



IITA

Youth Agripreneurs

Agriculture is the future

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Delegation from Dr Congo in IITA to understudy IYA model



IYA members with the Delegates from DR Congo; Country Representative-IITA (DR Congo), Dr Nzola-Meso Mahungu (2nd from right), Director-Ministry of Agriculture, Mr Luvuangu Mampuya and Dr Mpoko Bokanga

In preparation for the kick-off of the ENABLE Youth Program in DR Congo, a delegation from the Ministry of Agriculture in DR Congo visited the IITA Youth Agripreneurs office in Ibadan, Nigeria on Tuesday, 17 January to understudy the IYA model.

The team comprised Dr Mpoko Bokanga from AfDB; Mr Luvuangu Mampuya, the Director Ministry of Agriculture; and Dr Nzola-Meso Mahungu, the Country

Representative of IITA in DR Congo. After listening to a brief presentation on the success stories of IYA, Mr Luvuangu stated that he was delighted with what IITA has done in helping sub-Saharan countries tackle the issue of youth unemployment. According to him, DR Congo has tried in so many ways to tackle the issue through different entrepreneurial skills but it was discovered that many youth prefer white collar jobs to being independently engaged because of lack of resources.

can write business plans and also venture into businesses of their choice while still undergoing training at the incubation center.

Bose Idowu is one of the pioneer members of IYA who started her business from her savings and support from IITA. She is into planting and processing of cowpea into cowpea flour which can be used for bean cake. The delegates also visited Niji farms, the BIP, and other facilities in IITA.

He however expressed optimism that with the ENABLE Youth Program, the youth would embrace agriculture because there will be resources, training, and needed support to help them when the need arises. He added that it is essential to change the orientation of youth towards agriculture.

He said the experience of one of the Agripreneurs, Bose Idowu is worth emulating stating that youth



Visit to IYA vegetable field; Omokanjuola Dolapo (2nd from left) explains the business opportunities in fruit and vegetable production



Visit to IYA Processing centre: Azunnaya Victor (far left), showcases IYA processed commodities

We can change the narrative about agriculture-Ms Mosun Umoru



Mosunmola Umoru

The Technical Adviser on Youth and Gender to the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Ms Cynthia Mosunmola Umoru has advised young people to change the narrative of the agricultural sector by making

agriculture fascinating and glamorous for the world to see. Ms Mosun stated this when she led her team from the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) to the office of the IITA Youth Agripreneurs in Ibadan on Friday, 20 January.

During an interactive session with IYA at the Agriserve building, Ms Mosun highlighted that the agricultural sector has suffered a lot of negative perception and the time has come for the youth to contribute their quota towards ensuring that the mindset of other youth, policy makers, and stakeholders changes to a more positive one.

She added that IITA has done well by grooming the younger generations to embrace agriculture as a business. She however enjoined the youth to brace up for the challenges ahead of them as they

embark on their independent enterprises outside the walls of IITA. Ms Mosun who is the CEO of Honeysuckles PTL ventures also took time out to share some challenges faced during her sojourn in agribusiness.

Also on the team, Dr Aisha Ndajako Mohammed encouraged IYA not to be scared to explore the business opportunities out there. She advised them to broaden their business horizon by introducing extraordinary business ideas including those that can be of benefit to the pharmaceutical companies.

The Special Adviser on Monitoring and Evaluation, Dr Ariyo Maiye commended the diversity in the structure of IYA. He said the diverse educational background would be an added advantage in achieving the agricultural set goals and objectives. The team also made a tour round the fields and enterprises of IYA.



Visit to IYA fish ponds



Ms Mosunmola Umoru (far right) tasting "Tidbit delight"

IYA Onne diversifies into poultry production

The Onne environment in Rivers State is excited about the presence and activities of IITA/IYA in the area.

The Onne team of IYA moved to the rainforest region in February 2016 and within 10 months of existence, the youth are making an impact by establishing enterprises that have created employment for youth in the region.

Leveraging on the existing facilities in the Onne station, the team ventured into catfish production and has since started harvesting and selling to the outlets of Kilimanjaro restaurant, one of the largest restaurant chains in Port Harcourt.

The team also recently diversified into poultry production by stocking with 300 birds for the first production cycle



IYA-Onne team at the sales point for plantain suckers

after undergoing intensive training at a poultry farm in Sapele, Delta State. To meet up the needs of the community,

the group produces fresh vegetables and also provides the local farmers with disease-free plantain suckers.

ITYA wins award at National Agricultural Exhibition



Veronica Kichantav attends to participants at the National Agricultural Exhibition

ITYA Tanzania Youth Agripreneurs have been given an award by the Tanzania Agricultural Society as ambassadors

for youth in agriculture. The award which was given to them during the National Agricultural Exhibition late last year in Lindi, Tanzania was in recognition of their effort and commitment towards ensuring that youth are productively engaged in agriculture in the country. Speaking while presenting the award to ITYA, the Permanent Secretary,

Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Rosebud Kurwijila said the zeal and commitment shown by ITYA is worth emulating and congratulated IITA for the initiative. She however promised to continue to support ITYA in meeting their set objectives. She said youth participation in agricultural development programs in the country was necessary to catalyze the country's efforts to fight the challenges of poverty, hunger, and unemployment.

The youth have also enjoyed support from the Tanzania Agricultural Development Board in building their capacity in writing project proposals and business plans to tap into funding opportunities for youth programs.

IYA Ibadan, Kano hold staff retreats

In the spirit of the New Year and also in a bid to foster unity, peace, and brace up for the tasks ahead of the group in 2017, IYA in Ibadan and Kano recently held a staff retreat at their respective locations.

The retreat which gave the youth ample time to reflect on the activities, achievements, challenges, and prospects ahead of them as individuals and as an organization, also provided them the opportunity to renew organizational strategies and bonds as well as brainstorm on the "quick-win" activities for year 2017.

Reflecting on the activities of the group in 2016, the Head of Youth in the Agribusiness office, Evelyn Ohanwusi stated that IYA fared well in the year but will definitely work towards getting better in terms of delivery on its mandate in 2017.

She however urged her colleagues not to relent in their efforts of creating Fortune 500 companies out of agriculture.

The retreat gave IYA Ibadan a clearer picture of the 2017 activities as well as strategies behind current and forthcoming projects such as the ENABLE Youth Program.

In Kano, the leader of the group, Bankole Akinyele gathered his team members to set the goals and objectives around its activities, especially in the northern part of the country.

Supported by staff of the N2Africa Borno Project and ICRISAT, the Kano team was also poised to develop strategies that would make a difference in the discharge of their duties.



IYA-Kano team during a team building exercise



A cross-section of a discussion forum during the IYA retreat in Ibadan

With lots of team bonding tasks, quizzes, and games, the Kano team was re-energized to deliver and make an impact in the New Year.

At the age of 27, I went bankrupt and was owing banks 27 million Naira- PMF Cynthia Mosunmola Umoru



Cynthia Mosunmola Umoru

Recently, the Technical Adviser on Youth and Gender to the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Ms Cynthia Mosunmola Umoru, led a delegation from the Ministry to IYA on Friday, 20 January. During the visit, Ms Umoru and her team spent quality time with the Agripreneurs and she shared the good, the bad, and the ugly experience of her journey to success in agribusiness. Below is her story.

Today for me is an exciting moment. It is good to see people who are as visionary as Dr Sanginga, because over the years one of the things I have done is to try to see how we can encourage young people to think beyond themselves and seize the opportunity along the Ag-Space.

You are a lucky group and some of the privileged few. The word privilege is something you create for yourself. I would like to share my personal experience and share a bitter part of my journey. Straight out of college, I started running a venture right in my grandma's house. I started my first business when I was nine years old. I was cleaning cars; people would bring their cars on Saturday mornings and I would clean them, make some money, and save.

By the time I got into university, I was baking bread and cookies in my year 1 and 2 and selling GNLD. I schooled

in Lagos State University (LASU). I gained admission into medical school in Kano but I didn't pursue that dream, I ran back home.

But I left Kano with something very interesting, which is Zobo (sorrel drink). I am sharing this because in life you don't know tomorrow you don't know where you will find yourself, so please seize the moment. In medical school it was exciting but I left because a riot broke out and I didn't think I could survive, so I came back home.

My father asked me what I wanted but I said had found something more exciting. I wanted to start my own business and my daddy felt I was crazy. He wanted a medical doctor for a daughter.

My dad had built a library and he was ready to show off that he has a daughter who is a medical doctor. Going to medical school in Kano made me realize that I was going to study medicine for my father and that was not going to be. So when I got home I said sorry dad you can disown me if you want because you are not going to get a medical degree certificate; I am not going to produce one. I am back home and I am going to follow my dreams.

The same man that almost disowned me some years back is now my biggest fan. I get phone calls from him saying: "I saw you on TV today, my friends said they saw you in the newspaper" etc. today. He is very proud of me.

So when I brought home the Zobo leaf from Kano, my father said I brought rats into his house because my bag of sorrel attracted all sorts. I was the first person to bottle Zobo-tamper proof in Nigeria. I was the first person to put zobo in sachets like pure water in Lagos, because for me, I didn't understand why we had such great commodities in the North fura, zobo, nunu, all of those things and we didn't have them in the Southwest. I thought we are a rich country, blessed with so much but we are under-utilizing the resources we have, so I tried my hands on a lot of things.

Every Christmas today, my turnover in making fruit cakes is in excess of over 3

million naira just from one commodity. Every Valentine, I don't go out because my Val over the last 10, 12 years has been my father. I am blessed with three fathers and all three of them buy me a gift. But guess what, I stay indoors on Valentine's Day and I make up to 1.5, 1.8 or 2 million naira from baking cakes for all you lovers who want to go out and have fun. I also have a kid sister, Oyinkansola who is just as crazy as I am. She makes money by making gift deliveries for people on horses; she serenades people.

This is to tell you the opportunity out there that people are not leveraging on. I shared that background to tell you the fun part of my journey.

But the bitter part is that on my 27th birthday, I went bankrupt. I had run a business without the requisite skills in business and management, especially financial management and I was owing 27 million naira to loan sharks and to banks. Some loan sharks were charging me 10 percent interest monthly. But because I wanted to keep my business alive, I borrowed money.

I was foolish, but to be honest, I am grateful I went through that because today I make bold decisions in my business. I recently acquired 3,000 hectares of land in Osun State where we are developing an integrated farm. It is very close to Obafemi Awolowo University. It has not been an easy journey and I am going to be brutally honest with you. This is the easiest your business journey is ever going to be because you have support from IITA to help you develop and harness your skills.

But there is a real world out there. A real world where your business plans will be thrown back at you when you go to pitch to the banks. A real world where the business ideas will be taken by CEOs of some institutions where you go to pitch and they tell you there is no money and you walk out and the same people start the business you have gone to present to them.

A real world where you produce, harvest, and you want to move to the market and there is no infrastructure in terms of road network from where your farm is or you even manage to get the produce out and you have 30 to 40 check points between your farm gate and the market point. There is a real world where my chickens

are going out and the truck is delayed by a local government official or agent or policeman who does not understand the value of the commodity I have in the truck and detains the truck. You lose time, produce, money, and investment. That is the crazy world in Nigeria. I am not going to talk make you happy because this is the best it is ever going to be.

In as much as I am excited about the fact that you are coming on this journey or that you have started your journey already, I need to remind you that there

is that real world. Something has to keep you going on those days. I mean those days I have woken up and squeezed out water from my pillow and it could fill a cup. There is the reality of the days when there is nobody to talk to or listen to you just because you know Dr Sanginga, and they will tell you "but you are connected" or you know the Minister, the President just like my story where everyone says "but you know everyone in power."

How do you explain that you don't have money to run your business or that you don't have off-takers? Or even the situation where you want to export your produce and at the NAHCO shed at the airport there is an infrastructure gap because there is no temperature-controlled holding bay and you want to export and everything you have taken to the airport cannot go; or the situation where someone notices a weevil in your product because your staff didn't pay attention, or you get to work in the morning and your staff don't turn up or they come late because there was traffic on the road and there are deliveries to be made! What do you do in those situations? There are times I had to be the accountant manager, the pack-house staff, and I have had to literally run end to end across the value chain because somebody dropped the ball.

And the clients do not care because they want their deliveries and output. Are you going to be the CEO who sits at home and dishes out instructions or the one that takes the bull by the horns and leads by example? All of my staff know that there is nothing I can't do. I love them but I am ready to dive in the moment any of them is not available. What kind of entrepreneurs

will you be? I want you to be the ones who be an example, who will motivate your staff to constantly come to work, to be diligent in what they do etc. What you are doing is exciting and I am super proud of it but let us take this beyond excitement and out-scale this as a team, as Nigerians. You are not the leaders of tomorrow, don't let anybody deceive you. There is no tomorrow. Your tomorrow starts today. When I was young, they said we are the leaders of tomorrow but the same leaders of yesterday are still there today!

*// Success
will come, money will
come, my biggest wealth is the
investment I put in people. //*

Let me share with you one of the things that gets me going and keep me awake. I stay awake because I know there are 180 or over 2 million Nigerians who eat something every day. Imagine I make a naira from every Nigerian, which means I smile to the bank with approximately 200 million naira daily. I just want that share of people's pocket. So calculate that for 365 days. In addition to the fact that if the average Nigerian spends 100 naira per meal, 300 naira per day, that is 6 billion naira per month so how much of that gets into my company? This disturbs my sleep because I think of how to get my share of people's pocket. So who makes that money? Where does that money go? A portion of it must come to me.

I want to die empty. I want to give of myself, my best to my country. I have a genuine love of my country and I want you to do the same. Success will come, money will come, my biggest wealth is the investment I put in people. I can only sleep in one bed space at a time. With 20 cars in my garage, I can only sit in one car seat at a time. The moment I start moving to the back, the driver will ask me "Madam, are you alright", meaning are you going insane.

Don't be fooled. The guys who drive the Rolls Royce, the Bugatti, and other flashy cars drive on the same bad road that you drive. There is no special road

for them in Nigeria. The only difference between them and yourself who drives a motorcycle is because they got there before you. We are all on different journeys and different bus-stops. You will get to your own bus-stop when the time comes.

Never be intimidated. I have never been afraid of anything or anyone in my entire life and I have never thought there is any mountain that I cannot surmount. Everything in life is in stages and I am going to get to my own point when the time is ripe. I don't care if he has a jeep, or jet, that is where he is today. Tomorrow morning, I can get an order for so much maize, chicken and my transformation would come. So I celebrate him with all of his luxuries and I don't let him intimidate me. I will rather ask him how he got to where he is today. I am never ashamed to ask. There

is no point in being arrogantly poor; poor in resources, knowledge etc. I see a lot of fine girls at the airport with Louis Vuitton suitcases, Prada bags; guess what? Some of them are dragging their entire life on the tarmac because all of the money they have, they have used it to buy these things!

For you ladies, there is no ugly woman. It depends on how the lady looks at it. Don't let anybody fool you. But you are the ugly girls with 6 billion naira in your account.

During the last 12 years, everywhere I go, even when I worked in the African Union, others would be saying: "I attended Wales University" etc. I am never ashamed to say I attended LASU and I am a farmer and a Nigerian; then everyone pauses. Then the question they ask is; you a farmer? And I respond by saying yes! This is what a farmer should look like; sweet, young, sexy, pretty etc.

So we need to change the narrative. So the onus is on us to change the narrative and sell the narrative that we want. So the narrative we want to sell out of Nigeria is that agriculture can be glam, fun, farming can be cool and we can be successful billionaires like the president of AfDB wants us to be and truthfully, we can change our world! And I see people who would change that narrative in this room.

Institutions in Imo State applaud IITA for IYA model, pledge support



Rector of Imo State Polytechnic (3rd from right), Rev. Fr. Madu giving an insight into the production capacity of the processing center



Visit to one of the institution's fish ponds

The Imo State Polytechnic (formerly Michael Okpara College of Agriculture and Technology) in Umuagwo will serve as an incubation host for youth to be trained by the IITA Youth Agripreneurs moving to the State to kick-off the IYA model in Imo State.

The polytechnic, which is sited about 26 kilometers from the state capital Owerri, has over 1000 hectares of land with 350 hectares of farmland on the school campus.

Conducting a tour round some of the facilities, which has been abandoned for some time now, the Rector of the institution Rev. Fr. Wence Madu briefed a team of the DG IITA, Dr Nteranya Sanginga; Director AfDB, Dr Chiji Ojukwu; IITA's commodity specialist, Dr Richardson Okechukwu; and a host of IITA Youth Agripreneurs on the potentials of the facilities of the institution and the challenges faced in the maintenance and running of the institution's agribusiness enterprises.

He stated that the institution's cassava processing center, which has the capacity to process over 40 tons of cassava daily, used to produce cassava flour designated for master bakers but had to be abandoned because of lack of raw materials to meet up with production.

He stressed that the lack of mechanization on farmlands resulted in a shortage of raw materials as the local farmers now practice for subsistence purposes.

Other facilities visited include the "poultry island" which houses over 2000 battery cages for birds and also concrete fish ponds of about 40,000 production capacity.

The youth will be leveraging on these facilities to practice mechanized farming on a large expanse of land to produce cassava to kick start the operation of the processing center and also for other commodities along the cassava commodity value chain.

The abandoned fish ponds will also be utilized by the youth for maximum production of catfish to supply Owerri and its environs.

The abandoned screen houses will also be revived to produce vegetables all year round.

The youth will also work with the Federal Polytechnic in Nekede in the fabrication of farm implements and other machinery.

The Polytechnic, according to the Rector Dr Mrs Cele Njoku, has done well in the areas of fabrication of machines. She added that the institution will support IYA and also encourage their students to partake in the agripreneurial trainings and skills.

A team of experts from IITA has however been deployed to the institution by Dr Sanginga to carry out an on-site assessment and evaluation of the facilities before commencement of repairs and refurbishing.

IITA Youth Agripreneurs move to Imo State

Starting from the IITA headquarters in the south western region of Nigeria in 2012, the IITA Youth Agripreneurs (IYA) expanded and took the benefit of engaging youth and creating gainful employment along the agricultural value chains for youth in the northern and south-south regions of Nigeria.

With its fields and operational offices in Abuja, Kano, and Onne in Rivers State, IYA are having an impact and also changing the perception and orientation of young graduates about agriculture. Building on its model, the youth in the mentioned locations have also established profitable agribusiness

enterprises to sustain their operations and generate income for themselves.

With the intention of extending the benefit to the eastern part of the country, a team of Agripreneurs will be moving from the Ibadan and Abuja offices to start another IYA group in Imo State.

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The team, which will make use of the facilities of the Imo State Polytechnic in Umuagwo, is expected to train and engage an additional 25 youth in agribusiness skills.

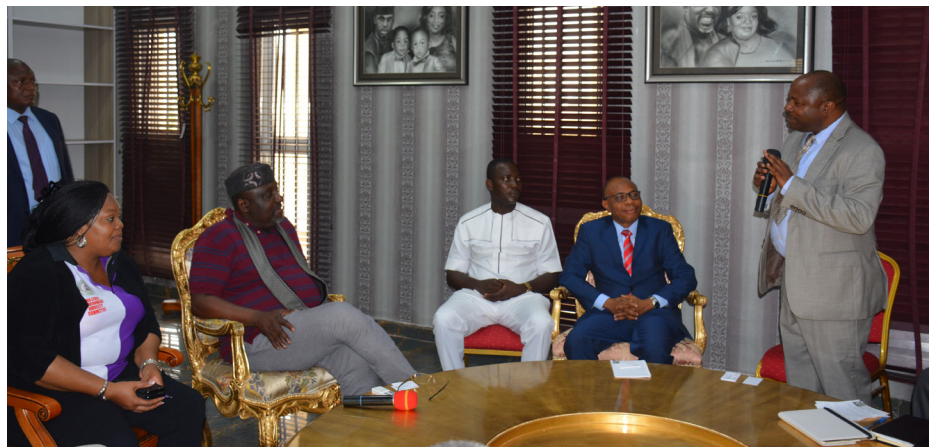
To kick-off in the State, the Director General of IITA Dr Nteranya Sanginga and the Director of Agriculture and Agro-Industries Department of the African Development Bank (AfDB), Dr Chiji Ojukwu visited the Governor of the State, Rochas Okorocha at his residence in Owerri on Friday, 13 January to discuss the efforts and intentions of the two organizations; IITA and AfDB in curbing unemployment and creating a platform where the youth of the State can be trained and gainfully employed under the ENABLE Youth Program.

Speaking on the IITA Youth Agripreneurs model, Dr Sanginga stated that the alarming increase in the number of unemployed graduates prompted his effort to establish the youth program.

"On the first day every month, IITA is always faced with the challenge of controlling the long queues of young people who come there to look for casual jobs such as weeding, painting etc. But one day, a fight broke out between the policemen controlling the crowd and these young people who have come to look for work and I had to intervene. When I interviewed them, I was amazed with what I saw. Many of them were graduates of quantity surveying, mass communication, crop production etc. I interviewed them further and they told me they wanted the casual jobs to keep themselves busy since they couldn't get a decent job after graduation. This situation saddened my heart as a parent and as a leader of an organization so I decided to gather them, train them, and expose them to the business opportunities in agriculture. They have created business enterprises in agriculture and they are making money," he said.

He added that the effort which started within the four walls of the institution in Nigeria has expanded to Kenya, DR Congo, Zambia, Uganda, and Tanzania and it is now being adopted by the African Development Bank under a Pan- African Program to create jobs for youth in over 31 African countries including Nigeria.

Speaking further on the ENABLE Youth Program, Dr Chiji said the ENABLE Youth Program, which was designed based on the experience of IITA on the IYA model,



DG-IITA, Dr Nteranya Sanginga (standing) enlightening the Governor of Imo State, Mr Rochas Okorocha (4th from right) and his wife, Mrs Nneoma Nkechi Okorocha on the ENABLE Youth Program and the technologies of IITA



The Governor in a group photograph with IYA members, IITA officials and Dr Chiji Ojukwu (4th from left)

will be implemented in the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria, and Imo State according to him, would be one of the first beneficiaries of the program. He stressed that under the program, youth will undergo training at an identified incubation center in the states and will develop a bankable business plan at the expiration of the training. He added that the business plan qualifies them for a loan to start their own agribusiness enterprise.

Commending IITA and AfDB for the IYA model and the ENABLE Youth Program, Governor Okorocha pledged the State's support in ensuring the full implementation of the model in the State. He said the program was coming at a time in which the country needed a change in mindset towards agriculture.

"Before Nigeria discovered oil, we were doing greatly in agriculture. But the moment we discovered oil, we all

abandoned agriculture and ran after oil but we have forgotten that the agriculture sector is the only sector that can engage a large number of people; it is sad that we have abandoned the sector. And that is why I would like to say that Nigeria is not poor but the people have a poor mindset. The mindset of youth must be changed to eradicate poverty in Nigeria and I think your model is on the right path in doing that. I am highly impressed and I want to see an action plan on the program. Also as the Chairman of the APC governors in Nigeria, I will introduce this model and ensure that we all tap into it," he said.

He however implored the first lady of the state, Mrs Nkechi Rochas Okorocha to work with the youth to ensure the successful kick off and implementation of the program. Representatives of IYA also took turns to share their experiences and impact of the program.