



# IITA

## Youth Agripreneurs

*Agriculture is the future*

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## Dr Sanginga calls for youth engagement in agribusiness

The Director General of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) Dr Nteranya Sanginga has underscored the need for youth engagement in agribusiness. This was part of his presentation at the 2013 Annual Lecture at the College of Agriculture, Osun State University (UNIOSUN).

Making reference to the IITA Youth Agripreneurs (IYA), Dr Sanginga said the group was proof of the latent potential in the youth being exploited for agricultural benefits.

Dr Sanginga's topic: "The Need of a Brown Revolution in Africa and Engagement of the Youth in Science-driven Agribusiness" drew insights into the factors constraining agriculture and proffered a road map to the present challenge.

"What the continent (Africa) needs is not a "Green Revolution" perse but a "Brown Revolution", he added, stressing that land intensification, rather than "extensification" holds the key to Africa's agricultural prosperity in the 21st Century. He explained that to close the current yield gap, there needed to be integrated soil fertility management



*IITA DG Sanginga with IYA and members of staff of UNIOSUN after the inaugural lecture*

which aims at optimizing fertilizer and organic resource-use efficiency and crop productivity.

Dr Sanginga further said that research should be used as a tool to tackle poverty and other socioeconomic problems. "Research is not an end in itself; rather it should be embarked upon for the sake of development," he said. The IITA Director General also highlighted the vast disconnect between the gains from research and the realities on farmers' fields. He said this has brought to the spotlight the need for strategic alliances

to ensure proper research delivery.

Prior to the lecture, there was a drama presentation by the UNIOSUN Ejigbo students. Making up the team from IITA were Dr Gbassey Tarawali, Head of the Cassava Value-chain Unit; Mr Godwin Atser, IITA Communications Officer (West & Central Africa); and Ms Victoria Lawal. Also in attendance were the Pro-Chancellor of Osun State University, Prof G.A. Olawoyin; the Vice Chancellor, Prof A.B. Okesina; other members of staff of the university; and other invited guests.

## Oyo State to partner with IITA on youth development



*Governor Ajimobi (second from left) with his entourage and IITA management team during a visit to the office of IYA*

The Governor of Oyo State, Senator Abiola Ajimobi has pledged his administration's willingness to work with IITA towards addressing youth unemployment and food insecurity.

The Governor has also made a commitment to support the construction of a youth training center in IITA. This came at the request of the Director General, Dr Nteranya Sanginga, during the Governor's visit to IITA on 20 November 2013 in which he also

commissioned new facilities at the headquarters of IITA in Ibadan and also visited the office of the IYA.

Governor Ajimobi cited striking figures that highlighted the need and benefits of an agribusiness center as a means of training the youth in Oyo State.

"I congratulate and also commend the IITA Youth Agripreneurs and the management of IITA for paying attention to the high rate unemployment in Oyo State."

Governor Ajimobi also cited how his own administration's work complements that of IITA.

Earlier, members of the IYA made presentations describing the nature of their project. The group explained that they aim to unlock the potential of agriculture thereby attracting and engaging young men and women in agribusiness to create decent employment opportunities comparable to those in other sectors.

After the presentation, the Governor was accompanied to the seed processing center by the youth where he saw the seed processing machine in operation and had a view of produce from the fields cultivated by the IYA.

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# 2013 Open Day: Agripreneurs woo youngsters to agriculture



DG Sanginga (right) and other visitors make inquiry from IYA booth on Open Day

Members of the IITA Youth Agripreneurs participated in the 2013 Open Day, exhibiting products from their farms and also distributing literature to visitors about their activities. The event which was held on 16 November provided an opportunity for the agripreneurs to talk to people about the importance of agriculture as a profession. The agripreneurs shed light on their activities and clarified questions raised by visitors.

The Open Day which attracted friends and families of staff commenced with a tree planting activity followed by exhibitions in which each unit showcased their products at the Conference Center.

## IITA Hub Directors may replicate IYA model

There are strong indications that IITA Regional Directors may replicate the IITA Youth Agripreneur model as part of efforts to engage young people in agriculture and create employment at the hub level.

The desire to replicate a similar program came during separate visits by

the directors to the IYA office in Ibadan during the Institute's R4D week that took place from the 24 to 29 November 2013.

Hub Directors Dr Bernard Vanlauwe of the Central African Hub, Dr David Chikoye of the Southern Hub, and Dr Victor Manyong of the Eastern Hub accompanied by members of staff from

their respective regions were impressed with the program.

Dr Marie Yomeni, SARD-SC Cassava Commodity Specialist based in DR Congo said the IITA Bukavu station is already bringing together a group of young people for a similar mission, and would love the IYA to provide backstopping.



Central Africa Hub Director, Bernard Vanlauwe (standing 7th from left) with members of staff and IYA



Eastern Africa Hub Director, Victor Manyong (standing 8th from right) with members of staff and IYA



Southern Africa Hub Director, David Chikoye (standing 10th from right) with members of staff and IYA

## IYA members give seminar on opportunities in agriculture



IYA with the Chairman of Ibarapa Local Government, Mr Olaosegba

As part of efforts to get more young people engaged in agriculture, members of IYA went for an outreach in Ibarapa Local Government Area and gave a seminar presentation

to the youth in the community on the benefits inherent in agriculture.

The visit to Ibarapa Local Government which is located in

Oyo State, southwest Nigeria was held on 30 October 2013.

The outreach culminated in a partnership agreement, in principle, between the Local Government and the IYA that will see the training of youths in that community on best-bet agricultural practices. Sixteen representatives from the Ibarapa Local Government attended the meeting.

The Chairman of the Local Government, Honorable Lanre Olaosegba commended the quality of presentation and lauded the young agripreneurs for their level of knowledge. He noted that despite the fact that most of them do not have an agricultural background they were able to take up agriculture as a form of business and a means of income for themselves.

The Ibarapa Local Government agreed to pay a visit to the IYA to strengthen the partnership.

## IYA at Canadian High Commission-organized roundtable



IYA and other participants with Canadian High Commission staff during the roundtable

Members of the IYA participated in a roundtable discussion organized by the Canadian High Commission in Nigeria on 25 November 2013.

Eight young female entrepreneurs were present for the roundtable discussion which was focused on young female entrepreneurship. IYA member Obafemi Victoria gave an overview of IYA's operations and talked about the challenges young women face in

getting involved in agribusiness. The roundtable presented the opportunity for other participants to also share their experiences.

Prior to attending the roundtable, members of the IYA received Mr Marcello Di Franco, the Canadian Deputy High Commissioner and Dr Paulyn Appah, Senior Process Development Consultant in IITA Ibadan.

After presentations by the IYA, Mr Di

Franco commended the youngsters for their efforts.

"Keep up the good work and surround yourself with people with a lot of ideas," he said.

Present at the roundtable were Ms Sylvia Koleva and Trade Commissioner, Ms Sarah Branco; Director General Africa Bureau, Ms Patricia Malikail; High Commissioner Perry J. Calderwood; and Senior Advisor in Africa, Sean Sunderland.

# Averting a “time bomb” – The IITA Example

*“They are an opportunity if we convert their energies (the youth) to agricultural development but they could be a ‘time bomb’ if we fail to do so,”* President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Dr Kanayo Nwanze.

The above words were expressed by the IFAD President Dr Nwanze during his speech in August 2012 when he visited the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Ibadan Nigeria. Among other things he stressed the need to increase investments in agricultural research for development stating that it would bring about transformation and help address the rising wave of youth unemployment and poverty.

The IFAD President’s word were so dear to the heart of the IITA Director General, Dr Nteranya Sanginga that the following month (September 2012) he launched the IITA Youth Agripreneur Program with the focus on promoting agriculture among youth, training them and exposing them to the agricultural value chain.

It was thus with excitement that on 19 September 2013, the Young Professionals in Agricultural Research for Development (YPARD) Nigeria team met to interact with these youths who have enjoyed being part of the IITA Youth Agripreneur Program as they marked their one year anniversary and also tell them about the YPARD network.

## IITA Youth Agripreneur Program

The IITA Youth Agripreneur Program kicked off in September 2012 with serving Corp members at the Institute. There are presently 11 men and 12 women under this program. The program focuses on hands-on training on plantain/banana sucker production, seed multiplication both certified and foundation, and cassava stem and root production. In the past year, the participants have also worked on the



*IYA on their way to the field*

farm, visited other farms, and had the opportunity to be trained by various experts in the field of agriculture through workshops and on-farm demonstrations.

A unique feature of this program is that these youth have graduated from various non-agricultural fields. For example, some are graduates of History, Quantity Survey, and Economics to mention a few. The participants were provided with a befitting office, farm equipment, farm overalls and boots, farm land, and a project vehicle.

## YPARD Meeting

The YPARD Nigeria Team had a lovely time with the participants. The meeting which was facilitated by the IITA Corporate Communications Officer for West and Central Africa, Godwin Atser kicked off with a brief introduction about the IITA Youth Agripreneur Program by its Coordinator Akinyele Bankole Odunayo (a youth himself). After which Jacqueline Opara from the YPARD Nigeria Team gave a presentation on the activities of the YPARD Network and how they can take advantage of the network. Thereafter, the YPARD Nigeria Country Representative, Olawale Ojo gave a presentation on how youth can use social media to promote and contribute

to agriculture and food security. He admonished that these youth use social media to share their experiences and stories during the program stressing that it would serve as a motivation for other young people to follow suit in considering farming and other agriculture endeavors. Group photos and interviews with the participants followed as a rap up of the day’s activities.

## Averting a “Time Bomb”

IITA has indeed started contributing to averting a time bomb that would occur if youth are not invested in. And it is an example for all quarters to follow in empowering youth to take up various roles along the agriculture value chain.

We want to appreciate Godwin Atser, who was enthusiastic about these young people and allowed us meet with them. Appreciation also goes to the YPARD Global and Africa offices for their support. I also want to thank Ajilore Oluwabunmi, Opara Jackie, and Jeremiah Majid all of YPARD Nigeria who made out time to meet with these youths. Finally, IITA and IITA Youth Agripreneurs who are setting a fine example for stakeholders and youth to follow.

*This piece is written by Mr Olawale Ojo, Country Representative for YPARD in Nigeria...<http://ypard.net/2013-october-11/averting-time-bomb-iita-example>*

## Milestones from the field



*Dr Gbassey Tarawali (middle) with IYA on a soybean field*

The IYA cultivated 4 ha of cassava, 4 ha of maize, 3 ha of soybean, and 2 ha of plantain, all within IITA campus in 2013.

The group also extended its farm activities outside IITA campus to Ogbomosho where they cultivated 21 ha of cassava and 16 ha of maize.

In total, the group cultivated 50 ha.

In addition, they multiplied 2000 suckers of plantain/banana using the macropropagation chamber.

The group plans to increase the number of hectares in 2014, leveraging on the gains and experience gained in 2013. Crops to receive attention will include cassava, maize, soybean, plantain/banana, and other staples.

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