

**IITA****Youth Agripreneurs***Agriculture is the future*

BULLETIN

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KHYG receives a loan from Kenyan government



Some KHYG sorting tomatoes harvested from their screenhouse

The Kibwezi Hortipreneur Youth Group (KHYG) which is one of the IITA Youth Agripreneurs group in Kenya recently received a sum of 190,000 shillings from the government to boost its operations in Makueni County.

The fund, which is a zero-digit interest rate loan given to entrepreneurs under the Youth Enterprise Development Fund initiative of the Kenyan government seeks to create employment opportunities for young people through entrepreneurship while encouraging them to be job creators and not job seekers. It does this by providing easy and affordable financial and business development support services to youths who are keen on starting or expanding their businesses.

Speaking on the process of acquiring the loan, the chairperson of KHYG, Elizabeth Mukulu stated that KHYG approached the county through the Makueni

County office of the fund initiative and presented their case stating the history and progress of the group.

"The process of applying for the loan took about three months but we were not discouraged as realized we have no other alternative. We needed the fund to support our operations here because we are gradually gaining some recognition in the county and if we wanted to meet up with their expectations of what we stand for, then getting the loan was one of the way out," she said.

The officials of the initiative in Makueni who were impressed with the activities of the young people who operate from the University of Nairobi Dryland Research station in Kibwezi, visited the KHYG facilities and checked their financial status with the banks before they were granted the loan.

Ms Mukulu mentioned that the officials

paid attention to their cash inflow and outflow, their production rate, etc before they could scale the hurdle which has been a bit challenging for other youth groups in the county.

After going through different levels of consultations and screening which took about three months, KHYG was given the loan with an agreement to pay back 25,000 shillings monthly all through the period of loan repayment.

Elizabeth stressed that the team is eager to utilize the fund so they can meet the loan repayment terms which if adhered to would qualify them for more opportunities under the government initiative.

KHYG started their activities in April 2015 and has since remained committed to its activities despite the challenges encountered in the location.

Farming within the University of Nairobi Dryland Research is challenging, as it is next to the Kibwezi forest and monkeys and baboons are serious threats to every food crop. But the necessary ingredients in terms of good growing climate and an enthusiastic approach by the team has kept the group progressing.

Since then, the group has established several experiential learning enterprises including greenhouse vegetable production, fish farming, and the manufacturing of nutritious snacks. Many skills needed to be developed such as making potting mixtures and raising thousands of vegetable seedlings, selecting the best vegetable varieties and rotating them in a way that minimizes pest and disease, repairing and expanding greenhouses, establishing settling ponds to filtrate water and installing drip irrigation systems for efficient irrigation, building fish ponds, nurturing fingerlings to maturity and blending cost effective fish feeds. Marketing was at first a challenge, but Kibwezi is along the Mombassa-Nairobi trade corridor and once the necessary contacts were made it was only a matter of timing harvest to peak prices. KHYG successfully operates a commercial vegetable and fish farm.

CYAG trainees move from the creeks to farms with start-up grants

Trained youths under the Community Youth in Agribusiness Group (CYAG) project have received start-up funds for them to commence their agribusiness enterprise.

CYAG project which is funded by Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility(CSR), is targeted at harnessing the energy of the youth in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria towards embracing agriculture as a business.

Before the introduction of the project in the Niger-Delta area, many of the beneficiaries lived in the creeks, and were engaged in illegal crude oil operations. However, some of the youths today are having a change of mind-set after a series of training and engagement through the IITA Youth Agripreneurs agribusiness incubation and training initiative.

As the country braces up to boost local food production, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and Chevron Nigeria Ltd (CNL) Joint Venture has trained 20 youths in the production of cassava, plantain and aquaculture.

The beneficiaries were selected from Itsekiri communities in Delta State for the capacity building in 2016 by the Itsekiri Regional Development Committee (IRDC) in line with the spirit of the General Memorandum of Understanding (GMOU) of CNL.

The beneficiaries were trained in the value chains of cassava, plantain and aquaculture in partnership with PIND



Some of the trained CYAG youth working at their fish pond

Foundation. Speaking at the graduation ceremony of the beneficiaries that held in August, at the IRDC's secretariat in Warri, the General Manager, Policy, Government and Public Affairs (PGPA), CNL, Mr Esimaje Brikin, said the gesture was intended "to stimulate socio-economic development in the Regional Development Committees (RDCs) under the Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMOU), using agriculture and agribusiness as means of generating income and providing employment for youths."

Mr Brikin, who was represented by the Area Manager, PGPA, Field Operations,

Mr Sam Daibo, expressed joy at the enthusiasm and commitment of the 20 beneficiaries who have been trained to use Agriculture to create value in their environment. According to him, the project aims to demonstrate the use of various opportunities that exist in the agricultural value chain to create wealth and achieve enhanced income and self-dependence among youth.

The project is specifically designed to empower youths to embrace agriculture and agribusiness as an income-generating activity, provide an opportunity for stimulating socio-economic development in the selected communities, offering secondary benefits to the larger society as a whole.

The activities around the project would boost availability of agriculture produce for local community suppliers," he disclosed, adding that the 20 beneficiaries had gone through a thorough process of capacity building in modern farming techniques.

The CNL boss, however, hinted that another set of 40 agripreneurs would soon commence training to cater for youths from other Itsekiri communities in order to churn out a large crop of entrepreneurs in agriculture who would help generate more value in the communities.



One of the trained youth receiving certificate of participation and cheque for start-up grant from Chevron Nigeria Limited.

Chairman of IRDC, Amb. Austin

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Oniyesan, who commended CNL, IITA, PIND Foundation and members of his executive for making the pilot programme a huge success in his remark, admonished the graduands to put, into judicious use, the training and start-up grant they received.

A representative of the IITA Youth Agripreneurs, Arome Alfa, said that the CYAG project has three phases of production, designed into value

addition and service provision. He disclosed that some of the beneficiaries have already, on their own, commenced agricultural production immediately after the training was over. Mrs M.J Ogboru of the Delta State Ministry of Agriculture, who represented the State Commissioner for Agriculture, enjoined the beneficiaries to eschew squandering the grant on other projects not related to the one it has been given for.

Meanwhile, four of the beneficiaries; Blessing Afini, Jemide Joseph, Austin Ikpi and Oris Ugabameta while sharing their knowledge in plantain, cassava and fish production, promised to boost agriculture production through their enterprise and inspiring other youths to buy into it.

Beneficiaries of the training were presented with certificates of participation and cheques of six hundred thousand naira each (N600,000).

In Celebration of the International Youth Day



A photo session with participants at the International Youth Day

On August 15, all roads led to the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) as the ENABLE-TAAT compact in partnership with the Business Incubation Platform (BIP) of IITA and Nestle Nigeria Limited, organized an enlightening program for youth to commemorate the 2019 International Youth Day (IYD).

The event, aimed at showcasing the relevance of agricultural education for youth to align with this Year's IYD theme **"Transforming Education"**, had in attendance different youth networks and representatives of the private and public sectors.

During his opening remarks, Dr. Chrys Akem, the Head of Project Management Unit for the Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT) program, encouraged the participants to take hold of all the opportunities that have been made available to them through the program as this will aid their journey into agribusiness someday. The Technical Adviser to the Youth at IITA, Dr. Paul Woomer, while

giving a presentation on the importance of the IYD, stated that young people were meant to be at the forefront of global change and innovation and this according to him would only happen if they have access to quality education and empowerment.

In line with the IYD 2019 theme, some representatives from the different youth groups gave presentations on the importance of education for agricultural transformation. Ms. Molayo Owoeye the Capacity Development leader for YAGL emphasized the need for continuous acquisition of educational knowledge in agriculture which if well applied would trigger innovative ideas that would lead to food security and youth empowerment.

The plenary discussion on "Youth Enterprise Opportunities in Agribusiness" made up of six panelists who are actors in different agricultural value chains explored the role of each stakeholder in ensuring that youths tap into the opportunities available in agricultural value chains. The panelists

highlighted the vast opportunities embedded in agriculture, each speaking on the different area of the agricultural value chain they are involved in.

Some young people who are engaged in agriculture shared their experiences to motivate the participants.

The mini agricultural exhibition organized to promote the products of Agripreneurs also served as a means for intending agripreneurs to interact with agribusiness owners.

The International Youth Day (IYD) is observed annually on August 12 and it is endorsed by the United Nations to draw the attention of governments and other concerned institutions to pressing challenges of youths worldwide. The program was first launched in 2000. Every year since its inception, a theme rooted in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda for 2030 is selected to commemorate the day.



Interns at EYC initiate pilot enterprises



The EYC beneficiaries with the harvested green peas



The Agripreneurs harvesting green peas

After weeks of trainings, the aspiring agripreneurs trained by ENABLE Youth Cameroon (EYC) in *Ferme Ecole de Ndoungue*, one of the Youth Agribusiness Incubation Centers (YABICs) have initiated pilot enterprises.

While waiting for the commencement of their actual pilot-enterprises, 36 trainees initiated agribusinesses in their Incubation Center, under the leadership of Mr. Josue Koba, their YABIC Coordinator.

At *Ferme Ecole de Ndoungue*, as in other Incubation Centers of ENABLE Youth Cameroon, developing financial management skills of the trainees was a great challenge. To apply the knowledge gained during the ongoing training, Koba, encouraged them to use their free hours to establish agribusiness, a suggestion that they embraced easily.

The trainees thus decided to look for relevant opportunities around their Incubation Center, and to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the YABIC host-institution. With this in mind, they decided to venture into the production of cucumbers, green beans, lemon grass, moringa, cabbages and huckleberry.

Despite their good ideas, motivation and enthusiasm, the aspiring agripreneurs encountered some challenges in access

to land, inputs, tools, and funds to establish their agribusinesses.

To address this, they organized themselves in such a way that all the agripreneurs participated in carrying out field activities, with leadership positions rotating every week. Then, each agripreneur agreed to voluntarily contribute a small amount of money to make sure that they are able to carry out their activities. With this money, they bought seeds and other inputs, which were used in the establishment of their fields.

Sharing their experiences, one of the Agripreneurs Wilson Nfor Gwei said the experience challenged their entrepreneurial skill and they are proud to have been able to scale through.

"For us, the farm project initiated following the recommendation of the YABIC Coordinator has been a good experience. Through it, we were able to learn and acquire some of the entrepreneurial skills as an agripreneur. Most importantly, it helped us strengthen our leadership and team spirit. All this will be useful when we will have our own enterprises" he said.

For Josue Koba, the YABIC Coordinator, a giant leap has been made.

"There is a change of mentality. They

have now developed the positive mentality required to truly be agripreneurs. As a YABIC Coordinator, I really appreciate the resilience and team spirit developed by the agripreneurs in just 3 months of incubation. It means a lot when you see young people coming together with little resources and producing something valuable. I'm happy to manage this strong group, which is constituted of young women and men from different background, but willing to work together. This makes me believe that a great revolution in African agriculture is happening. Indeed, young people are coming in with unbelievable energy to make the paradigm shift a reality" he said.

The team is planning to reinvest the money from their first sales to expand the size of the vegetable and lemon grass farms. Much more, they have plans to process lemon grass and moringa into tea.

The other 13 YABICs have started learning from the YABIC at *Ferme Ecole de Ndoungue*, and are planning to implement similar activities, pending the beginning of the pilot enterprises. The initiative is highly encouraged by the IITA Coordination Unit of Enable Youth Cameroon (EYC), as well as the Agricultural Value Chain Development Project in which EYC is embedded.

IFAD-funded youth in agribusiness project kicks-off

The Youth Employment in Agribusiness and Sustainable Agriculture (YEASA), an IFAD funded project has kicked off.

The project which is being implemented by Afe Babalola University (ABUAD) in partnership with the youth in agribusiness office of IITA, and Africa Rice aims to build technical, entrepreneurial and soft skills of young adults between the ages of 18-35 years, in order to improve their productive capacity and increase their benefits from existing agri-food systems.

The project will empower a thousand youths resident in rural areas in the Republic of Benin (Lokossa and Cotonou) and Nigeria (Oyo and Ekiti),

with the target beneficiaries having the opportunity to choose from a range of agricultural commodities such as; Moringa, soybean/cowpea, maize, plantain, mango, cassava, rice, catfish, and agriculture-machinery fabrications.

Speaking during the project inception workshop which had all project stakeholders converging at ABUAD in July, the representative of IFAD, Dr Malu Ndavi stated that IFAD was concerned about the increasing rate of youth unemployment in Africa and has designed several projects and strategies that would assist in engaging young people. He said the YEASA project was one of those initiatives to address youth unemployment. He

added that the project was a product of mission, ambition and aspiration of all stakeholders, and enjoined them to ensure the trainings and skills impacted is targeted towards jobs creation and increase in income for rural youths.

The YEASA project will provide start-up funds for the beneficiaries of the project to kick-off youth-led agribusiness enterprises along the highlighted commodity value chains.

There will be an open call for interested applicants to apply and those selected will undergo classroom and field trainings as well as an internship with recognized agribusiness firms.

IYA wins FAO maiden innovation award



Evelyn Ohanwusi receiving the award on behalf of the IYA

The youth program of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) has won the 2019 International Innovation Award for Sustainable Food and Agriculture.

The award is in recognition of IITA's commitment to improving both agribusiness opportunities and creditworthiness of youth across Africa.

The award which is the first of its kind and funded by the Government of Switzerland, was presented during the 41st conference of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) at its Headquarters in Rome—an event that was attended by high-level government representatives across the globe on June 26, 2019.

FAO Director General, José Graziano da Silva said, "My congratulations to all of you. Your work is an inspiration to all of

us. Thank you for your contribution."

He added, "It is very important to showcase positive results and concrete ways in which we can work together."

The award which was in two categories; category A, 'award for excellence and digitization and innovation for sustainable food systems'; and category B 'International innovation award for sustainable food and agriculture'; reflects the important role of innovation for the future of sustainable food and agriculture and the improvement of food security and nutrition for all, particularly in the face of increased environmental challenges, in accordance with the United Nations decade of family farming (which runs through the years 2019-2028), and the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

Receiving the category B award on behalf

of IYA, Evelyn Ohanwusi the Head of IITA Youth Agripreneurs (IYA), appreciated the organizers and sponsors of the award saying; "IITA Youth Agripreneurs (IYA) is grateful to have been recognized as an innovation that empowers youth in agriculture and food systems and chosen among other qualified nominees. We sincerely appreciate the Government of Switzerland and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for contributing to our success story."

She dedicated the award to young people involved in agricultural transformation, and urged them to keep working hard towards resolving the problems of food insecurity and unemployment in Africa.

"This award is dedicated to all the youths in the agriculture and food systems across the world especially in Africa. We have started the revolution and yes, we can achieve more!" she added.

The IITA Youth Agripreneur Program is a youth in agribusiness initiative that was established in 2012, by the Director General of the IITA, Dr. Nteranya Sanginga, to address the issue of widespread youth unemployment, and to provide a platform that propels young people towards self-employment in agriculture. The program started in Ibadan, Oyo state Nigeria and has expanded into 13 groups with over 385 members operating 36 learning-by-doing enterprises in about 10 African countries including; Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Nigeria, Cameroon, Sudan, Madagascar, and Togo.

ENABLE



TAAT

ENABLE-TAAT in Togo



Valentina Ekun training the participants

As part of its effort in extending agribusiness opportunities to more youth in Africa, ENABLE-TAAT, the youth enabler compact of the Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT) in collaboration with the Togolese government, organized a 4-day comprehensive training for trainers at Centre Pilote des Techniques Agricoles du Togo (CPTA), in Lomé Togo from 11 -14 June.

The training which was a follow up on the sensitization and awareness creation carried out by ENABLE-TAAT at the National Farmers' Forum organized by the Togolese government in April is the first step leading to the implementation of TAAT youth program in Togo, and it was organized to ensure that trainers, who would be training youths during the ENABLE-TAAT pilot phase, are well equipped with the necessary skills needed to run an incubation program, and also enlighten them on the technologies promoted by TAAT.

With this expansion, ENABLE-TAAT will develop agribusiness skills, change counter-productive mindsets and provide economic opportunities to rural youth in agribusiness, including young women. The compact will also work with some

other TAAT commodities value chain to establish a range of innovative, youth-led agricultural enterprises and consolidate the gains along value chains, including higher-value crop production, marketing, value addition and a range of agricultural services.

Also, it will support rural enterprise networks that provide youth-led initiatives with interactive agribusiness and financial information and raise the creditworthiness of aspiring youth agribusiness persons.

Addressing the participants of the training, the Head of TAAT clearing house, Dr. Mpoko Bokanga stated that the training was a beginning of Agricultural Transformation in Togo.

"Africa has to feed itself...we cannot wait for other continents to feed us. We have the landmass, climate, and weather, but what is hindering us I believe is the technologies. Hence, TAAT has come to introduce improved agricultural technologies so that there can be an agricultural transformation in Africa and in Togo especially" he said. The representative of the Minister of Agriculture in Togo, Mr. Kpadenou Kodjoga advised the trained youth to be dedicated and tap into the

vast agricultural technologies being promoted by TAAT through the young people working under ENABLE-TAAT. The training had in attendance about 54 participants who were trained on topics ranging from youth marginalization, its negative impact on the economy and ENABLE-TAAT as a solution, Agripreneurs movement, Youth Incubation and Agribusiness rural enterprise which covers topics on Agribusiness and Incubation, Value Chains, Mentorship, Financial management, ICT in agribusiness, Marketing amongst others.

One of the participants, Tsibi Blakeur, a trainer at Institut National de Formation Agricole (INFA) said the training enlightened him about the available opportunities along the agricultural value chain focusing on improved technologies. He further said that he is ready to transfer the knowledge to other youths.

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Promoting ENABLE-TAAT, KHYG participates in country program

The Kibwezi Hortipreneurs Youth Group (KHYG) who is a partner in the implementation of ENABLE-TAAT activities in Kenya is spreading the news about the opportunities provided by the ENABLE-TAAT compact in Kenya.

The team has been organizing and participating in various seminars, exhibitions, talk shows and various activities to advocate for youth engagement in agriculture through the compact. Recently the group

participated at a three-day agricultural show organized by Makueni County and a trade fair organized by the African Women Agribusiness Network (AWAN).

At the Makueni County Agricultural show, KHYG displayed the importance of small scale mechanization in reducing the drudgery in agriculture through the use of machineries such as a power sprayer and earth auger. A variety of fresh produce from KHYG's farm were displayed. There was also sensitization

on the health and economic benefit of Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato (OFSP) root and vines which is one of the TAAT commodities promoted by the young people in the country.

Also at the trade fair organized by the African Women Agribusiness Network (AWAN), ENABLE-TAAT representatives in Kenya explained during a presentation the TAAT project gives equal participation for women and young people to tap into various value chains of the commodities promoted by TAAT.



Participants at the trade-fair showing interest in some of the TAAT technologies promoted by ENABLE-TAAT



Start Them Early Program (STEP)

1st Project Planning Workshop

IITA Ibadan, Nigeria.
10 - 12 September, 2019

IYA births another youth organization



Dr Sanginga (3rd from right) and the YAGL team at their office in Ibadan

Some members of the IITA Youth Agripreneurs (IYA) have taken a bold step to establish an independent youth organization outside the premises of the IITA headquarters in Ibadan.

The organization known as the Youth Agripreneurship Global Limited (YAGL) was established as a subsidiary of IYA to operate independently.

The establishment of YAGL is one of the outcomes of IYA as highlighted in the organization's strategy that about 40

percent of the members will become self-employed either by establishing independent agribusiness enterprises or organizations.

The YAGL team who have gone through the incubation program of IYA decided to register their company with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) in Nigeria, in April 2019.

YAGL has been established to run as a profitable venture while engaging youths in agribusiness. The group serves

as a continuation of the strongest feature of IYA relayed toward independent operations. It will provide proactive contract services in the areas of project design, coordination and advocacy, communication and information, youth training in agribusiness, and agribusiness enterprise support.

In large part, it is intended to ensure that the IITA youth empowerment program being conducted over the past seven years be extended beyond the term of the founding father of the youth agripreneurs initiative at IITA, Dr Nteranya Sanginga.

While visiting the team at their office at Mokola in Ibadan, Dr Sanginga stated that his desire was to ensure that an independent youth organization that will operate outside IITA is duly established.

"When IYA was established, I wanted it to grow and expand to other countries and this happened after a while. I have also realized my dream of establishing an independent youth organization outside IYA" he stated.

He however advised them to utilize the skills acquired during their incubation period at IITA to strengthen the activities of the organization.

YAGL will also serve as a linkage between IYA and the private sector.



Dr Sanginga (2nd from right) interacting with the team during his visit to YAGL office

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