



**IITA**

**Youth Agripreneurs**

*Agriculture is the future*

## IITA Youth Agripreneurs build capacity of youth from Borno State



Left-Right in front: Professor Alphonse Emechebe (in white), Dr. Gbassey Tarawali, Mr Ado Rabo, IITA Youth Agripreneurs (in lemon green shirts) and Borno State youths (in blue shirts) at the workshop

Borno State is located in the North Eastern part of Nigeria. It is one of the states that are worst hit by a wave of insurgency, mainly from the Boko Haram sect. The orgy of violence is driven, in part, by the presence of hunger, poverty and unemployment. The IITA Youth Agripreneurs are testing IITA proven technologies to address the underlying factors driving insurgency and basically empowering young women and men with knowledge that would enable them create jobs for themselves. This training log captures some of the activities implemented by the IYA in their first training contact with the youths in Borno State.

A huge process to unlock employment opportunities for thousands of the Borno youth using agribusiness was set in motion by the completion of the 3-week intensive training workshop organized by IITA Youth Agripreneurs in collaboration with N2Africa for 20 young men and women from the State. The training was held at IITA Kano Station and started on 3 September 2014. In attendance during its opening ceremony was the representative of the Borno State Governor, Alhaji Sani Aliu Meedugu who is the Project Manager, Agricultural Development Program of Borno State; also Dr Alpha Kamara, System Agronomist and Station Manager, IITA Kano; Dr Emmanuel Sangodele, the Country Coordinator for the N2Africa

Project; Professor Alphonse Emechebe, Plant Pathologist and Independent Plant Management Specialist, IITA Kano; Mr Ruben Solomon and other staff from IITA Kano.

Dr Sangodele in his key note address said, "It is time to re-orientate ourselves on values that build a progressive and peaceful society. As we need education on character building and moral uprightiness, so we need agriculture-based initiatives that will improve smallholders' food and nutrition security." He reiterated that properly engaging the youth, especially in a viable sector that can create thousands of jobs, would drastically reduce the level of restlessness and crime in Borno State and Nigeria.

The first week of the workshop was for Sensitization and Mindset changing activities where the team of five Agripreneurs (Odusanya Oludare, Dawodu Olabisi, Ibironke Ifedayo, and Adefioye Adedayo led by Owoeye Molayo) shared their experiences gathered over 2 years of IYA's existence. Courses also treated included Introduction to Entrepreneurship, ICT and Communication, ICT in Agribusiness, and Farming Systems in the Developing World.

Aquaculture and the production of crops such as groundnut, millet, sorghum, maize, and soybean were treated in week 2. On-field and off-field activities were

used to facilitate the trainee participants' learning. Week 3 featured the facilitation of the replication of the IYA model where the trainees showed their optimism for its possibility.

The goal of the workshop was "to enable young people to increase their knowledge in sustainable agronomic practices and develop their entrepreneurial skills in agribusiness to promote self-dependence." The testimonies of the trainee participants at the end of the program revealed that this had been achieved as each expressed gratitude for the opportunity to acquire new knowledge and skills.

According to Owoeye Molayo, "The training has been worthwhile as the trainees have already started exhibiting the new skills they acquired and sharing them with their colleagues in Borno State using the ICT tools." She pointed out that one of the major challenges facing youth involvement in agriculture as a business was an inadequate capacity to develop business enterprises. The training workshop had done a lot in working it out.

Odusanya Oludare, a member of the IYA team also said, "The workshop has so far been able to bridge the gap between the trainees' existing skills and the required knowledge and attitude in terms of doing agribusiness."

At the end, Dr Gbassey Tarawali, Head

of IITA Abuja Station, who represented Dr Nteranya Sanginga, DG of IITA, commended both the IYA team that facilitated the program and the young people of Borno State for their full cooperation and participation throughout the program. In his closing remarks, he congratulated them and encouraged them to put into practice the new skills and knowledge acquired over the 3 weeks from IYA, scientists from IITA, and representatives from ICRISAT. A lasting solution to the burgeoning rate of unemployment among the Nigerian youth could be found using agribusiness.

Richard M. Wakawa, the Coordinator of the 20 trainees from Borno State, could not contain his deep sense of gratitude to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation that funded the workshop. The training would not only have a great effect on their lives but would also have multiplier effects on other young men and women in Borno State.

Mairo Sikta, one of the participants, while speaking at the end of the workshop, said, "Although we have been into agriculture, we are happy because we will be able to increase our yield, expand our businesses, and provide more employment with the new skills and knowledge acquired on production, marketing, and partnership."

A plaque of honor was presented to Professor Alphonse Emechebe in



Owoeye Molayo and Odusanya Oludare, while speaking at the closing ceremony

recognition of his indefatigable support throughout the training workshop. The IITA Youth Agripreneurs described his contribution towards the success of the event as exceptional.

## In the 3-week intensive training workshop

### Lecture on "Postharvest Mechanization"



Mr Aliyu Adinoyi demonstrating the use of a groundnut oil extractor

Value addition is key to income generation from agricultural produce. The practical session on postharvest mechanisation facilitated by Mr Aliyu Adinoyi, a Research Supervisor in ICRISAT revealed that there now exists small, affordable and locally fabricated machines that can process crops such as groundnuts, sorghum, millet and many more; and drastically reduce drudgery on field. Mr Adinoyi demonstrated the operation of a manually-driven multi-purpose planter, thresher, miller, combined harvester and groundnut oil extractor. According to Dr Hakeem Ajeigbe, ICRISAT Country Representative/System Agronomist, "more youths can only be attracted to agriculture if they realize there are affordable ingenious technologies developed by research institutes such as IITA, ICRISAT and other agriculture-based research institutes to enhance production." He also pointed out the various ways of acquiring and maintaining these machines.

### Field Visits

The participants and trainers went on various tours to fields, each with a unique aspect of agriculture that was helpful to the participants.

#### Visit to Armada Farms

Mr Yusuf, the Manager of Armada Farms, made the participants realize the various opportunities in agriculture and the need to invest in it. The farm which specializes in the production and marketing of maize seeds realizes 10 to 12 tonnes of seeds

per hectare. Mr Yusuf explained the techniques and practices being used to achieve their maximum yield.

#### Visit to groundnut pollination block and ICRISAT demo field

The participants were introduced to some of the practical means by which research brings better yielding varieties. Dr Badu Motagi, the facilitator, showed the participants round the pollination blocks, identifying the different parent materials and their resulting progeny and emphasizing the basis for developing new varieties.

On the research demonstration field at Minjibir, he showed the symptoms of various common diseases peculiar to groundnut production and various methods of combating them. To realize maximum production, he introduced the participants to new techniques of planting and managing a groundnut field.

#### Chemical application demo at Minjibir demo field

Mr Ruben Solomon is a Research Supervisor, IITA Kano Station. He made the participants learn the appropriate ways of applying herbicides, insecticides, and fertilizers. Though there may not be immediate health problems when this is done inappropriately, following and adhering strictly to the rules and regulations of spraying and the descriptions of the chemical labels are strongly recommended. He also pointed the need to have first aid preparation always in place in case of any emergency.

## Lecture on “ICT in Agribusiness”



Adefioye Adedayo (standing) facilitating the practical session on “ICT in Agribusiness”

The participants came across the relevance of ICT in the value chains of agriculture. They were shown

the entry points of ICT especially in production and access to market. According to points discussed by

Adefioye Adedayo, one of the IYA team who facilitated the session, a number of mobile-based applications such as *esoko* and *mfarm* now exist that can tell the current market prices of several agricultural commodities, and are cheap and accessible even in the rural communities. The trainees were able to develop platforms such as Blogs, Facebook, and Twitter which would enable them to open up new markets, receive updates on best-bet agronomic practices, and weather reports. Earlier, the trainees had pointed out that how to sell their products and stay abreast of market information had always been challenging. The introduction of these ICT tools which offer potential ways of solving these problems was very important.

## Trainees speak about their experience



Mercy Haruna Wakawa

Mercy Haruna Wakawa, from Biu Local Government of Borno State, and a graduate of Food Science Technology from University of Maiduguri, Borno State.

“I am so happy to be part of this workshop because I can now confidently turn my farm into “real business”. It is amazing how I can now use social media to receive updates on researches in agriculture, partner with agribusiness ventures like IITA Youth Agripreneurs, reach and interact with my target customers beyond my nose, reach and even share my success story with many youths out there. I am into poultry production but now, I have started thinking of expansion just like the IITA Youth Agripreneurs because of the knowledge I have acquired in business development, organizational communication, marketing plan and entrepreneurship. I really appreciate the collective efforts of N2Africa and IITA Youth Agripreneurs for the learning opportunity.



Richard M. Wakawa

Richard Mohhamed Wakawa, the Borno Youths’ coordinator, a graduate of Geography from the University of Maiduguri, Borno State.

“The three weeks have really been impactful because my mindset has not only been transformed, but I have also acquired more skills and knowledge in entrepreneurship and management of an agribusiness venture. I now understand that there exists several value chains for even just a single crop and it does not mean everybody will have to be on the field. I have learned how to cultivate groundnut, millet, sorghum, maize, cowpea and soybean in such a way that it yields more profit. Moreso, the knowledge about fishery business is very interesting and valuable because I never knew anything about it before. But now, I can venture into it with little capital and grow gradually. I am so happy to learn from IITA Youth Agripreneurs and I also appreciate N2Africa and IITA for giving Borno State youths the rare opportunity of being empowered.



Mairo Sikta

Mairo Sikta, a graduate of Library and Information Science from the University of Maiduguri, Borno State.

“I am so glad I took part in this learning workshop. I will not forget to sincerely appreciate IITA for this great opportunity given to us. It has been 3 weeks of experience-sharing and skills and knowledge acquisition on the production, processing, packaging and marketing across the value chains of cowpea, millet, sorghum, maize, soybean, groundnut and especially fishery. I am more than convinced that agriculture should not just be on the subsistence level but should be seen as a real business because there exists several opportunities unutilized in agriculture. With the help of this training, I can manage my own small enterprise, and even expand to employ and empower many more youths in Borno State. I commend the works of IITA Youth Agripreneurs, IITA and ICRISAT and would like all state governments in Nigeria to embrace the opportunities inherent in agriculture to gainfully employ youths and secure food for the nation.”

# Photo news: Engaging Borno Youths in Agribusiness, IITA Kano

## List of trainees in the workshop

 Mercy Haruna Food Science & Tech. Biu Local Govt., Borno State	 Saidu Idrisa Inter Science/Primary Edu. Kwaya Kusar Local Govt., Borno State	 Abdullahi Ibrahim Agriculture Edu. Hawul Local Govt., Borno State	 Gabriel Mohammed General Agriculture Biu Local Govt., Borno State
 Richard M. Wakawa Geography Education Biu Local Govt., Borno State	 Mohammed Zubairu Accountancy Biu Local Govt., Borno State	 Mairo Sikta Library & Info. Science Biu Local Govt., Borno State	 Zainab Yalma Zoology Biu Local Govt., Borno State
 Hajara Bitrus harma Metal Work Tech. Kwaya Kusar Local Govt., Borno State	 Abubakar Maina Biology Education Hawul Local Govt., Borno State	 Jeremiah Emmanuel Biology Education Kwaya Kusar Local G., Borno State	 Mohammed Adamu Biology Inter-Science Biu Local Govt., Borno State
 Abdullahi Umar Teli Electric/Electronics Eng. Bayo Local Govt., Borno State	 Suleman Maina English & Hausa Lang. Kwaya Kusar Local Govt., Borno State	 Zainab E. Tarfa Adult Edu. & Sociology Biu Local Govt., Borno State	 Haruna Rebecca Geography Biu Local Govt., Borno State
 Rejoice DS. Yanga Eng. & Social Studies Kwaya Kusar Local Govt., Borno State	 Mohammed Adamu Animal Health Production Bayo Local Govt., Borno State	 Ali Maidugu Adamu Biology Education Biu Local Govt., Borno State	 Usman Adamu Teli Pest Management Bayo Local Govt., Borno State



Resource persons, IITA Youth Agripreneurs (in lemon green shirts) and Borno State youths (in blue shirts) at the workshop



Dr. Badu Motagi, explaining the process of pollination of groundnut at the groundnut pollination block



Mr Yusuf of Armada Farms delivering a lecture on maize production



IITA Youth Agripreneurs' team to Kano State (in lemon green shirt) and the Borno State youths (in blue shirt)



IYA honours Professor Alphonse Emechebe with a plaque for his exceptional participation