



IITA

Youth Agripreneurs

Agriculture is the future

September 2014 Issue 7

At AGRF, stakeholders commend IITA for youth program

Stakeholders from the public and private sectors met at the African Union Commission in Addis Abba 1-4 September 2014 during the Agricultural Green Revolution Forum (AGRF) to discuss the new vision and strategies for inclusive and sustainable transformation in agriculture.

One of the side events was *Agribusiness-led Employment for Youth in African Agriculture*, organized by AFDB, AGRA, and IITA, with representatives of the IITA Youth Agripreneurs championing the cause of agribusiness in Africa at the event. While speaking at the side event, Mr Alemayehu Konde, one of the panelists who is the Program Manager of the youth learning center, MasterCard Foundation, commended the IITA Youth Agripreneurs for their initiative. He urged them not to relax in engaging young across the continent in agribusiness.

At various sessions and press briefings during the AGRF, the IITA Youth Agripreneur model received commendations from representatives



IYA members with Dr Adeshina Akinwumi, Nigerian Minister of Agriculture and Dr Sanginga at AGRF.

of various governments and institutions.

The side event was a follow-up to the concept note developed by IITA,

the lead implementing partner, and AGRA during the Youth Agribusiness Development Initiative conference at IITA headquarters, 28-30 May 2014.

Catholic Church inspired by IITA youth model



Left to right: Mr Deogratias, Dr Sanginga, and Archbishop Francois Maroy with IKYA.

The Catholic Church in DR Congo is enthusiastic about the IITA Youth Agripreneur model of engaging the youth in agriculture and has pledged to scale up the initiative.

Francois Xavier Maroy,

Archbishop of Bukavu Catholic Church, made the pledge on 22 July 2014 during a visit to IITA Kalambo.

Accompanied by Mr Deogratias Ruhamanyi, the former Chancellor of the Catholic University of Bukavu (UCB), the archbishop said the church would adopt the model and scale it out to all parishes.

Dr Sanginga Nteranya, IITA Director General, welcomed the archbishop and thanked him for his support in the development of Kalambo station.

Mr Maroy recalled that 10 years ago Mr Ruhamanyi was the first

person to formulate the vision of Kalambo as a research site for the region and based on this vision, the Catholic University Board decided to build one of their campuses here.

The visit provided the IITA Kalambo Youth Agripreneurs an opportunity to interact with the visitors during the tour of the facilities. The young people explained the steps involved in cassava and soybean processing. The visitors were delighted to see the Congolese youth taking an active role in fighting youth unemployment in sub-Saharan Africa. They appreciated the way IKYA manages the IITA facilities, especially the cassava and soybean processing units and the exhibition center. They warmly commended the vision to bring back other young people into agriculture through agribusiness which would help to reduce youth unemployment.

DR Congo pledges support to IKYA



Prof Patrick Somora, top officers with IKYA.

Prof. Patrick Mzee Somora, the Minister of Planning and Budget of the South Kivu Province in DRC, has promised his full support to promote the agribusiness initiative in the province and beyond.

The Minister went on a courtesy visit with IKYA in IITA Kalambo station with a team of Ministers, Cabinet Directors, and Heads of Divisions of five other

provinces. He said that the visit was aimed at creating awareness about IITA facilities and other agricultural innovations and technologies developed by the Institute.

After a briefing and a tour around the IKYA facilities, such as the soymilk and cassava processing center, the Minister and other officials expressed

their readiness to embrace the IKYA initiative in other provinces of the region. He said, "I'm so impressed and proud to be part of this, to be an official authority in this province where this technology is developed and especially by the youth. I'll be more proud when this technology will be taken to the whole province and to other provinces with the label of our youth of South Kivu. Expect all my support for this end."

In the same vein Mrs Adolphine Muleyi, the Minister of Agriculture, South Kivu, expressed her readiness to be part of the IKYA Steering Committee.

The Minister who received some members of IKYA in her Bukavu office said that as she was part of their Steering Committee, the door of her office was open to the youth for advice and orientation for a better IKYA.

She said, "I'm so happy that you entrusted me with this honorable position... I promise you my full commitment and support. Feel free to come any time you need help."

In his speech, Noel Mulinganya, the IKYA coordinator, thanked the Minister for her support so far and also gave a run down on the activities of the group for the next 6 months.

IYA and OOPL YC explore partnership

IYA and the Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library Youth Center (OOPL YC) are exploring areas of partnership. The OOPL YC is committed to interventions such as youth empowerment, capacity development, and social awareness.

On 13 August 2014, a delegation from OOPL YC paid a courtesy visit to IITA. This set in motion a series of meetings that included a return visit by IYA to OOPL accompanied by Dr Kenton Dashiell, the Deputy Director-General Partnership and Capacity Building on Friday, 22 August 2014.

With converging goals, OOPLYC and IYA are hoping to leverage on resources at their disposal to ensure amplified impacts through joint projects. The two organizations aim to work closely in harnessing the energies of the youth for



IYA members with former president Olusegun Obasanjo at OOPL

societal transformation in Africa through agriculture.

IYA recognizes that reorienting young people towards more productive

engagement in agriculture is not a pocket-sized task and cannot be achieved alone; hence, the need for such strategic partnerships.

"Our major challenge in cassava farming is weed"

In an interactive discussion aimed at unraveling bottlenecks to farming, young farmers identified devastation by weeds as the most challenging constraint hurting cassava farming and yields.

"Our experience is that even before you complete the first course of weeding, you see another set of grasses coming up," Akinyele Bankole, a youth agripreneur with IITA, said during a meeting with members of the Cassava Weed Management team at IITA.

"We have weeded about five times but it

appears we are not doing anything when you see the weeds in the fields. This is the most difficult challenge we are facing," he said.

"And sometimes it looks discouraging seeing our fields with weeds competing with cassava," Evelyn Ohanwusi, another youth agripreneur added..

Researchers estimate that weeding takes 50 to 80% of the total labor budget, and up to 200-500 hours of labor of mostly women and children per hectare are required to prevent economic cassava root losses in Nigeria.



A young farmer weeding cassava farm.

Hurray! IYA is two years old! ...launches new product



Mrs Charlotte Sanginga celebrate with IYA.

As the IITA Youth Agripreneur program marks its second anniversary, the group has launched a new product known as "Titbit." This is a snack made from a blend of cowpea and cassava flour, spiced with onions.

While unveiling the new product, Mrs

Charlotte Sanginga, of *icipe* and wife of DG Sanginga, commended IYA for keeping up the pace of hard work.

Pleased by the success recorded by the group so far, Mrs Sanginga urged them not to rest on their laurels and advised them not to be distracted by

the challenges faced on the road to success.

The day brought memories of how the group started with a call to a meeting involving 48 members of the National Youth Service Corps, thanks to Dr Sanginga for initiating the idea and inspiring the youth.

Over time, some in the first group went for further studies, while others got jobs outside IITA. In 2012, the group was left with 21 members (11 men and 10 women). This number increased to 30 and subsequently to 35.

The group's achievements include the establishment of fields for various crops such as cassava, soybean, maize, and plantain/banana, and the recent diversification into fish production as well as value addition to crops including the processing of soy milk.

To commemorate the day, IYA distributed free samples of two products – titbits and soymilk – to IITA staff and casuals at different strategic locations in the institute.

More youths join IYA

Ugheoke Avoedoghia D.

I am a graduate of Federal University of Technology, Akure where I obtained my B.Tech in Biology (Storage Option), I was posted to IITA for my NYSC. I got to know about IYA during this time.



Because of my passion for agriculture, I applied and joined IYA in July 2014. I have always seen agriculture as a means of eradicating poverty which helps to save life. Taking it as a profession is something I will love to do. Now I am acquiring so many skills in planting, harvesting, and storage.

Omooba Temitope

I am a graduate of Business Administration from Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, Ondo State. I was posted to IITA for my National Youth Service. During the exercise, I got to know about IYA and I said to myself that this was a great opportunity not only to start as an entrepreneur but



also to change others' perception about agriculture. I joined IYA in July 2014. My experience thus far shows that agriculture is profitable and I can see that the future is bright because it opens my eyes to some hidden treasures. A big thank you to Dr Sanginga, the brain behind this project.

Akinsiku Oluwadamilola

I am a graduate in Biochemistry from LAUTECH Ogbomoso, Oyo State. I was posted to IITA for my NYSC and worked with EDITS Cowpea Unit (JIRCAS) during my service year.



I had the opportunity to attend a workshop organized by SARD-SC and IYA where my orientation changed as I learned that agriculture was not just farming but a business that was profitable. I joined IYA in July 2014. It is challenging and at the same time motivating. The scheme has opened my eyes to so many things and given me the opportunities to learn agricultural practice with skills to add value to the economy. I am happy knowing also that more awesome experiences await me.

Dawodu Olabisi Mercy

I am a graduate of Obafemi Awolowo University with a BA in Agricultural Economics. I was posted to IITA for my NYSC where I learned about IYA. I joined them in July 2014 and



they have influenced my mindset about agriculture positively. Thus, I can say my experience so far has been stimulating and encouraging. I cannot but say a big thank you to our great mentor, Dr Sanginga, for this opportunity.

Adenmosun Adetola.

I am a graduate of Mass Communication from the Polytechnic, Ibadan, Oyo State. I was posted to IITA for my NYSC and worked at the Supply Chain Unit for 10 months.



I joined IYA in July 2014. This experience has changed my perception about agriculture and exposed me to various opportunities in the sector.

Youth agripreneurs program is giving results

Zoumana Bamba is the Head of Capacity Development at IITA. In this interview he shares his thoughts on the Youth Agripreneurs program.

Will you please tell us a bit about yourself?

I am from Burkina Faso. I worked for different institutions including the United Nations where I spent 14 years before coming to IITA. My educational background is a bit diverse: a background in Education, Masters in Information Science, a certificate in communication, and another certificate in International Development. Over the years, I have gained experience in education, information management, project development and design, and in evaluating projects. I am married with six kids, and I love IITA.

Let's come to your Unit here at IITA. Why is Capacity Development important for an institution such as IITA and for Africa?

The need for capacity development in Africa is one of the key issues we need to tackle to improve livelihoods. Capacity development could mean technical capacity. For example, if we look at the farmers today, some of them are still using old practices that our fathers had been using. If we don't provide them with best practices, we will never be able to increase productivity and create wealth. Capacity development is also important for scientists: in many countries in Africa, we have very few scientists for research and most of them do not have the right skills and competency to do agricultural research. Capacity development is also important at the governance level, that is, the capacity to partner with stakeholders, capacity to manage projects, capacity to prepare good financial reports, conduct monitoring and evaluation (M&E) etc. But in IITA, we also need capacity development to improve the skills of the staff. Today, the Capacity Development Office has been able to send staff for different training across the world. So we are building organizational capacity and individual capacity.

Recently, the IITA Youth Agripreneurs had the opportunity to work with your Unit. How would you describe or assess this relationship?

The relationship is good, but it can be better.



Zoumana Bamba, Head of capacity development at IITA.

Do you see the Agripreneurs program making contributions in terms of mitigating youth unemployment?

Yes I think so. The program is already making a positive impact and this should continue. The program is still young, and we just need to look at things that have been done so far.

We have seen over the years that you seem to have a very strong interest in youth empowerment/development. Why?

First of all, I have six kids and even if they are not in Africa right now, when they come back they will be faced with the issue of unemployment. Secondly, when I was working for IFAD, I launched the IFAD youth program, and the interest that Dr Kanayo Nwanze is showing to you is due to some of my work in West and Central Africa. We started working on Youth in Agriculture in 2009. I designed three projects, one for Shongai center, another one for UNIDO,

and the last that I worked on but did not finalize was the last meeting some of your colleagues attended in Port Harcourt (CORY).

What advice do you have for the Agripreneurs as they continue to tackle constraints to development?

I think the first advice is for you to build your internal capacity with tools that you need to manage your program. I believe your internal processes should be strong. The second one is about strategic communication: if you want to reach many young people, then you need to communicate. For example when you look at the impact of what you have done in the last 2 years, you should be able to work with the Communication Office to build some communication products and share these with others like yourselves. That will be the best way for you to contribute to agricultural development in Africa.



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