava stems from an allotted hectare will be given to the Corps members to start their own cassava cultivation while IYA take the roots. This is to stimulate the interest of

the Corps members towards creating sustainable enterprise across the cassava value chain.

Receiving the stems on behalf of NYSC, Mr. Adeniran explained that the variety, TME 419 supplied by IYA came at a time when they were sourcing for how to revamp their cassava fields.

The partnership is aimed at boosting IYA's effort in promoting the cause of attracting young people to agriculture.

IYA Tanzania welcomes Dr Sanginga; promises to support the group



Dr Sanginga checking some records of the IYA Tanzania team

The Director General of IITA, Dr Nteranya Sanginga has promised to support the expansion of the enterprises of the IYA team in Tanzania.

He stated this in September while on a working visit to IITA Eastern Africa hub station which houses the IYA Tanzania incubation center at Kwembe Dar es Salaam.

The purpose of his visit was to observe the progress of work done by the IYA team in Tanzania, identify challenges and look into areas for improvements.

In his words, some funds will be allocated to the group to expand its rabbit and poultry enterprises. The poultry facilities will also be upgraded for training of other young people.

Looking at the prospect of the business, the enterprise according to him will promote livestock farming and upscale the project to attract more youths in agriculture and livestock business.

He however urged the youths to start an animal feeds production line. He stated that the feed production will reduce the cost spent on purchasing imported feed.

He also urged the scientists to support the youth development projects.

The DG also went on a tour of the cassava production processing and production facilities, poultry, rabbit pen, and the fish ponds. The team in Tanzania started the livestock enterprise in June as another source of generating income for the group.

Know your crop - Sorghum



An IYA member in Kano accessing the sorghum field

Sorghum is one of the staple crops considered as the second most important grain in Africa and the world's fifth most important grain after wheat, maize, rice and barley. It is a drought tolerant crop which is environmental friendly. Although it is largely grown as a subsistence food crop by local farmers, young people have identified the economic benefit of sorghum and are cultivating it for commercial purposes.

The IITA Youth Agripreneurs in Kano is one of the group of young people that have identified this opportunity and have commercialized the production of sorghum (seeds and grains) for the ever increasing market demand especially in the Northern part of Nigeria.

About 34 hectares has been planted in Nasarawa with identified off-takers for the produce. IYA targets brewers, flour producers as it is used as raw material for traditional African beer, malt extraction and flour production because it now

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Tanzanian government supports the youth with land

The Tanzanian government has supported the IYA team in Tanzania with 10ha of land for the production of cassava seeds.

The land located at the Coast of Tanzania, Bagamoyo districts has been chosen for the production and multiplication of improved cassava seeds and roots varieties.

The land is part of the support from IITA's collaboration with the government through the Mikocheni Agriculture Research Institute (MARI).

Appreciating the government for the support, the head of cassava value chain, Edwin Ndibalema said the land will give them an opportunity to expand their production from 2.5ha to 10ha.

"Producing high quality cassava flour to meet the level of demand is part of our mission, we are working hard to make sure we expand and increase our income", he said. The team has experienced high yield and return on investment from previous production hence, the need for them to

expand to meet the increase in demand. Activities of Tanzania Youth Agripreneurs on cassava activities has been growing and has shown good trend of progress since the establishment of the business in 2014. The cost benefit analysis indicates a high trend in market demand of the cassava produce "MpishiMkuu -Great cook."

The production of "MpishiMkuu" moved from 300 to 500 kg per month in 2014 to 250 kg per week in 2017.

competes with wheat flour. Sorghum has been proven to be the best alternative to barley for beer brewing. It is also used as an ingredient in the production of inoculant for aflatoxins, syrups, and so many confectioneries like cookies, bread, cakes, pancakes, couscous etc. Just as the grains are used

for food as well as feed production, the straw is also used as animal feed, and domestic use such as fencing, roofing material and fire wood.

This interesting crop is a blessing as it serves diverse purposes to better the lives of the farmer and the end user.

It is highly rich in iron and zinc and its consumption is recommended for pregnant women, nursing mothers and its composite flour for weaning babies.

The potential for sorghum to be the driver of economic development in Nigeria and Africa at large is enormous.

Agripreneurs to be trained on Cassava Value Chain in Brazil



YTTP beneficiaries from IYA

Some members of the IITA Youth Agripreneurs across Africa have been chosen as beneficiaries of the Youth Technical Training Program (YTTP) organized and sponsored by the African Development Bank (AfDB) and Brazil Africa Institute.

YTTP aims at providing capacity building and knowledge transfer in several sectors including agriculture, health, infrastructure and education amongst others to African youths.

The training which is the first of its kind will focus on agriculture in line with the AfDB's Feed African Strategy for agricultural transformation and it is targeted at 30

African youths operating in various stages of the cassava value chain in Africa.

The youths will be trained for two-months on cassava value chain starting from October 23 to November 20 at the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA) in Brazil.

Speaking during the launch of the program at the AfDB headquarters in Cote d'Ivoire, the Director of Agriculture and Agro-industries; Dr Chiji Ojukwu said the training which will become a yearly program will help African youths create businesses that are sustainable especially in the cassava value chain. "For this year we are focusing on cassava, next year, we would focus on

another value chain that will provide jobs for young people", he said.

Also speaking, the President of the Africa Brazil Institute, Dr Jao Bosco Monte assured that after the training, the youths will acquire more knowledge that will improve their professional skills as the Institute has assigned experts who will disseminate the latest technologies across the value chain.

He encouraged the youths to be focused, determined and enthusiastic in learning new technologies.

The DG of IITA, Dr Nteranya Sanginga emphasized the importance of cassava to Africans and stated that research work on cassava utilization is ongoing at IITA, he advised the youths to be focused, learn and tap into expertise and technologies available in Brazil, bring it back for the development of agricultural industries. He also assured the African Development Bank that the training will be useful to Africa.

Dr Bright Okogu, AfDB Executive Director for Nigeria also urged the participants to learn the culture of agriculture and bring it back to train other youths. He also added that financial and technical assistance will come at some point.

Presentation was given by two (2) participating Agripreneurs, from Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire who shared their experiences on cassava value chain.



IYA team at the Tony Elumelu Entrepreneurship Program in Lagos



IYA Kano team with trained corp members

European Union advocates for youth engagement in agriculture

The European Union (EU), is advocating for the engagement of youths in agribusiness using the IYA model. The issue of youths and agribusiness formed parts of the discussion for the EU-Nigeria Business Forum which was held between 5-6 October in Lagos.

Themed; “Youth as Engine of Broad-Based Economic Transformation” the forum was aimed at exploring areas of proposed actions in view of the Africa-EU summit scheduled to take place by November in Cote d’ivoire.

Speaking at a panel, the representative of IYA, Oyindamola Asaju stated that through the IYA model, many youths have been able to find a career path in agriculture.

She said the Institution has successfully changed the orientation of young unemployed graduates towards job creation in the agriculture space.

She however emphasized on the need for functional systems because agriculture is interrelated with other sectors such as

transport, power, and other infrastructure. The Chairman of Nigeria’s Agribusiness Group, Alhaji Sani Dangote emphasized the importance of pooling farmers and youths into clusters to enhance effectively, impacts of financial and incentive supports.

On his part, the Director of Agribusiness, Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Dr Azeez pointed out that the Ministry will soon roll out the ENABLE youth program to support youth engagement in agriculture.



Oyin Asaju (4th from left) talking about the importance of youth engagement in agriculture at the EU summit