



IITA

Youth Agripreneurs

Agriculture is the future

You've gone further than I ever dreamed –IFAD President



IFAD President Dr Nwanze (second from left front row) speaking to youths in IITA Ibadan

By Adefoye Adedayo and Oyesiji Fumilayo

On 21 August 2012, the President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Dr Kanayo Nwanze was invited to IITA to give a talk on the Rejuvenation of IITA ... and to share his views on how to move the Institute forward. While delivering a speech, Dr Nwanze made an appeal for the need to invest in the youth. This turned out to be the beginning of the IITA Youth Agripreneurs with IITA Director General, Dr Nteranya Sanginga initiating and nurturing the youth project. Coming to IITA on 17 June 2014, Dr Nwanze sat back to watch and listen to what has become of this idea... And made these remarks: Director General, Dr Sanginga; Deputy Director General, Akuffo-Akoto Kwame, my old colleague; Other heads of departments in divisions; My good friend and brother, Dr Lawani; IITA's Agripreneurs; and Youth Corpers, future Agripreneurs in the making, I hope; Ladies and Gentlemen.

I may say that I'm actually overwhelmed by what has transpired this morning, starting from the presentations, to the videos, and now to this award. I humbly dedicate it to the rural farmers of the world that feed the world's population.

I cannot boast by saying that I generated what is happening here today. My passage 2 years ago was, of course, the desire as always happens to return to one's home base. For those of you who would not remember or who are not aware of this, about 43 years ago I stepped into these premises of IITA as a temporary research technician with a 3-month contract. I was grateful to have it extended to another 3 months, so I did 6 months here as a temporary member of staff. Certainly 43 years ago, the thought of returning here to be honored was never in my mind.

There is an old proverb that says, "He who plants a walnut tree does not expect to eat the fruits." That is very true, but sometimes we live long enough to see the walnut tree bear fruits and I think I am one those few who have been blessed with such an occasion.

I must say, Dr Sanginga, I am very proud of what you have done. Two years ago you actually challenged the youth corpers who were here then; see what we have in front of us! It's so easy to make statements, it's very easy for anyone to talk like a politician and promise heaven on earth, and also peace in paradise. It's easy to do that. But then, for action, you need the engine to really mobilize people and that is what you

have actually been. You challenged those Youth Corpers into becoming what you now call the IITA Youth Agripreneurs (IYA).

I hope you all know what that means. Well at least in Yoruba, a language that I speak, a woman from this part of the country is called *Iya*, meaning mother and so signifying motherhood. That says a lot because the IYA whose members we see here is basically an incubator. You are incubating Nigeria's future by establishing these young entrepreneurs.

It's a symbol of tomorrow. It's so easy for us to speak about agriculture as a business and to encourage the youth to be engaged in agriculture along the value chain. As one of the young agripreneurs said, they are learning how to plant, how to harvest, how to clean, but even going beyond that, to providing market information. Because of the challenge that I gave to the IITA graduates two years ago, you've gone from planting to processing, to packaging and marketing. I like your vision; to establish an independent agribusiness somewhere out of these walls.

Today, you agripreneurs are protected within the walls of IITA. Tomorrow, you will not be protected by these walls. Then you will have to stand on your own feet. But I believe in what I have seen here so far. You are determined to make this work and I like your optimism but, at the same time, there is some level-headedness that says that some 40% may continue with this business, 10% may be employed by others, 10% may be employed within the IITA Agribusiness enterprise, and so on and so forth. I will say, be realistic and put a number also for the failures.

There is a lot to be learned from failure and we do not learn enough. If you have never failed, you can never succeed... I'm sure that in the last 2 years you have learned a few things.

But let me stop here because I would like to listen to your questions. You've gone further than I ever dreamed 2 years ago. I never knew this was going to mushroom into what it is today. I really congratulate you, the agripreneurs, so let me listen to your questions. Thank you.

Cassava Weed Management project trains youth, others

By *Gbadamosi Muritala and Atu Obinna*

IITA Youth Agripreneurs, participated in a 2-day workshop, 23–24 May 2014, organized by IITA project on Sustainable Weed Management Technologies for Cassava Systems in Nigeria. The workshop was aimed at training research associates, field technicians, and farmers on the effective and safe use of herbicides. Generally, weeds are considered as undesirable or unwanted plants which compete with crops for soil nutrients, sunlight, and other resources needed for optimum growth. Among the

control systems developed, herbicide application has proved to be the most effective and time-efficient method of managing weeds. Although there are numerous herbicides with high selectivity, their efficiency is based on compliance with all product label requirements for handling and correct application. These, among others, were top issues properly addressed in the workshop where participants were able to have practical demonstrations of the various control methods on the field.



Participants taking training course on weed control

Project administration workshop builds youth capacities



Participants at the project administration training

By *Oyesiji Funmilayo*

Building the capacity of staff is the key to the growth of any organization, and achieving the vision of the IITA Youth Agripreneurs

(IYA) relies upon the quality of their human capital. It is in light of this that IYA members are still undergoing a series of trainings.

On 30 April 2014, a seminar was organized by the Project Administration Office of IITA to support efficient service delivery of the Youth Agripreneurs to partners and donors. The purpose of the training was to equip the agripreneurs with the knowledge and skills required for administering projects; these included the use of PROMIS, a database for managing projects. At the end of the workshop, emphasis was also made on the need to provide polite, timely, effective, and satisfactory responses to requests and a quick turn-over of quality services to internal and external clients within expected time limits, thereby sustaining relationships with partners and donors.

IITA-CDO and CTA trains youths on web 2.0 and social media

By *Adefoye Adedayo and Lamidi Funmilola*

For the Youth Agripreneurs to work more efficiently and smartly with a high level of collaboration with other young people across the world, the Technical Center for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) through the Capacity Development Office of IITA recently organized a workshop, Web 2.0 and Social Media for Development, 23–28 June 2014.

The workshop revealed the efficacy of collaborating and sharing knowledge and information on a large participatory platform using some internet-based tools and applications. The Web 2.0 is a new and interesting technology with the possibility of creating, curating, and sharing information.

The workshop made known to the agripreneurs the powerful tools for updating the group on market information, best agronomical practices,



Participants at the training

different methods of exploiting the value chains of agriculture that unfold on daily basis, different media of real-time communication platforms with other young people worldwide, and lots more.

The ability to create and innovate (the keys to a successful business enterprise) was also revealed by the use of these powerful tools through interactions at the workshop.

Youth Agripreneurs on expansion drive ...Establish more fields

By Barituka Bekee

In line with the Youth Agripreneurs' expansion plans, the activities of the group have been extended to other states in Nigeria. The group has presently established fields in different states including Niger, Kaduna, and Oyo. More states will come into the picture as the group intends to undertake trainings in several locations.

However, some activities will remain within the confines of IITA's premises for the time being, including those of the Fishery Unit, as well as the production of soy milk handled by the Processing Unit. IYA is committed to scaling these out as soon as possible.



A new field in Zaria

Exchange visit affords us the opportunity to learn from agripreneurs in Nigeria

By Adaobi Umeokoro

Arsène Kashemwa and Esperance Kitumaini are both agripreneurs from IITA Kalambo station in DR Congo. The duo were in IITA Ibadan for a three-week exchange visit that provided them the opportunity to learn from their colleagues and experts from IITA.

During the period, the youngsters had both theoretical and practical training on several areas of agriculture cutting

across the value chain. They were also encouraged by the achievements of their colleagues in Nigeria.

Mr Kashemwa said the exchange visit changed his perception about agriculture, and he is now convinced to invest his time and energy in the profession.

"We have learnt a lot from the different units that we were taken to for training during our stay in IITA headquarters," Kashemwa and Kitumaini said.

During the visit, the youth also participated in the workshop on Engagement of Youth Entrepreneurship for Agricultural Transformation in Africa held from 28 to 30 May 2014. The outcome of the workshop, which had their input, was endorsed by African states and major donors. The workshop called for the establishment of a pan-African initiative for youth in agribusiness that would be fashioned after the IITA Youth model; and that the initiative be led by IITA.

Kashemwa and Kitumaini said they would return home with the experience gained to help develop and inspire other youth to go into agribusiness to help tap the vast agricultural resources in DR Congo.

"We should replicate what our colleagues here are doing to improve the lives of millions of youths in our country," they said.

They thanked IITA for giving them the opportunity and building their capacities under the youth program.



Kashemwa



Kitumaini

Training of Trainers workshop

By Bello Tobi and Owoeye Molayo

The Consultancy Services Unit, University of Ibadan, through IITA's Capacity Development Office, organized a 5-day workshop (2-6 June 2014) on Training the Trainers (TOT) for the Youth Agripreneurs to facilitate the effective spread of knowledge, experience, and expertise to other young people in order for them to create wealth and become independent.

The purpose of the training was to enhance and/modify the Youth Agripreneurs' knowledge, skills, and attitudes which were pointed out during the workshop to be the key attributes of change. Sessions such as group discussions, exercises, brainstorming, and opportunities for questions and answers facilitated learning throughout the workshop. At the end, all participating agripreneurs



Agripreneurs at the ToT

were able to demonstrate the processes, concepts, and ethics of good presentations skills acquired over the

space of 5 days and how best to design, implement, and evaluate the objectives of a training.

Board member Ngongi commends IITA for youth program



Dr Ngongi

By Godwin Atser

It was more or less a vision accomplished for Dr Namanga Ngongi, IITA Board member, as he witnessed the accomplishments of the IITA Youth Agripreneurs during the recently held workshop on Engagement of Youth Entrepreneurship for Agricultural Transformation in Africa held 28–30 May at IITA, Ibadan, Nigeria.

Dr Ngongi who currently chairs the African Fertilizer and Agribusiness Partnership has a passion for youth empowerment. In his career which spanned several organizations including the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and United Nations agencies, Dr Ngongi pioneered several youth empowerment initiatives.

It was therefore his joy to see the IITA youth model delivering results and demonstrating its workability in terms of addressing youth unemployment especially if adopted at a continental level.

In a keynote address at the youth workshop which attracted policymakers, members of the diplomatic corps and development partners, Dr Ngongi commended Dr Nteranya Sanginga and his team for pioneering such an innovative project.

He reiterated his conviction that the development of the entrepreneurial spirit of Africa's young men and women was a sure way to move the development agenda of Africa forward in a sustainable manner.

Painting a picture of the current situation in Africa, Dr Ngongi noted that in spite of the natural resources that favor agricultural production, 25 percent of the continent's population still goes to bed hungry and that malnutrition was still widespread despite continental efforts to change



Dr Ojukwu

Africa's agricultural narrative.

He proposed the adoption of a transformative agenda, one that would convert African agriculture into a vibrant and economically viable and sustainable business sector that is attractive to the youth.

For this to happen, Dr Ngongi said appropriate tools and machines that would ease the tedium of agricultural work and make the sector attractive to youths and less exacting on women were desperately needed.

According to him, it is not enough to make pious declarations that accord priority to agriculture.

"The declarations should be backed by concrete policies and programs that will lead to transformation of the sector at scale," he said.

The IITA BoT member said African agriculture needed a new group of actors, persons who see opportunities

and take action including risks, to turn opportunities into profitable ventures.

"These are the entrepreneurs and in the agriculture sector, agro-entrepreneurs. This group of actors, young for the most part, will be needed to provide services to the agriculture sector throughout the value chain, from the provision of improved seeds and other planting materials to land preparation; from planting to harvesting; from storage to processing and transformation of raw agricultural commodities to finished food and industrial products," he explained.

He noted that though the agro-entrepreneurs do have the interest and the will to take risks, most often they lack the business skills to manage an enterprise profitably.

"They do not normally have the opportunity to test a business idea before taking it to the market place as few countries have any functioning start-up or risk sharing programs. Young people in particular are disadvantaged as they do not have access to even a minimum of capital," he stressed.

Dr Chiji Ojukwu, Director, Agriculture and Agro-Industry Department, African Development Bank reechoed that exploiting opportunities to enlist and hold the interest of the African youth and women in agriculture was crucial if African countries were to meet the growth and poverty reduction targets under the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program (CAADP) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

He said the Bank was pleased with the successful multiplication and dissemination of improved crop varieties by the IITA Agripreneurs under the SARD-SC project.



Dr Jacob Mignouna from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation delivering a speech at the workshop