



Re-direct your vision towards improving agriculture - Godfrey Nzamujo



IITA Youth Agripreneurs learning the processing of yogurt at Songhai Centre in Porto-Novo

The founder of Songhai Centre, Reverend Father Godfrey Nzamujo has enjoined the IITA Youth Agripreneurs (IYA) to be involved in solutions that will transform the continent through agriculture.

Reverend Nzamujo stated this during a 10- day training program organised for some IYA members in Porto-Novo, Republic of Benin, from 7 – 18 December 2015.

The Agripreneurs numbering about 18 from Nigeria and the DR Congo participated in the training at the centre to get hands-on experience on best agronomic practices of crop and livestock production.

Stressing the importance of human resource, Reverend Nzamujo urged the youths to place less importance on money. "Here at Songhai Centre, we have 5 capitals. The first is the environmental capital that God has given us: the land, water and air. The second is the human capital they are people who can open their eyes and develop their internal capacity. The third is the social capital, while the fourth is the technical capital, which is the

knowledge base. The last is the financial capital. If you do not put the four capitals in place before the financial capital, it is a disaster", he said.

The Agripreneurs who started the training with a tour around the Songhai facilities, were taken through sessions on pigs, snails, grasscutters and poultry. Other sessions included fish farming, agroforestry and techniques of fertilization. There were also special

sessions on the process of recycling organic wastes naturally into valuable organic fertilizer, the techniques of producing renewable energy from biodegradable materials such as animal dung, municipal waste and plant materials.

The Agripreneurs also visited the Songhai Food Processing Units to enhance their skills on value addition of primary agricultural produce to avoid post- harvest losses and increase in income.

The Songhai Centre is an International Non-governmental organization founded by Reverend Father Godfrey Nzamujo in October, 1985 with the aim of establishing an entrepreneurial platform of integrated development, an enabling environment to find social, economic, technical, organizational solutions that will take Africans out of poverty and pull them towards autonomy and sustainable socio-economic development.

The Centre also develops technical entrepreneurial capacity within local communities targeting the youths through effective and functional training programs within the framework of regenerating all the self-sustaining economic system.



IITA Youth Agripreneurs learning about vegetable production at one of the screen houses at Songhia Center

Activities at Songhai Center



IITA Youth Agripreneurs learning the production of biogas from biodegradable materials



IITA Youth Agripreneurs at one of the out-stations located at Ketou in the Republic of Benin



IITA Youth Agripreneurs with the founder of Songhai Center, Reverend Father Godfrey Nzamujo



IITA Youth Agripreneurs at the poultry (layers) unit at Songhai Center

Uganda Youth Agripreneurs adopt on-line marketing



The Youths displaying some of their farm produce

The Uganda Youth Agripreneurs (UYA) which is the youngest group replicated by the IITA Youth Agripreneurs in Uganda has commenced the sales and marketing of their products.

The group in June, 2015 acquired a 5-acre land that was leased to them at

no cost for the period of 5 years for the production of vegetables and other crops.

UYA has however decided to explore the huge possibilities available in the use of an on-line platform to market and sell their farm produce. The on-line platform

known as the "Basket On-line System", was developed by the group to bridge the gap between farmers, middlemen and the final consumers. This will expand the sales to other communities in the country. The on-line platform will also help in ensuring the quality of the crops is preserved, as the group harvests crops based on the number of request received from customers who order through the on-line platform.

Before the on-line marketing and sales innovation was developed by the group, the youths were faced with the challenge of limited sales of their produce as they had to compete with other farmers at the country's major

market in Kampala. Besides, the group faced difficulty in selling their crops as most of the crops perish before they got to the point of sales at the market.

Using the link: <http://goo.gl/forms/wmYuPcvGcR>, customers fill and submit

the form with their order before 4pm on Thursdays each week, after which orders from the already filled forms are prepared and deliveries are made to the customer by 4pm on Friday. Payments are however made on delivery to the customer. UYA is also creating market linkages for other farmers in the community as they are giving others the opportunity to make use of the on-line

marketing platform to sell their produce. The youths are working with farmers in the Mukono and Wakiso districts of the country to supply other agri-produce so as to meet the increasing demand. They are also liaising with the HarvestPlus Country Office in Uganda to use the marketing portal as a delivery channel for the orange flesh sweet-potato being produced by the organization.

Organizations such as Slow Food Youth Network in Uganda will also make use of the platform to sell organic honey. To reach out to other consumers in other districts of the country, the group is planning to buy a tricycle which will aid movement and prompt delivery of its fresh farm produce.



IKYA begins full operation at the abandoned ponds in DRC

All is now set for the IITA Kalambo Youth Agripreneurs (IKYA) to commence their fish farming business as they recently took delivery of over 11, 200 fingerlings of Tilapia specie.

The fingerlings which were pre-ordered from Butare in Rwanda have been transferred to the newly acquired ponds of the Agripreneurs at Nyakabera, South Kivu province of DR Congo.

It would be recalled that IKYA, discovered about 50 abandoned ponds in the Nyakabera and Lwiro area of the South Kivu province in September.

The abandoned ponds which are properties of the Congolese government will be used by IKYA in expanding its fish farming business which started with one pond in Murhesa. IKYA in September

2015 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the provincial government to facilitate the use of the ponds.

The Tilapia fish, which will be raised under hygienic conditions would be sold to the people of Bukavu at an affordable price to enable them tackle the issue of animal protein deficiency in children. IKYA will however embark on fund raising activities for the construction of a hatchery and fish feed formulation equipment. All these are aimed at



IKYA taking delivery of the fingerlings from Rwanda

addressing malnutrition in the country.

AfDB and Nigeria's Federal Government to spend US \$300m on youth agriculture scheme

The African Development Bank (AfDB) and the Federal Government of Nigeria are planning long-term solutions to employ youth in the agricultural sector. They will spend about US \$300 million on the "Enable Youth Empowerment Agribusiness Programme."

The project is to be implemented in partnership (AfDB with Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development) within 18 months. "AfDB's

Director of Agriculture and Agroindustry, Chiji Ojukwu disclosed this information, recently in a top level meeting with Nigeria's agricultural authorities in Abuja" The Nation reported.

The scope and impact of this initiative will create 250,000 jobs; the beneficiaries will be trained at various incubation centres on all aspects of value chains, with each beneficiary of the project supported with about US \$75,000. Ojukwu said the

three-year project would enable training and funding of young graduates, who are interested in farming across the country. "A total of US \$300 million would be accessed to cover the three-year project which would bring young graduates together and train them for 18 months as entrepreneur farmers." In a statement by the ministry's Director of Information, Tony Ohaeri, the Agriculture Minister, Chief Audu Ogbeh disclosed that the project would commence from the three

Federal Universities of Agriculture in the country.

“The initiative would create 250,000 jobs; the beneficiaries would be trained at various incubation centres on all aspects of value chains, with each beneficiary of the project supported with about US \$75,000. The project would cover the 36 states including the FCT, while the Agricultural transformation Agenda (ATA) would be expanded through the processing zones.”

The Minister, in his remark, emphasized the need for the three universities of agriculture in Umudike, Makurdi and Abeokuta respectively to revert back to the provisions of the Act that established them. Ogbah advised the

country to re-invent her own economic strategy to revive its economy. He stated that the strength of a nation lies in the population of the youth and expressed concern on the rate of youth unemployment in the country saying, “We need to take care of them before they take care of us.”

He promised to collaborate with representatives of AfDB and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), who came to present him the concept note on the youth agriculture scheme.

However, the Minister tasked IITA to intensify efforts towards researching into the conversion of cassava leaves into animal feeds, while some components of the Labour Intensive Family Enterprise

(LIFE) of the ministry could be built into the youth empowerment initiative.

IITA Director-General, Nterayana Saginga, called for a change in the mindset of the young graduates, saying that the IITA’s experiment in the past on young unemployed graduates revealed that they could make good turn over on their investments. He pledged the readiness of IITA to provide necessary support to the ministry.

Culled from <http://www.afdb.org/en/> (News and Events)



The Green Wealth Agripreneurs

Green Wealth Agripreneurs venture into fish smoking business

The GreenWealth Agripreneurs (GWA) has started adding value to catfish through the newly adopted fish smoking technique.

The fish smoking enterprise of GWA is an expansion of the catfish business of IYA, which started in 2014.

Through the business synergy, IYA is expected to supply GWA with a specified size of catfish regularly to enable them meet the production target. The two groups are expected to generate income from the business and provide jobs for other unemployed youths. With the smoking kiln acquired by IYA, GWA started its fish smoking operation at the FAO yard in December 2015 with about 300 pieces of catfish.

The business which has since recorded large turn out from markets within the IITA premises is expected to expand outside the premises with the on-

going negotiation with supermarkets and other stores within Oyo State. The youths have adopted the use of an improved technology for efficiency, proper hygiene and longer shelf life of the product. Some of the people who patronized the youths during the sales of the smoke catfish commended them for the initiative.



GWA team cleaning the catfish before smoking



GWA team learning fish cropping



The newly acquired smoking kiln



The fish smoking team of GWA



An agripreneur checking the smoked fish



Agripreneurs in DR Congo train rural youths

IITA Kalambo Youth Agripreneurs (IKYA) has taken its 'Youth in Agriculture' reach-out program to rural youths in the North and South Kivu provinces of the area.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, recent report shows that over 70% of the youth population are unemployed and this is attributed to factors such as the increase in rural-urban migration arising from unattractive agricultural returns, limited

To mitigate these myriad of factors, IKYA through a partnership with World Vision International in November trained over

bread, cake and chin-chin using the high quality cassava flour. Although the three



IKYA and the rural youths

opportunities for advancement, limited infrastructure for economic activities and social networks, insecurity, drudgery associated with agricultural production, and youths' desire for a better life in the cities amongst others.

350 youths in the Minova, Kalehe and Fizi territories of the North and South Kivu provinces. The youths were trained on best agronomic practices, cassava and soybean value addition such as the production of soymilk, doughnut,

territories lack electricity supply, modern farming, and baking equipment; the IKYA team were able to prove through the training that they could generate income through the traditional baking and farming tools at their disposal.

Keep family farms in business with youth Agripreneurs - Dr Nteranya Sanginga



Dr Nteranya Sanginga

Finding a way to allow youth to contribute their natural and ample energies to productive causes is increasingly the touchstone issue that will determine future prosperity.

It is a tragic irony that today's youth, despite being the most educated generation ever, struggle to be included.

That's true in advanced countries. But it is even more so in Africa, where almost

two-thirds of the jobless are young adults, whose ranks swell by 10 to 12 million new members each year. The challenge is staggering in scale: Today there are 365

million Africans aged 15 to 35, and over the next 20 years that figure will double. There is no magic wand. It is the youths themselves who must find a solution.

Everyone else – governments, international organizations, the private sector, social groups and parents – have a huge stake in their success and so must not stand in the way. Normally one hears about the need to help cast in, elaborate theories based on the need for redistribution; but the truth is, we need a step change.

That is the spirit the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) is adopting with our "Agripreneur" coaching programmes. This aims to use self-help groups so that people

can indeed help themselves. As I bluntly told a group of youth in Uganda, we will provide support in the form of technology, knowledge and advocacy, but the real activity has to be done by them. Another message was: "Be aggressive."

It is well known that Africa is a vast land of family farmers, many living in rural areas and regularly struggling with

poverty and hunger. Figures can also be easily made to show how most family farms are exercises in subsistence, and don't always succeed without external help.

Family farming is a way of life, to be sure. Yet, that does not mean, when you really think about it, that it cannot be done as a business. Doing so would represent a change, but the time has come. Making agriculture a commercial trade offers a

“One of our Agripreneur “interns” told me that what he took away was that success is not in fact all down to money.”

set of new tools to entice talented youth to a sector we all know they tend to run away from.

Akinwumi Adesina, former Nigeria's agriculture minister and now the President of the African Development Bank (AfDB), likes to say, "Africa's future millionaires and billionaires will make their money from agriculture."

And it is quite likely that youth, being in a proverbial rush, will accelerate the transformations that will lead to better lives than a mad rush to cities where employment prospects aren't keeping pace with urban population. Moreover, agriculture has been the weak link in terms of productivity growth across the Continent – that means there is an

enormous upside to doing it better. Knowledge needs pollinators. While extension services are excellent and should be upgraded, young people are natural communicators when they think something is cool and useful. That's what agriculture has to be.

IITA's Agripreneur campaign is hinged on our version of a Silicon Valley hackathon. Incubators are created to allow youths to learn and exchange ideas of a practical nature – about how to keep accounts, new crops and farming techniques, the myriad of possibilities in agricultural value chains that include roles for seed traders, food processors, weather forecasters, insurance salespeople, marketing specialists.

One of our Agripreneur "interns" told me that what he took away was that success is not in fact all down to money. An enterprise really needs ideas, of course, and the ability to plan.

To be clear, his enthusiasm – as so many of our alumni say – was about the possibility of enterprise. Call it agribusiness. Agricultural commodity value chains provide just that, a series of transactional opportunities that work to improve efficiency for all and reward

the talented. This is a major catalyst for youth. After all, it opens the door for the professionalization of agriculture. To be sure, the agribusiness model crucially

requires inclusive efforts to make sure credit is available to youth, to assure that gender equity becomes an operational assumption rather than just a goal, and a host of public goods including scientific research. Yet it begins with a changed mind set.

People must learn how to apply for a loan. Bankers always say they wish to fund on the basis of a business plan rather than collateral. It is time to put that to the test. IITA's focus on agripreneurs is a well-placed bet on the idea that nobody learns faster than youth.

Culled from the "Inter Press Service News Agency" (www.ipsnews.net)

Oyo State government to partner with IITA on issues of youth and agriculture productivity



Executive Governor-Oyo State (Nigeria), Senator Abiola Ajimobi (M), DDG-IITA, Dr Kenton Dashiell (5th from left) with other IITA delegates

IITA and the Oyo state government have agreed to move forward on a plan that would bring quick results especially in the area of youth empowerment through agriculture.

In a meeting that was held at the governor's office in Ibadan, Oyo state on December 8, Governor Abiola Ajimobi and delegates from IITA led by Deputy Director General of Partnerships and Capacity Development, Dr Kenton Dashiell spoke extensively on ways of tackling youth unemployment and improving agricultural productivity in the state.

The request for closer collaboration with IITA is coming at a time when agriculture is gaining attention as the only surviving sector that can absorb the massive

number of unemployed youth, and also rescue the country from the dwindling fall in oil price.

Governor Ajimobi in his speech called on IITA to use its expertise in the area of research and youth in agribusiness initiative to proffer solutions that would unlock the agricultural potential of Oyo state.

Speaking about the agricultural endowment of the state, Governor Ajimobi said the state is endowed with rich arable land and a diversity of agro-ecological climate comprising rainforests and savannahs. This climate variation supports both tree crops and cash crops such as cassava, maize, soybean, rice, oil palm, etc. The agricultural land also supports livestock and fisheries. He added that all these endowments have

not translated to wealth for the people of Oyo state.

Dr Dashiell, in response renewed the commitment of IITA to support the state government. He underscored the need for Oyo state to invest in research to address the low productivity question, and to massively engage young men and women in agriculture.

Dr Dashiell said that the government could adapt the IITA Youth Agripreneurs model to engage young men and women in agribusiness, and reminded the Governor of his earlier promise to support the construction of an agribusiness training center in IITA's Business Incubation Platform that could serve as a training ground for not only the youth of Oyo state but also Nigeria as a whole.

Octogenarian support Uganda Youth Agripreneurs



UYA selling vegetables with the woven basket

Impressed by the effort of the Uganda Youth Agripreneurs (UYA) in helping other youths in the country to tackle unemployment, an octogenarian is offering to support UYA by providing the group with ecofriendly baskets made from natural papyrus fibers.

The Octogenarian, Magdalena Nalwanga from Naggalama in the Mukono District of Uganda is supporting

the youths by weaving the papyrus basket to help address the issue of packaging of farm produce faced by the youths.

Since the government of Uganda placed a ban on the use of plastic bags for packaging, the youths have been sourcing other means of packaging their farm produce. With Magdalena's intervention, the group now has an ecofriendly means of packaging their products.



IITA and Osun government sign MOU



L-R: Deputy Governor Osun State (Nigeria), Mrs Titi-Laoye Tomori; Executive Governor-of Osun State (Nigeria), Rauf Aregbesola; and DG-IITA, Dr Nteranya Sanginga

On 17 November 2015, IITA and the Osun state government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that would facilitate the use of 204ha of land situated in the Ago-Owu area of the state for research and demonstration of best agronomic practices.

The 204ha of land is situated close to two farm settlements, which are part of the newly planned agricultural production zone in the state.

The MoU, which was signed by the state Governor, Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola and the Director General of IITA, Dr Nteranya Sanginga at the office of the governor in Osogbo, is expected to foster a relationship that will bring impact in terms of research, development in agriculture to farmers and youths in the state.

During his address, Dr Sanginga appreciated the Governor and the people of Osun for giving IITA the opportunity to bring the institute's vast knowledge in the area of agriculture to their doorstep. He said the time has come for the country to diversify from its dependence on oil and turn to agriculture. He stressed that Agriculture remained the only source of wealth and the only sector that could accommodate the teeming population of unemployed youth in Africa.

Speaking about the impact of IITA in Africa, Dr Sanginga said the presence of IITA had rescued many African countries from poverty and hunger.

"Just think of Africa or Osun State without cassava or yam. 30 years ago, cassava almost disappeared from Africa but the timely intervention of IITA research saved the situation. Rwanda after the war came to the Genetic Resource Center in IITA to get seeds for planting. Our Genetic Resource Center contains all seeds. What we have to do is to use those resources for the benefit of Osun. Some of these seeds will be given to the farmers in Osun state to plant and spread. We would start with banana and cassava," he said.

He however implored the government to fulfill their own part of the MoU by providing over 1,000 extension workers in the state to help in the multiplication of the seedlings.

On his part, Governor Aregbesola commended IITA and Dr Sanginga for the initiative and said the signing of the MoU was a timely partnership that would complement his administration's agriculture programme especially in the area of food production.

"God has positioned IITA and Dr Sanginga in our country at this critical period when oil price has gone down. Our relationship with IITA would seem like it was made in heaven."

Aregbesola attributed the challenges facing farmers in the state to lack of critical linkages between agricultural research and implementation, adding that with the MoU and partnership with IITA, Osun state stands to have direct-to-farm linkage of scientific innovations in farming with the best of agriculture scientists. He however enjoined the farmers and villagers around Ago-Owu to support IITA in its bid to bring research and development to the area.

"The state of Osun has about 316,780ha of arable land. Out of this, only about 149,148 have been cultivated so far. So let us support this partnership to transform Osun from a peasant agrarian state to a mechanized agricultural state," he added.

The Director General, Office of Economic Development and Partnerships, Dr Charles Akinola, stated that the relationship with IITA had been on for over four years.

"We look forward to a larger impact from this partnership. The location of the farm is close to two major farm settlements that we have in the state. We expect that the impact of IITA will be felt in about 85 villages and the state as a whole," he said.

The IITA Youth Agripreneurs under the partnership will have the opportunity of training youths in the state on modern, commercial, and profitable farming.

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