



IITA

Youth Agripreneurs

Agriculture is the future

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You will 'ENABLE' Africa to develop with pride - AfDB President, Akinwumi Adesina



Dr Akinwumi Adesina addressing the youth during his visit to IITA, Abuja Station

President of the African Development Bank (AfDB), Dr Akinwumi Adesina on Tuesday 27 September reiterated that the ENABLE Youth Program championed by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) will receive the support of the bank. This, according to him, will give room for the emergence of new agripreneurs that will help re-brand the agricultural sector.

Dr Adesina who was speaking at the IITA station in Abuja said his determination to create a continental wide platform for the African youth to generate wealth and create employment was a deliberate attempt to ensure that the continent is able to feed itself again.

He said the level of hunger, poverty, food importation, and insecurity in the continent has increased over the years because the youths who are supposed to bring about the dynamic change needed to support Africa's dream of feeding itself were massively migrating to the western world illegally in search of greener

pastures. "Africa uses over USD35 billion dollars to import food yearly and from research, it was stated that the number will increase to about USD110 trillion dollars if nothing is done about it. Food business is a big business in Africa but the youth who are supposed to take it as a business are on their way out of the continent through the Mediterranean Sea. This saddens my heart as most of them end up as food for the sharks in the sea while embarking on the journey in search for jobs. In the past African youths were forced out of their fathers' land as slaves but now, they leave voluntarily to serve as slaves in another continent," he said.

Dr Adesina stressed that agriculture, which had the potential to absorb the large number of unemployed African youths is however redundant as it does not look fascinating to the youths due to the negative perception about the sector, lack of skills and financial support, as well as a lack of institutional support amongst others.

He however congratulated IITA for the IYA initiative, which has helped in addressing some of the factors militating against youth engagement in agriculture. He said the ENABLE Youth Program which is a component of his administration's 'Jobs for Youth in Africa' strategy would adopt the IYA model in exposing the African youth to opportunities available to them in the agriculture value chains.

"ENABLE Youth has come to stay and will kick off as expected. It is a continental wide program with Nigeria inclusive. We would be creating 37,000 jobs in Nigeria and with the multiplier effect of the program, we expect the number of jobs created to expand. This would help Nigeria come out of the

present economic recession and we are delighted to partner with IITA in this program," he stated.

Through the program, agripreneurs would have the access to training and skills acquisition, loans, mentoring, etc; which would enable their agribusiness enterprises grow.

He however enjoined the African leaders to stand up and support the youth to enable them stand and grow in agribusiness.

The AfDB Executive Director for Nigeria, Dr Bright Okogu, who was impressed with the IYA model pleaded with the President of the bank to give the necessary support to the youths for them to excel in the sector.

"I am really impressed by what I have seen. This is the first time I am seeing young people with so much passion for agriculture and this speaks a lot, that the future of Africa is indeed bright with



Dr Bright Okogu



Dr Chiji Ojukwu

youths like you in agriculture. We would take this news back to Abidjan.

This is really great and we would help you scale out what you have started," he said.

Dr Chiji Ojukwu, a Director of the bank, said the AfDB board has approved the

'Feed Africa' strategy which has the ENABLE Youth program as a component.

Also present at the event was a representative of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Mrs Nimota Akanbi-- a former Nigerian Ambassador to the Royal Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Representatives of IYA who took turns to share their experiences in agribusiness, displayed their passion for agribusinesses but pleaded for support from the bank.

Through the ENABLE Youth Program in Nigeria, the Bank will provide USD 300 million for youth employment in agribusiness. The goal is to create 1,000 youth entrepreneurs in agribusiness in each of the 36 states, with an expected additional 185,000 jobs.

The visit of Dr Adesina, which is his first official visit to Nigeria, and IITA after his election also witnessed planting of trees as a symbol for posterity and legacy. There was also an exhibition and a tour of the Youth Training Centre that would be named after him in 2017 during IITA's 50th anniversary.

Voices from the youth

During the visit of the President of the African Development Bank, Dr Akinwumi Adesina and his cabinet

members to IITA in Abuja on Tuesday 27 September 2016, the IITA Youth Agripreneurs from Abuja, Ibadan, Kano,

Onne, and Borno came together to share their experiences. Below are some excerpts from the IITA Youth Agripreneurs;

OYINDAMOLA ASAAJU



I am a graduate but couldn't find a job after I finished school, so I moved to Ibadan from Lagos in search of a job. The only job I could get was that of a waitress where I was meant to clean tables and serve drinks and also had to work sometimes in the pantry. Although there is nothing bad in this, I felt as a graduate one must be engaged in mind tasking activities to stay relevant. I had the opportunity of joining the IITA Youth Agripreneurs and I must tell you, this has really helped me as I have been trained in the various aspects of the agricultural value chain. My first time of boarding a plane was to South Africa where I represented this group at a youth summit sponsored by

the Master Card Foundation. Another was my trip to Los Angeles where I also represented the group in another youth summit.

There is no better way to describe transformation. Agriculture has indeed transformed me and today I lead a team of agripreneurs at the IITA station, Onne, Rivers State..

“ As a graduate, one must be engaged in mind tasking activities to stay relevant ”

IBIRONKE IFEDAYO



My first encounter with unemployment was in IITA where I did my one year National Youth assignment, and I was in charge of taking casuals to the field. But one day, I realized that some of my casuals were actually people with a Masters' degree and this for me was a challenge to create an independent business that could save me from joining the massive number of unemployed labour force after my NYSC.

The opportunity came and I joined IYA and was part of the team that revived and expanded the abandoned 4 ponds in IITA to 17 ponds after a 3-week intensive training on catfish farming at Durante Fish Industry. Agriculture

was never appealing to me and when I was offered admission to study agriculture in the university, I was not happy and I obtained a change of course form but my orientation about agriculture changed through IYA. I am now a professional trainer in agribusiness and I manage projects on agriculture. I am also an agricultural 'priest,' preaching the gospel of farming is cool. I have been able to achieve this through the opportunity given to me by IITA.

Let's join hands to give other youths out there this opportunity as well so that the legacies of you, Dr Adesina and Dr Sangina can live on forever.

OGINNI YETUNDE



Agriculture has rescued me and my family from poverty. I lost my dad at the age of 3 and lived in an uncompleted building afterwards. We had to move from house to house to pack manure to sell and this was an eye opener for me to start a small poultry business. With the ENABLE Youth Program, many African youths can be rescued from poverty and unemployment just like I was.

AGBOTOBA IBUKUNOLUWA



I belong to the third generation of agripreneurs known as the Green Magic Agripreneurs. I had a little experience of farming while growing up but I never saw the business angle to it.

Through IYA, I now see agriculture as a business and I would like other youths to have the opportunity of seeing the vast potential in the sector.

OLANIYI TOSIN



I have been able to create a niche for myself in agriculture through my encounter with the wife of the AfDB President and the wife of the Director General of IITA, Mrs Adesina and Mrs Sangina. During my interaction with them, I found out that they are not just wives of great men but women of vision. IYA has really thought me what independence is and I don't regret choosing the path of agribusiness.

OWOEYE MOLAYO



These are testimonies of the ever ready soldiers who want to take agriculture to the next level.

They have all spoken their minds and I feel we can help make this dream come true by supporting them. If we are given the opportunity and support, we would make agriculture a business. Not as a normal business but as business unusual.

MERCY WAKAWA



I graduated from the University of Maiduguri and was part of the applicants for the Nigeria Immigration recruitment exercise sometime ago but I was disqualified because of my height. I was depressed but I got an opportunity to go for a training organized by N2Africa project under the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The training which cuts across the agricultural value chains was facilitated by IYA, and after the training I received a grant from N2Africa. From the grant, I started my groundnut oil processing factory. Today, I am a CEO and I have 8 people working for me. The name of my company is Confianza Limited. Let's help other youths build their career in agriculture just like me.

BAJULAYE TOLULOPE



I had always wanted to be the CEO of a bank while growing up but now, my eyes are open and I would like to be the CEO of an agribusiness enterprise. I work with the processing and marketing unit of IYA and we have a product known as TIDBIT. With TIDBIT, we have penetrated 2 states out of the 36 states and we still find it very hard to meet up with demand. If we can be provided with funds, we would penetrate the nooks and crannies of the continent and the world as well, and create jobs for more youths so we don't only compete as millionaires and billionaires but also end up on the Forbes list of richest men in the world. Help make this a reality.

ZACCHEUS IZUWA



Africa indeed has the potential but we cannot eat our potential and the youths that are supposed to transform this potential are not receiving the necessary support needed for them to excel. Sometime ago I was in Dakar, Senegal and I could remember the country's minister of agriculture saying they have the money to invest in the youth but the youth are not responsible enough to take up the challenge of transforming the wealth in the country.

But here we are as one ready to save Africa from the menace that has bedeviled it.

OKUNLOLA FESTUS



I am the third of five children, born of my parents. Out of the five children, I am the first graduate and the only one with a first class. My father is a missionary who graduated at the age of 55 years with a 2nd class lower. I was not brought up with a silver spoon and had to hustle for everything. IYA has however opened my eyes to a better side of life. I remember the last time you came to IITA, I discussed my plan of venturing into tomato business with you and my business plan is ready. We are relying on ENABLE Youth to make our dreams come true.

“ As a graduate, one must be engaged in mind-tasking activities to stay relevant ”

The Legacy

Following a tour of the Youth Training Centre in Abuja, President of the African Development Bank, Dr Akinwumi Adesina planted a Tamarind tree (*Tamarindus Indica*) to show his commitment and support for the growth of agribusiness through young and agile agripreneurs across Africa. While planting the tree, Dr Adesina said, “the exercise symbolizes the birth of a

generation that is not scared to take the risk and excel in agribusiness.” “You are the ones that will create the new wealth for Africa, and you have succeeded in changing the mindset in agriculture.

And even as we have watered this, I believe we would also provide resources to water your dreams, ambition, and to help you grow into a viable business that

would not only enable you feed Nigeria, but also feed Africa as a whole,” he said. The Director General of IITA, Dr Nteranya Sanginga who was also present at the ceremony, planted a White Star Apple tree (*Gambeya Cainito*) stating that the tree planting exercise was the laying of a legacy for him in Nigeria. He further requested for the support of the bank on behalf of the youths.



Dr Akinwumi Adesina plants the Tamarind tree



Dr Nteranya Sanginga plants the White Star Apple tree



An Agripreneur in Abuja, Ene Agada planting a tree

Support the IITA Youth Agripreneurs - Dr Nteranya Sanginga



Dr Nteranya Sanginga meets with IITA Staff in Abuja after the visit of Dr Akinwumi Adesina

The Director General of IITA, Dr Nteranya Sanginga has stated that the IITA Youth Agripreneurs have brought dynamic change in the history of the Institute.

Dr Sanginga who stated this during an interactive session with IITA staff in Abuja on Wednesday, 28 September said through the support of IITA for the Youth in Agribusiness Program and the unrelenting effort of the youths, IYA has

gained world- wide recognition which has placed the institution on a better pedestal among its counterparts.

Dr Sanginga stated this following presentations and experiences shared by the youths during the visit of Dr Akinwumi Adesina, President of the African Development Bank (AfDB) to IITA Abuja on Tuesday, 27 September. There have been lots of investors both from the public and private sectors indicating

of the African youth and steering their path towards a profitable sector.

He however called on the staff and IITA community to support the youths especially in the forthcoming ENABLE Youth Program.

He added that the program which started without a definite road map has been adopted by 31 countries on the Continent.

interest in partnering with IITA on the youth in agribusiness component.

He said following the presentation, 10 Agripreneurs have been invited by the African Development Bank to Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire to present their case and enlighten the Board of the African Development Bank on the IITA Youth Agripreneurs' model.

Dr Sanginga stated that the cabinet members of AfDB who visited the station with Dr Adesina commended IITA for championing the cause

Photo Speaks: Visit of Dr Akinwumi A. Adesina, AfDB President to IITA, Abuja Station



AfDB President, Dr Akinwumi Adesina (M), Executive Director-AfDB, Dr Bright Okogu (4th from right) and Director General-IITA, Dr Nteranya Sanginga (4th from left), with other top AfDB officials at the occasion

Photo Speaks: Visit of Dr Akinwumi A. Adesina to IITA, Abuja Station



Mrs Abur Terngu (R) presenting to Dr Adesina (L) posters reflecting his historical achievements for the past 25 years



Dr Adesina at the exhibition stand of IITA Youth Agripreneurs



IYA member, Hassan Halmot sharing her experience with Dr Adesina on the use and impact of mechanization in the group



Dr Akinwumi Adesina (M), with Dr Nteranya Sanginga (far left-in front), Dr Bright Okogu (2nd from left), Dr Chiji Ojukwu (far right) cutting the cake with IITA Youth Agripreneurs Abuja to mark his visit



IYA member, Oni Waheed explains the group's partnership with Hello Tractor



Dr Akinwumi Adesina and Dr Nteranya Sanginga shake hands after the tree planting exercise



Dr Akinwumi Adesina planting the Tamarind tree



Dr Akinwumi Adesina being appreciated by a little girl with a flower



Dr Nteranya Sanginga planting the White Star Apple tree (Gambeya Cainito)



The Youth Corp members in IITA, Abuja Station present a gift to Dr Akinwumi Adesina



IYA member, Ene Theresa (Abuja), planting the Jack Fruit tree (Arthocarpus Heterophyllum)



Dr Nteranya Sanginga with all Agripreneurs (Abuja, Borno, Ibadan, Kano, Onne)

“ I am really impressed by what I have seen. This is the first time I am seeing young people with so much passion for agriculture and this speaks a lot, that the future of Africa is indeed bright with youths like you in agriculture ”
Dr Bright Okogu



Dr Akinwumi Adesina with the Youth Corp Members and IITA Youth Agripreneurs (Abuja)

“ And even as we have watered this, I believe we would also provide resources to water your dreams, ambition, and to help you grow into a viable business that would not only enable you feed Nigeria, but also feed Africa as a whole ”
Dr Akinwumi A. Adesina



A group photograph with Dr Akinwumi Adesina