



# IITA

## Youth Agripreneurs

*Agriculture is the future*

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## Ministry of Agriculture to support IITA Youth Agripreneurs



Hon. Minister of Agriculture, Chief Audu Ogbeh (2nd from left) flanked by agripreneurs from Ibadan and Abuja

The Honourable Minister of Agriculture in Nigeria, Chief Audu Ogbeh has promised to negotiate about 100 ha of land for the IITA Youth Agripreneurs (IYA) in Abuja at the Gurara Dam Irrigation Scheme land along the Kaduna road. He also promised to negotiate for the release of 2 tractors to enhance mechanized crop production and operations of the youths on the piece of land. Chief Audu Ogbeh stated this while receiving a delegate of IITA

and the IITA Youth Agripreneurs (IYA) in his office on March 14, in Abuja.

Welcoming the IITA and IYA delegates led by IITA Director General, Dr Nteranya Sanginga in his office, the Minister said the IYA initiative championed by IITA was in line with his vision of ensuring that agriculture is embraced by the Nigerian youth as a business. Sharing some statistics with the delegation, the Minister said agriculture would be the

next goldmine of the world. He added that the country is finding it difficult to meet up with demands of food supply from countries around the world.

He enjoined the youths to tap into the opportunity and secure the future by taking agriculture as a business. He added that the ministry would build a Youth-Agro Industrial Complex in Abuja and other states of the federation to train and empower youths in agribusiness.

The Minister also laid emphasis on banana and plantain production through the tissue culture technique. He urged IITA to invest more in tissue culture to enhance production of suitable banana and plantain for export.

Responding to the Minister, Dr Nteranya Sanginga highlighted the efforts made by IITA in the areas of food production and research. He said IITA would not rest on its oars as the Institute has the expertise and resources to boost food security and production in Africa.

Others in the team included; Dr Alfred Dixon, Dr Tarawali Gbassey, Mrs Toyin Oke, Evelyn Ohanwusi, Ene Agada and Zacchaeus Isuwa.

## IYA-Abuja inspects Gurara Dam facility



Mr Francis Adunoye (2nd from left) with Agripreneurs inspecting the available equipment

Following the commitment from Nigeria's Honourable Minister of Agriculture, Chief Audu Ogbeh on the negotiation of a 100ha parcel of land for the IITA Youth Agripreneurs in Abuja (IYA Abuja) at the Gurara Dam Irrigation Scheme in Kaduna State, the youths have embarked on series of fact finding missions to the site to ensure that adequate facilities are in place in preparation for the task ahead.

The youths who were accompanied by the Farm Manager, IITA Abuja Station, Mr Francis Adunoye to the site discovered that the Dam has lots of facilities that can facilitate the production of crops all year round.

Conducting them round the irrigation site which is about 6000 ha, the Farm Manager of Gurara dam, Mr Ndanusa said the authorities could allocate the unused portion of the land which is about 1,880 ha to the youths for all year round farming with approval of the necessary authorities.

The Gurara Dam Irrigation Scheme located in Kuturmi community in Kaduna state was established in year

2000 during the President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration to generate about 30 megawatts hydroelectric power plant for Nigeria. It was extended to include a pilot irrigation project under the Agricultural Transformation Agenda [ATA] project of the President Goodluck Jonathan administration.

The Dam has a reservoir capacity of 880,000,000 cubic meters and 3-meter diameter, 75 km long steel pipeline and

covers an irrigation component of 6000 ha of land. It has the capacity to produce 4500 tons of rice, 6700 tons maize, 11,000 tons of melons and 100,000 tons of fish. The dam has a center beam, surface, drip and the sprinkler irrigation system.

Other facilities at the irrigation scheme site include improved farm machineries, standard accommodation with a swimming pool and a training centre all fitted with constant electricity supply.

## Stakeholders converge to discuss issues of youth in agribusiness

The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in collaboration with the African Development Bank (AfDB) is organizing a continental workshop on the Empowering Novel Agri-Business-Led Employment (ENABLE Youth) Program in African Agriculture.

The conference which takes place in Abuja, Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory between the 21st and 22nd of April 2016 will have in attendance about 200 stakeholders including policy makers, entrepreneurs, National Ministries, development partners, the private sector, commercial banks, agencies of Central Banks overseeing risk sharing facilities, Pilot Youth Incubation Program, young agripreneurs and many more.

The objective of the ENABLE Youth Program Design Workshop is to build a well-grounded evidence-based understanding of the ENABLE Youth Program Concept among key stakeholders from interested governments across the continent, development partners, the Private Sector and finance institutions. It will also permit fine-tuning the program design through the incorporation of Africa-wide lessons learnt and best practices. The ENABLE Youth Program is part of strategies by the AfDB to draw the next generation to the agricultural

sector as 'agripreneurs,' by harnessing new skills and technologies, such as ICTs, mechanization and a value chain approach to boost food production in Africa and eradicate malnutrition by 2025. Also, young agripreneurs will be able to create self-sustaining jobs for young people, increase food production for a growing population, and initiate less reliance on food imports, and healthy trade balance for African countries.

In the pilot experimental phase with the IITA Youth Agripreneurs in Nigeria, there are proven evidences that with greater access to the agribusiness enterprise, and institutional support, youths with their passion and energy, can become the driving force of agricultural transformation in Africa. With the right skills, improved access to credit and an enabling environment, young African men and women can become the proud owners of profitable agribusiness enterprises.

The main activities of the workshop include: Discussion on the approaches, techniques and modalities for generating youth employment in the agricultural sector; Success stories under the pilot phase of the Youth Incubation Program; Provision of a platform for key speakers to share

experiences and lessons learned in mainstreaming youth employment generation into agriculture and other sectors; Leveraging and crowd-in finance – through setting up a risk sharing facility to encourage lending by financial institutions to agribusinesses owned by young people in the ENABLE Youth Program; Identification and design of other innovative financing mechanisms to fund youth in agri-business, including exploring public-private partnership models, developing diaspora bonds to allow remittance flow for investment in agriculture and agribusiness, and mobilization of excess liquidity from commercial banks to service agricultural enterprises; and also Encouraging and rewarding synergies between national ENABLE Youth Programs.

Several countries have expressed keen interest in participating in the ENABLE Youth Program through the submission of requests to work with the AfDB in collaboration with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), and other partners to design and roll-out country-specific ENABLE Youth programs.

## IFAD officials visit IYA-Abuja

Delegates from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in March visited the IITA Youth Agripreneurs in Abuja (IYA-Abuja) to have to have an understanding of the IITA Youth Agripreneurs model as a panacea for eradicating youth unemployment in Nigeria.

The delegation, which consisted of about 60 international representatives within IFAD programs in Africa were given a brief about the group through a presentation on the activities of the group by IYA representatives, Olaniyi Oluwatosin and Zacchaeus Isuwa. While outlining their activities and achievements, the representatives of IYA also spoke on

the proposed plans of the group, the challenges faced, and lessons learned.

Shedding more light on the IYA model, the Head of the IITA Abuja station, Dr Gbassey Tarawali talked about the ENABLE Youth Program which he said was designed to address the issue of poor funding constraint which impedes youths from



IYA showcasing their products to IFAD Officials during the visit

venturing into independent enterprises. He said the ENABLE Youth Program would create jobs for the unemployed youth in sub-Saharan Africa. He assured the IFAD team of IITA's readiness to continuously backstop, and mentor the youths throughout the stages of their business operation and ensure that they succeed in their individual or group business enterprises. After the presentation, the delegates were taken round the various fields and exhibition stands where the youths displayed cassava, soybean and maize value added products such as cassava bread, sausage roll, egg buns, garri, cassava starch, soymilk, *Tidbit Delight*, *Croquant*, *Sneh balls* and smoked fish.

## IYA applauded for embracing agriculture

The IITA Youth Agripreneurs have been applauded for taking a giant stride in embracing agriculture as a business.

The commendation came from panelists during a Breakfast Academy for collaborative learning, problem solving and action organized by the Advancement Linkage Centre of Rivers State University of Science and Technology (RSUST).

Speaking on the topic "Agripreneurship and Youth Mobilization for a prosperous Economic Outlook", IYA representative, Oyindamola Asaaju explained the rationale behind the IITA Youth Agripreneurs model. She stated that with the dwindling economic crises faced by most African countries, the only sector that could rescue the continent from the challenges faced by it was agriculture.

She added that the only way to do that was to actively engage the youth who according to her are were smart and innovative enough to introduce new ideas and technologies, which would help save the agricultural sector from the present state of dejection.

Oyindamola noted that IITA, which is championing the cause of youth engagement in agriculture across Africa, identified this and encouraged the youth



Agripreneurs (lemon green shirts) with IITA and RSUST officials

to embrace agriculture and tap into the various opportunities inherent for them.

She stressed that the IYA model had served as an eye opener for many youths that agriculture can be highly profitable and also create jobs for unemployed youths in Africa.

"IYA started from zero. But when we took agriculture as a business and ventured into the agricultural value chain, we have

been able to move from the zero point to a point at which we pay our salaries and even employ people who work for us," she said.

Giving an insight into the support given to them by IITA, Oyindamola pleaded with the Federal Government to create an enabling environment for independent agribusinesses to thrive. She said the institutional support from IITA and other notable partnerships with

private and public organizations were part of the landmarks behind the success of the group.

Speaking from the leadership element for youth development perspective, Director Humidtropics, Dr Kwesi Atta-Krah said agripreneurship was more than

job creation but a level of empowerment given to persons involved. He also mentioned that the Agripreneurship program was all encompassing on personal and business development.

Dr Atta-Krah however highlighted the four phases of leadership growth,

leadership styles, the Characteristics and Competencies that influence success and also the Model of Leadership.

Other IITA staff at the events include Dr Ylva Hilbur, the Deputy Director General (Research) of IITA; Research, and Dr Okechukwu Richardson.

## Green Wealth Agripreneurs explore use of ICT in Agriculture

The Green Wealth Agripreneurs (GWA) is exploring the use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in agriculture.

Realizing the importance of ICT in the development of agriculture especially in solving some of the related problems in the sector, GWA through its ICT team will be providing amongst others a database that would give answers to the vast challenges encountered in agriculture.

Using some ICT applications and software that are currently being developed by the team, they will be proffering solutions to the problems of access to market, pricing system, analysis, and networking thus enhancing farmers' productivity and income. The application and software, which is being developed is expected to be user friendly and will be launched

for the benefit of smallholder farmers, marketers, and every other key player along the agricultural value chain.

The team is poised to contribute its quota by ensuring that every smallholder farmer becomes an ICT savvy person while also helping to resolve the lingering challenges faced by farmers.



Green Wealth agripreneurs' ICT team



Director General of IITA, Dr Nteranya Sanginga (3rd from left) during a multi-stakeholder youth panel discussion at the Regional Implementation Forum for IFAD-supported projects in Abuja, Nigeria



An agripreneur taking data with an ICT tool

**Save the date: 11-15 April 2016**

**Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT)  
Identification and Preparation Workshop**

International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)  
Ibadan, Nigeria

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