



# IITA

## Youth Agripreneurs

*Agriculture is the future*

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## IYA model is inspiring— Tony Elumelu Foundation



*Ms Adebakin (second from right) at IYA's processing centre*

The Chief Operating Officer of the Tony Elumelu Foundation and Entrepreneurship Program (TEEP), Ms Abimbola Adebakin has indicated the organization's readiness to partner with IITA Youth Agripreneurs (IYA) in empowering African youths through agribusiness.

Ms Adebakin who made this known during an interactive session with the IITA Youth Agripreneurs (IYA) in Ibadan, Nigeria on May 19, said the collaboration was important to enable both parties expand its scope of creating employment opportunities for youths along the agricultural value chain.

She added that with the recent increase in the level of interest shown by the TEEP applicants in agriculture, it became imperative for TEEP to map out strategies on how to form a strong collaboration with youth-in-agriculture inclined institutions like IITA and IYA.

"We had over 20,000 applicants for TEEP last year and the most interesting part of it is that over 40 percent of them wanted to venture into the agriculture sector," she stated.

Giving insight into TEEP, Ms Adebakin said the program would support 10,000 African entrepreneurs in the next 10 years, with training, mentorship, coaching, and start-up funds.

"We select 1,000 entrepreneurs every year across Africa and they get seed capital of \$5,000 and later get another \$5,000 dollars which they pay back over 3 years after undergoing a 12 weeks training with us. The 12-week course comprises of financial training, product or service initiation, branding, market analysis, pricing, leadership training and more," she added.

The entrepreneurs who apply on-line are screened and judged based on five criteria which include Feasibility, Market, Financial understanding, Leadership and Entrepreneurship skills as well as Scalability.

"After going through the training and meeting the requirements, we don't still expect 100 percent success or the normal level of failure. Even when they fail, we say they have met the challenges which they did not anticipate and we encourage them to move up again through their linkage with the alumni network where they can share experience and ideas on how to overcome such challenges," she explained.

Ms Adebakin, who added that IITA has done well by initiating the IYA model said the model aligns with the TEEP and the organization, Tony Elumelu Foundation, would bring in the start-up tool kit through the partnership.

IITA's Deputy Director General for Partnerships and Capacity Development, Dr Kenton Dashiell said, "IITA through its youth agripreneur program is willing to ensure that youths in Africa become successful agripreneurs along the value chain in the sector."

# How youths can break barriers using agribusiness— Ada Osakwe



Ada Osakwe

Ada Osakwe, the Chief Executive Officer of Agrolay Ventures and a former Senior Investment Adviser to Nigeria's former Minister of Agriculture now President of African Development Bank, Dr Akinwumi Adesina has advised the IITA Youth Agripreneurs (IYA) to have self-belief, build discipline, and partnerships that will enable them become the agent of change who will make a difference in Africa.

Ada, who stated this during a chat with the agripreneurs at the Agriserve building on June 2 in Ibadan, said with these three key things the youths could break limitations and cross hurdles in their chosen fields.

Relaying her sojourn into agribusiness from the financial sector, Ms Osakwe

added that her exposure to the opportunities available across the agriculture value chain while working with Dr Adesina changed her mindset towards the establishment of her agro-food company.

"I have worked in the financial sector for years. I worked in an investment bank in London, I have also worked at the African Development Bank (AfDB) and also with a private equity company in the United States of America, but all these never gave me the opportunity of making any direct impact. My job as the Senior Investment Adviser to Dr Adesina was a turning point for me. I discovered that there are lots of things to be done in Africa but so many people are not channeling into it," she said.

She enjoined the youths to be innovative and think of how to create opportunities out of the various opportunities available for them.

"Put yourself in the scenario. Think of what gives you dis-satisfaction and make an opportunity out of it. That was how I started my business," she added.

Ms Osakwe also expressed readiness to partner with IYA in all areas including investment opportunities to ensure that they become successful agripreneurs in Africa.

It may interest you to know that Ada Osakwe graduated with a first class degree in Economics from the University of Hull in the United Kingdom. She was among the 2014 Forbes list of 20 young power women in Africa.



Ms Ada Osakwe with IITA Youth Agripreneurs

## Nigerian Army chief visits IITA Youth Agripreneurs Explores partnership opportunities

Major General Laz Ilo, the General Officer commanding Division 2 of the Nigerian Army, Oyo State has commended the IITA Youth Agripreneurs (IYA) for their effort to end unemployment through the skills empowerment of other youths in agriculture.

General Ilo who visited the youths at the IITA headquarters, Ibadan on May 27, with other top military officials and their wives said the IITA Youth Agripreneurs' model is worthy of emulation.

He stressed that with the achievements and commitment shown by IYA so far, the agricultural sector in the country would be revived and be able to accommodate the increasing number of unemployed youths in the country.

Stressing the need for them not to



Major General Ilo at IYA's demonstration field

relent in their effort of creating jobs for unemployed youths in the society, General Ilo said the Division would like to partner with the IYA in training some

young graduates in the Division.

He added that through the training, the youths could also become self-employed and tap into the vast opportunities

available along the agricultural value chain.



Major General Laz Ilo (M) with some army officers' wives during their visit to IITA Youth Agripreneurs' office

## Ethiopian Ambassador commends IYA

The Ethiopian Ambassador to Nigeria, Samia Zekaria, paid an official visit to the office of the IITA Youth Agripreneurs (IYA) in Ibadan on 12 May to gain better understanding of the ENABLE Youth Program. The ENABLE Youth Program is a collaborative initiative between IITA and the African Development Bank (AfDB) that seeks to empower youths through agribusiness.

Ms Zekaria who was accompanied by the embassy's counsellor II, Alemu Gesuma was received by IITA's Head of Partnership Coordination Office, Dr Alfred Dixon; and Dr Melaku Gedil, Head of the Bioscience unit.

During the interactive session at the Agriserve building, Dr Dixon gave insights into the ENABLE Youth program and how the country could benefit from the opportunities available in engaging youth in agriculture.

Ms Zekaria noted that Ethiopia has keen interest in participating in the ENABLE Youth Program and expressed pleasure over the number of young women



Ethiopian Ambassador, Samia Zekaria (M), Dr Alfred Dixon (R) with IITA Youth Agripreneurs

meaningfully engaged in agribusiness in IYA.

"I see a lot of women and I am very impressed. It is very good to see so many young women engaged on this platform. This is an interesting project to boost agriculture. Africa has a large youth population but a problem

with youth unemployment. We have the resources and the manpower. It is a matter of putting the resources together. This is a good project. It makes the youth self-sufficient. We will take your message back home," she stated.

The Ambassador also conducted a tour round the IYA facility.

# IYA recruits new members

My name is **Adeniyi Temitope**

**Peter**, I studied Agricultural Extension and Management from Federal College of Agriculture, Akure. I joined IITA Youth Agripreneurs because of my personal conviction to change the face of agriculture in Nigeria, and in Africa as a whole. I see agriculture as the best place where I can put my skills and passion for the growth of the Nigerian economy.



My name is **Dolapo Omokanjuola**. I

am a graduate of Agricultural Economics from the University of Ibadan. I joined IITA Youth Agripreneurs because I see agriculture as the solution to the problems being faced in the Nigerian economy. I support the vision of changing the mindset of youths towards practicing profitable agriculture because their involvement in agriculture will help in reducing unemployment in Nigeria.



My name is **Ajayi Paul**, a graduate of

Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Zaria, where I studied Crop Production Technology. I was posted to IITA for my NYSC where I work with Cassava Weed Management Unit. I have always seen agriculture as a means of eradicating poverty and creating jobs. During my service year, I was opportunely to know IYA through their various agribusiness programs. This triggered my passion and dream to become an agripreneur. IYA has changed my perspective, and opened my eyes to various opportunities available in agriculture.



My name is **Samekpolo Miriam O**, a graduate of Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta where I obtained my B.Agric in Horticulture.



My mindset about agriculture has changed through my interaction with IITA Youth Agripreneurs. Through them, I have realized that agriculture is not only meant for the old but also for the youths. Young people like me can channel their knowledge and introduce mechanization, add value to products, and take agriculture to a greater height.

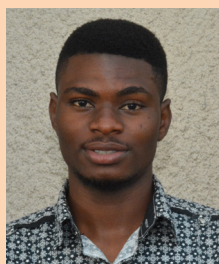
My name is **Lawal**

**Ebunoluwa L**, a graduate of Computer and Information System from Achievers University Owo, Ondo State. I joined IITA Youth Agripreneurs because of my thirst for knowledge. I want to be an agent of change in agriculture making it attractive for youth involvement. I am also interested in introducing my skills in the use of ICT to make agriculture attractive to the youths.



My name is

**Bajulaiye Tolulope**. I studied Marketing from Lagos State University. I joined the IITA Youth Agripreneurs because I believe so much in the agricultural sector, and I see it as being the future. There are different entrepreneurial opportunities along agricultural value chain which I can venture into.



I am **Seriki Aramide**, a graduate of Botany from the University of Ibadan. I joined the IITA Youth Agripreneurs because I believe agriculture is profitable, can reduce youth unemployment, and also help boost the Nigerian economy.



My name is **Agbotoba Ibunkunoluwa**. I studied Agricultural Extension and Rural Development from the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB). I joined the IITA Youth Agripreneurs because my



experience within the premises of IITA has made me realize that agriculture is profitable. When the mindset of youths and farmers is changed, then agriculture will be seen from another perspective.

My name is **Yusifu Murtalab**

**Adedamola**, a graduate of Agriculture and Environmental Engineering from the University of Ibadan. I joined IITA Youth Agripreneurs because I have realized that agriculture can make me successful.



My name is **Oparinde Babatunde**, a graduate of Wildlife and Eco-tourism from the University of Ibadan. I joined IITA Youth Agripreneur because I have a passion for environmental conservation at the same time youth empowerment. The future of any economy is in the hands of entrepreneurs and innovators and we IITA Youth Agripreneurs are the future.



My name is **Komolafe Peters**, a graduate of Food Science from Joseph Ayo Babalola University (JABU). As the world grows, the most challenging issues we face are in agriculture: feeding the growing world population, sustaining quality water supplies, and keeping our planet healthy. As an agripreneur, I know that I can be part of the team that will make that impact of discovering the solutions and creating job opportunities for youths at large.



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