



# IITA

## Youth Agripreneurs

*Agriculture is the future*

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## N2Africa and CropLife Africa Middle East Train Borno Youths in Spray Service Provision and Entrepreneurship



*A practical demonstration on appropriate spraying techniques*

The N2Africa-Borno State Project and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), through the latter's youth component (the IITA Youth Agripreneurs), have trained 60 Borno State youth on "Agribusiness: Key to Productive Youth Engagement," in three training workshops, designed to increase the agripreneurs' knowledge in sustainable agronomic practices (in the production of cowpea, soybean, and groundnut), develop their entrepreneurship skills in agribusiness, and promote income generation, and self-dependence along the three grain legume value chains.

After their training, the Borno State youth agripreneurs decided to engage in nine out of 20 identified agribusinesses, along the three value chains. Specifically, 60% of the agripreneurs opted for cowpea, groundnut, or soybean production and marketing. Since the commercial production of the three legumes requires the application of herbicides, (as a labor saving and drudgery reduction device) for the control of weeds, and insecticides and fungicides for the control of diseases and insect pests (especially in cowpea and

groundnut), the N2Africa-Borno State project considered it necessary to train special spray providers (contract sprayers) to provide these services to farmers. To implement this activity, the N2Africa-Borno State project partnered with CropLife Africa Middle East, which has an internationally acknowledged reputation for provision of expertise on pesticide spray services, and access to quality pesticides and spraying equipment.

The primary target beneficiaries of the training program were primary and secondary school leavers in Borno State. The objective of the training was to enhance the capacity of the already existing spray service providers (contract sprayers), and subsequently develop their capacity to do business, make money, and earn sustainable

livelihoods as spray service providers (SSPs) to farmers in the project area.

The training was conducted from 29 March to 15 April 2016 at the Borno State Agricultural Development Programme (BOSADP) Office, Biu and at the Central Primary School, Kwaya Kusar, Borno State. A total of 45 persons (43 males and 2 females) were trained in three batches (15 persons per batch), each training lasting one week.

*To be eligible to participate, a potential trainee must be:*

- (i) *a bonafide indigene of Borno State;*
- (ii) *actively engaged in contract spraying, for which he/she is duly recognized by the community;*
- (iii) *experienced and passionate about farming and grain legume production;*
- (iv) *literate with a minimum qualification of the First School Leaving Certificate and a maximum of National Certificate of Education (NCE); and*
- (v) *aged 18–40 years. In addition, the applicant is required to provide a letter of attestation to the above claims by the community leader.*



*The trainees (in orange) with the facilitators*

After the formal opening session (attended by representatives of CropLife Member Companies, BOSADP management staff, N2Africa-Borno Project staff, and trainees), the trainees wrote a pre-training assessment test.

The training topics covered on the first day included: (i) Introduction to plant pests and diseases; (ii) Characteristics of weeds; (iii) Basics of pest scouting; (iv) Integrated pest management; (v) Types of pesticides; (vi) Herbicides; and (vii) Pesticide formulations.

On the second day, the following topics were treated: (i) Counterfeit and illegal pesticides; (ii) How to recognize counterfeit and illegal pesticides; (iii) How to read a pesticide label; (iv) How to read a toxicological band; (v) Selecting the right pesticide; (vi) Weed management; (vii) Guidelines for buying pesticides; and (viii) Personal protective equipment.

Day 3 topics included: (i) First aid for a person contaminated with pesticides;

(ii) Transporting pesticides; (iii) Storage

of pesticides; (iv) Why empty containers should not be re-used; (v) Correct cleaning and disposal of empty containers; (vi) Parts of knapsack sprayer and how they function; (vii) Types of nozzles; (viii) How to calibrate a knapsack sprayer; and (ix) The pesticide dosage. The following topics were covered on Day 4: (i) Measuring and mixing of pesticides; (ii) How

to use a knapsack sprayer (iii) Pesticide residues; (iv) Dos and don'ts of pesticide application; (v) Basic record keeping. On the afternoon of the fourth day, the trainees wrote a 1-hour post-training test. Each of them also completed a training evaluation form. The trainees were informed that each would be advised on their performance at the training test. In this regard, 13% of the trainees failed, i.e., scored less than 87% of the trainees were approved by CropLife



The trainees displaying their certificates after the training

Africa Middle East as spray service providers (SSPs).

On Day 5 of the training, the activities were devoted to enterprise development issues, such as talks on entrepreneurship, financial management, record keeping, and know your customer tips. This training is one of the many other activities of the N2 Africa-Global project which is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

## Borno State Youth Agripreneurs open secretariat in Biu and plan to open another one in Maiduguri



Representative of the Emir of BUI, Alhaji Umar Mustapha Aliyu (m) commissioning the secretariat

The Borno Youth Agripreneurs have established their first secretariat in Biu (in southern Borno State). The group also plans to establish another in the northern part of the state (Maiduguri) as the security of lives and properties improves in the state. Borno State is located in north east Nigeria and has been hit by Boko Haram insurgents that have left the state in ruins. IITA and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation through the N2Africa project is restoring hope to the crisis-ravaged state through youth empowerment initiatives primarily the Borno State Youth Agripreneurs. The Borno State Youth Agripreneurs

training program facilitated by the N2Africa-Borno Project, which is one of the projects of the N2Africa-Global.

The training ensured that the youth received hands-on training in managing different agribusiness enterprises especially along the value chains of soybean, cowpea, and groundnut. The N2Africa-Borno Project also facilitates the linkage of the business plans to regulatory institutions (e.g., Corporate Affairs Commission) and relevant financial institutions, including the Bank of Agriculture, the Bank of Industry, and Fidelity Bank. The project also links

are group of graduates of various disciplines. These Youths who live in Borno-State, have been trained to generate employment opportunities along the value chains of agriculture, and in agribusiness through a

However, due to security reasons, the initial activities were concentrated in the southern parts of Borno State.

### Functions of the Secretariat

The Borno State Youth Agripreneur Secretariat serves the following functions: *It serves as a physical address for correspondences of the group.*

*It enhances the corporate image of the agripreneurs as promoters of agriculture as a profitable business.*

*It serves as venue for the meetings of the agripreneurs as a corporate group to advance their business interests.*

*It serves as an ICT center for the group. In this respect, the Secretariat is equipped with working office furniture, a desktop computer, and a printer. Internet connectivity will be provided soon. In this regard, adequate arrangements will be made for the agripreneurs to take full responsibility for the management of Internet access. Thus, the project will provide the modem and pay for the first set of data, while the agripreneurs will be responsible for subsequent renewal of the data subscription.*

*The Secretariat serves as an outfit that will be sustained after the donor-funded project would have ended.*

the young agripreneurs to markets (e.g., input and output dealers, and processors).

The original implementation plan was to start with selected local government areas located in the Sudan savanna agroecological zone of northern Borno State (for cowpea and groundnut) and another set of local government areas located in the northern/southern Guinea agroecological zones of southern Borno State (for groundnut and soybean).

### Secretariat Partners

The establishment and initial management of the Secretariat is a collaborative effort of the Borno State Agricultural Development Programme (BOSADP) and the N2Africa-Borno Project as highlighted below:

- BOSADP provided the physical office space, while the N2Africa-Borno Project rehabilitated and equipped it.

- BOSADP is responsible for payment of electricity bills from the electricity distribution company, while the N2Africa-Borno Project provides power from its stand-by generator during power outages.

### Commissioning of the Secretariat

The Borno State Youth Agripreneur Secretariat was commissioned by His Royal Highness, the Emir of Biu, Alhaji Umar Mustapha Aliyu- (CON), on Thursday, 3 December 2015.

## Celebrating a woman in agribusiness



*Mercy Wakawa*

Mercy Wakawa is a young agripreneur who has embraced agriculture as a viable means of earning a living.

Wakawa's sojourn into agribusiness started in 2014 after three weeks' intensive training organized by the IITA Youth Agripreneurs under the N2Africa project for youth in Borno State.

The N2Africa project's mission is to take as many unemployed youth as possible in Borno State and give them hope for a sustainable livelihood through profitable engagement in agribusiness ventures in the legume value chain.

Thirty-year-old Wakawa who is from Hawul Local Government Area, Borno State holds a degree in Food Science and Technology from the University of Maiduguri, north-east Nigeria. After graduating, Mercy, like every other young Nigerian, was full of dreams and aspirations of getting a white collar job. She had paid her dues by diligently excelling in her studies but was soon faced with the reality of unemployment after she couldn't get a job, years after graduating.

Mercy was on the verge of despair and frustration when she got the opportunity of participating in the agribusiness training under the N2Africa project.

"I actually decided to be part of the training just to get my hands on something and be part of anything that will get me engaged. I never had the hope that something meaningful will come out of it," she said.

After going through a series of mindset changing activities, training on best-bet agronomic practices on crops, production technologies, entrepreneurship and business planning, postharvest processing, and other agricultural activities along the value chain, Wakawa decided to be engaged in the postharvest processing of groundnut.

Mercy was given the opportunity as an intern with a groundnut oil and cake manufacturing industry and received a starter pack in the form of appropriate machinery and cash to facilitate the establishment of her business after the internship.

The business was also registered with the name Confianza Global Resources with the Corporate Affairs Commission of Nigeria to operate as a legal business entity.

Now referred to as "a woman like man" within her rural host community, Mercy is now a proud owner of mini-oil mill which produces high quality groundnut oil, groundnut cake, and sludge at affordable rates.

'I am a proud owner of a functional cottage food processing industry of my dream with an installed capacity of 2 tons per day, I can earn some income without begging, and even pay workers salaries' she stated.

The factory, which began operation in January 2016, now has four employees and is creating downstream secondary processing and marketing of sludge for housewives in the immediate host community, as an income generating and livelihood improvement activity.

The sludge is a secondary by-product of groundnut which is a major raw material in the local soap making industry; while the groundnut cake is very useful as a feed component in animal fattening and is being supplied to poultry feed mills in the neighborhood.

Now a Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of her company, Mercy is one of the few entrepreneurs who qualified for the Bank of Industry's Youth Entrepreneurship Support Programme (YES-P).

YES-P is aimed at developing the entrepreneurial capacity of youth and providing start-up loans at concessionary interest rates to execute their business plans.

Mercy, one of the many female Agripreneurs under the N2Africa project, is practically demonstrating that women can be good entrepreneurs, and indeed enterprise leaders if properly mobilized.

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