



IITA

Youth Agripreneurs

Agriculture is the future

June 2017 Issue 26

TOFAN Foods spins off from IYA



The team at their factory during production

As an outcome of the IITA Youth Agripreneurs initiative, IYA Ibadan has recorded its first set of Agripreneurs who have completed the incubation program designed to expose, coach, train, and mentor young unemployed graduates on the business opportunities available in the production, value addition and marketing of agricultural commodities and service provision.

The team identified as TOFAN Foods were trained under the food processing unit of IYA for a period of 18 months before developing a business plan on Tidbit snack production and marketing.

The business plan, which was screened by professionals within IITA, Ekimiks Nigeria Limited, and the Lagos Business School received start-up loans, which will be payable over a period of 5 years.

TOFAN Foods, which is owned and managed by three young partners, Oyinkansola Ajayi, Bajulaye Tolulope and Komolafe Peter started commercial production of the product on Monday 26 June at its factory located in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State. Oyinkansola is a graduate of Business Administration from The Polytechnic Ibadan, Bajulaye

Tolulope studied marketing at the Lagos State University while Komolafe Peters is a graduate of Food Science and Technology from Joseph Ayo Babalola University. According to the team lead of the business, Oyinkansola Ajayi, the location of the factory was chosen because of its proximity to the source of raw materials and the target market.

She added that the team plans to penetrate the Lagos and Ogun markets with plans to expand to other states as production and demand increases.

The Tidbit snack is a composition of High Quality Cassava Flour, Cowpea and Salt. It is an innovation of the crop utilization unit of IITA before it was out-scaled on a commercial level by the IITA Youth Agripreneurs.

The IYA incubation platform gives interested young people an opportunity to explore the potentials inherent in

embracing agriculture as a business and is an avenue to create profitable agribusiness enterprises that enhances the creation of decent jobs for other unemployed young people.

During the incubation period, the trainees are taken through exercises that change their perception about agriculture through educational visits and excursions to successful agribusiness enterprises in Nigeria.

The trainees, who are selected from diverse educational backgrounds are also trained on managerial and business skills where they are taught how to develop bankable business

plans and pitch their business ideas to potential investors. After the 18-month incubation period, the youths develop business plans, which gives them access to secure loans or grants from financial institutions.



TOFAN food team L-R; Oyin, Tolu and Peter

IYA is worth showcasing to the world - Imo State Governor



Governor Okorocha and Agripreneurs in Imo

The Governor of Imo state, Rochas Okorocha has commended the IITA Youth Agripreneurs for their hard work and effort in ensuring that they set remarkable pace in the development of agriculture in the state.

Dr Okorocha stated this while receiving the team of Imo State Youth Agripreneurs who visited his office on Friday, 16 June to give progress report on their activities after six months of operation in the State.

While giving a presentation on the enterprises which are located at the Imo State Polytechnic Umuagwo, Victor Azunnaya said the team identified the huge potential in some of the facilities abandoned by the institution and resuscitated them into a profitable venture.

Speaking on the poultry enterprise, Victor stated that the team started with 700 birds and has expanded to about 2450 birds with a focus on broilers and

layers production. Victor stressed that the team also added egg production to the value chain and have also started supplying eggs at the rate of 800 Naira per crate to some wholesalers within the community. The team also enjoys patronage from restaurants, hotels and relaxation spots in the state capital, Owerri.

According to him, the fishery enterprise will begin sales of catfish soon as the team now makes use of 20 out of the 33 abandoned ponds identified in the institution. The 20 ponds were stocked with 10,000 fingerlings for the first cycle.

Also speaking on the activities at the Anambra-Imo River Basin Authority, Omokanjuola Dolapo said after the team discovered an abandoned 5000msq green house in Agbala in April, they commenced operations by planting four varieties of pepper, seven varieties of tomato, cucumber, sweet corn, cabbage, squash,

sweet melon, okra and eggplant. Barely two months after they kicked off with their operation, the team has sold over 500kg of cucumber in the open market and it is exploring the online marketing platform for its commodity.

Dolapo added that the team has projected revenue of over 1.5 million Naira from the sales of the commodities in the green house.

IYA Imo has also cultivated 47 ha of cassava, 4 ha of rice and 6 ha of soybean.

Pleased with what the team is doing, Governor Rochas Okorocha said the youth will be given a store in the city as a major outlet to sell their produce. He also advised his media Aides to come up with a documentary that can sell the program within and outside the State.

“This is a story Nigerians should know about. It is what we are waiting for and I think this should be projected to the world to see. There is no impossibility if you are willing and ready to do anything,” he said.

The Governor also stated that the State recently empowered about 205 young people with one million naira each to establish profitable enterprises. He said the beneficiaries will be linked with the Agripreneurs for them to explore areas of investment in Agriculture.

It would be recalled that about six Agripreneurs were deployed from Ibadan to Imo in January to establish the incubation center and seven young people who have completed their National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) at IITA Ibadan in 2017 were deployed to undergo the 18 months incubation training after which they will develop a bankable business plan for loans or grants to establish their businesses.

IITA-AfDB is changing the narrative about agriculture

The Director of Agriculture and Agro-Industry for the African Development Bank (AfDB), Dr Chiji Ojukwu made an official visit to the IITA Youth Agripreneurs in Onne on Thursday, 15 June and stated that the Bank will continue to support the IYA especially in expanding their enterprises.

He said the Bank is leveraging on IYA activities to expand to other countries in engaging youth in agribusiness.

Dr Chiji, who was accompanied by a senior agribusiness officer, Mrs Ometere Omoluabi Davies said he and his team have monitored the growth of the program and they are impressed to know that the young people are still dedicated to the cause of creating decent jobs through agribusiness.

“It is good to know that you are making progress and I wish to see more of this in other locations. I am quite sure

you will be ready to outscale this by the time we launch Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT) because there will be focus on commodities like cassava, plantain and fish and I know you have the expertise in these areas,” he said. Ogunwole Dorcas who made a presentation on behalf of her colleagues in Onne said the team has been able to maintain its momentum in agribusiness due to self-motivation. She said although they started small,

... continue on page 3

they have now expanded and are yet to meet the demand for their commodities, especially cassava. The Head of IITA Onne Station, Dr Richardson Okechukwu while shared some background information about the station noting that the station had been abandoned for over 10 years before it was re-opened by the Director General of IITA, Dr Nteranya Sanginga to promote research and extend technologies to farmers in the region. He appreciated the AfDB team for their support to IITA and also the youth program. He led the team on a tour of the station's.

Dr Chiji also visited Imo state to show support and encouragement to the IITA Youth Agripreneurs in the state. In his speech, he said he was impressed that the youths are changing the narrative about agriculture through the platform provided by IITA and AfDB. His words: "You have started and we know you will do well."

Our hope is seeing individual Agripreneurs starting something with the resources we will be providing for them. We have decided to give grants for them to start and then link them

with financial institutions for expansion of their businesses. Initially we wanted to give loans but banks may find it difficult to give young people loans especially when they don't have the experience. This grant will not be in cash but the money will be used to buy equipment for the businesses," he said.

The AfDB team also went on a tour of the enterprises established by the youths at the Anambra-River Basin Authority in Agbala and Imo State Polytechnic, Umuagwo.

Photo gallery



Dr Chiji at IYA's exhibition stand at IITA station in Onne



...at the greenhouse in Onne



Ojoniyi Doyin taking the team on a tour of the poultry facility in Imo



Dr Chiji feeding the fish at the pond in Imo



...at the greenhouse in Imo



A group photograph with the staff of Imo State Polytechnic

IYA celebrates AfDB President Dr Akinwumi Adesina



Dr Adesina with IITA Youth Agripreneurs

IITA Youth Agripreneurs join the world in celebrating their Mentor Dr Akinwumi Adesina, President of the African Development Bank on his award as the winner of the 2017 World Food Prize Laureate.

The award was announced on Monday 26 June by the President of World Food Prize Foundation, Ambassador Kenneth Quinn at a ceremony at the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C.

Ambassador Kenneth Quinn stated that the selection of Dr Adesina for the prize was in

recognition of his efforts in driving change in African agriculture for over 25 years and improving food security for millions across the continent. The recognition also reflected his breakthrough achievements while he was Minister of Agriculture in Nigeria.

However, for the IITA Youth Agripreneurs and other youths who have enjoyed the support and tutelage of Dr Adesina, the award is an endorsement of the fact that the world has finally come to recognize and support his efforts in ensuring that they create wealth for Africa's economies by

ensuring that agriculture becomes a business.

It is a confirmation of a bright future for the African youth who have seen and embraced agriculture as a business and a means of creating jobs for other unemployed African youths.

It is also a confirmation of a possible end to poverty in Africa because of his strong support and motivation for youths to embrace agriculture as a viable sector of economic opportunity for self and continental development.

Dr Adesina has set a pace and channeled a road for African youth to follow and see agriculture as business "unusual"

IYA is happy to be associated with the latest winner of the World Food Prize Laureate.

IITA Youth Agripreneurs promise to keep the flag flying and ensure that the dream of making the future millionaires and billionaires of Africa out of Africa's greatest resource-agriculture becomes a reality.

I will join in sharing your story to the world-US Ambassador



Mr Stuart picking up some IYA products at the processing center

The American Ambassador to Nigeria, Mr. W. Stuart visited (IITA) on 19 June to see and understand the impact of the Institute's research and technology in the development of Africa's agriculture.

The Ambassador, who was accompanied by a team from the Consulate office, was welcomed by the Director General of IITA, Dr Nteranya Sanginga, some senior staff of the institute and also the IITA Youth Agripreneurs (IYA).

Mr Stuart who spent some time with the youths at their office in the Agriserve building said IITA has finally provided an answer to the lingering question of how to make agriculture cool and attractive for people to embrace as a business.

... continue on page 5

Listening to a presentation on the IYA model, the Ambassador who showed some excitement about the dynamism in the strategy used by IITA in attracting young graduates into agriculture advised the youths to be innovative and come up with ideas that will enable Africa feed itself.

“For the rest of your life, I want you to think of how you are not only going to feed yourself but how you will outscale this and extend the benefit of what you have learnt within the premises of this institution to others who do not have the opportunity of being here. Always think of growing Nigeria because you are the greatest gift Nigeria has and if you move with your ideas, the world will feel you move and that for me means development for Africa”, he said.

Mr Stuart emphasized that the government should support innovations that will change the narrative of the agricultural sector. “It is not for the government to help, but for the government not to be in the way. I want you to think of how you can approach



The Ambassador at the IYA fish pond in Ibadan

a farmer who makes 40 dollars in a year and convince him that you can triple the amount in a year. I know you can do this because you have the training, skills, experience of doing things differently by using the right technology, seeds, and practices,” he added. He however promised to ensure that he propagates

the model for prospective investors to see. “I will join in telling your stories to the world. It is worth sharing,” he stated. The Ambassador and his team were taken on a tour round some of the enterprises of the youths.

You have a lot to offer Nigeria- Mrs Kemi Adeosun



Damola Adewole presenting a plaque to the Minister during her visit

Nigeria’s Minister of Finance Mrs Kemi Adeosun has stated that Nigerian youths can contribute immensely to the growth of the country if given the opportunity.

Mrs Adeosun who stated this during her visit to the office of the IITA Youth Agripreneurs (IYA) on June 10 at the IITA headquarters in Ibadan was also accompanied by some delegates from the Ministry of Finance.

Taking the Minister and her team through a presentation on the role of youth in

developing the agriculture sector- A case study of the IYA model, Yemi Adunoye pointed out the success and impact of the model in Nigeria and some other parts of Africa While adding that the model gave birth to the design of the Pan-African Program-ENABLE Youth which is funded by the African Development Bank.

She pointed out that the program which has so far been adopted by 31 African countries will create decent jobs for youths along the agricultural value chains.

The Minister who was intrigued by the success recorded through the IYA model, pointed out that the youth will be invited to tell their stories to the Acting President- Prof Yemi Osinbajo

“I am impressed by what these young people are doing. I wonder why nobody is talking about this. I wouldn’t be the only one to listen to you. I think we need to invite you to Abuja for you to tell your stories to the Acting President”, she said.

Mrs Adeosun who was in Ibadan to assess the ENABLE Youth Program and also see what IITA is doing on youth engagement in agriculture added that the issue of sustainability of the program had stalled the signing of the ENABLE Youth Nigeria project by the Federal Government.

She said she is however convinced that the ENABLE Youth program would be rolled out in Nigeria soon.

While responding to the Minister, the Director General of IITA Dr Nteranya Sanginga said the youths have acquired a lot of skills in the course of their training and are ready to expand their businesses. He said IITA has supported some with

start-up capital while others will develop business plans for them to have access to loans from financial institutions.

The Minister's visit gave the Agripreneurs an opportunity to talk about how the IYA program has changed their mindsets about agriculture and agribusiness, and how it is now transforming their lives.

Speaking on the impact of the IYA model, Mercy Wakawa, the CEO of Confianza Nigeria Limited stated that the training offered by IITA through the N2Africa project funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation ended her travails of searching for a job.

"I am from Biu, Borno State, and the training I attended 2 years ago has helped me establish a groundnut oil processing cottage industry that now provides employment for seven other youths and supports the local groundnut industry being run by women. I was rejected during the recruitment exercise carried out by the Nigeria Immigration Service and here I am today standing with no regrets", she said.

Also speaking about her experience in the incubation center, Ajibola Olaniyi who leads a team of two other young people ventured into catfish farming said the business has expanded even though they had no prior knowledge about fish farming.

"We knew nothing about catfish farming but we were sent on training by IITA to Durante Fish Industries and today I can proudly tell you that we resuscitated four abandoned ponds and later expanded to 17 with a capacity of 150 tons. The expansion of the business has created jobs for short-term staff who work with the team in the management of the pond. The business is growing as clients come from all geo-political zones in Nigeria to patronize us", she stated.

TOFAN Foods is a subsidiary of IITA Youth Agripreneurs. The business which is owned by three young people who were trained under the processing unit of IYA is into the production of the Tidbit snack. Tidbit snack is a composition of High Quality Cassava Flour (HQCF) and cowpea. TOFAN Foods is based in Ijebu-

Ode, Ogun state and will scale out the technology learnt during the incubation period in IYA.

Oyindamola Asaju, another Agripreneur, used to serve tables, but after getting involved with IYA, she now leads a group of Agripreneurs in Onne, Rivers State, in cassava, rice, plantain, and catfish production. The group is using the IITA station in Onne to develop new agribusiness enterprises in poultry, catfish, and micro-propagation of plantain, and serve as an incubation center for young people.

The Minister's team included Ahmed Aliyu, Director, International Economic Relations; Special Adviser, Adora Asonye; Technical Assistant, Tolulope Kasali; and Chief Administrative Officer (Agriculture), and Abubabkar Ibrahim Matazu.

Top management of IITA was also on ground to support the youth.

University of Ibadan School of Business commences lectures in IITA

Pioneer students of the Masters of Business Administration (MBA) in Agribusiness at the University of Ibadan- School of Business (UISB) have commenced lectures within the premises of IITA.

The development, which is a result of a partnership between UI and IITA, is for the University to tap from IITA's wealth of experience as an institution that is championing the cause of agribusiness especially among the youth.

IITA, which currently runs a youth-in-agribusiness program in different locations within and outside Nigeria, will be providing first-hand experience

and skills to candidates enrolled in this under its Business Incubation Platform (BIP) in Ibadan. Through this, the BIP will be offering agribusiness support and technical advice along the agricultural value chains to agribusinesses, entrepreneurs, and start-ups. IITA also offers an enabling environment for the students to carry out case studies and hands-on, practical internships on agribusiness. Agribusiness experts with many years of practical experience in the field and industry will also be serving as mentors.

Some of the scientists, and experts in IITA have started tutoring the students on the technical know-how in agribusiness.

The MBA in Agribusiness was introduced as part of the program offered by the UISB in contribution to the paradigm shift in the agriculture sector becoming a sector of economic opportunity for all. IITA's youth-in-agribusiness model and the Business Incubation Platform also serves as motivating factors for the institution.

The MBA in Agribusiness program is scheduled to run for two years.

Some members of IYA are also pioneer students of the program.

A brief on Kibwezi Hortipreneur Youth Group

Two years ago, the Kibwezi Hortipreneur Youth Group which was initially known as the Makueni Youth Agripreneurs was established at the University of Nairobi Dryland Research station in Kibwezi. The group operates in the semi-arid east Kenya midway area along the Mombasa-Nairobi trade corridor. The farm is situated in the University of

Nairobi Dryland Research station along the Kibwezi river, and adjacent to the Kibwezi forest and the famous Tsavo National Park.

Using the drip irrigation lines, the team rehabilitated two abandoned greenhouse of 2700m² for the production of tomatoes, capsicum

and cucumbers. The team was sent on training before embarking on the commercial production of the vegetables. The group also expanded into fish farming, leafy green vegetables and snack processing.

The activities of the team in exploring the commercial production of maize,



The Kenya team sorting tomatoes for sale

sorghum, and pumpkins was stalled by the invasion of wildlife mostly monkeys and baboons.

KHYG also established a depot in Kibwezi town to market its produce and processed products. The group provides a range of training services; targeting school children, local farmers, other youth groups, government and university projects. Negotiation is ongoing between IITA and the University of Nairobi to transition into a Youth-in- Agribusiness Park where different businesses are provided tenancy and common services. The team which is gradually becoming a well-known group for youth in agribusiness initiative in Kenya has participated in many youth events, both in Kenya and elsewhere, and recently won a cash prize of \$1200 at a youth fair.

AgYouth Lab Project, a Rescue Operation- Vice President Yemi Osinbajo



Project Leader, MSU, Julie Howard briefing the audience on the project

some of the challenges faced by youths in seeking work especially in Africa.

“In MasterCard Foundation, we believe that investing in youths is critical to economic development so we invest a lot in them and we know that we are also on the right path with the AgYouth Lab Project” he stated.

In his goodwill message, the Vice-President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Prof Yemi Osinbajo who was represented by Ifeoluwa Adebayo, Special Assistant to the Vice-President on Innovation and Entrepreneurship said he

The Michigan State University (MSU) in partnership with IITA launched the AgriFood Youth Opportunity Lab (AgYouth Lab) project in Lagos on Monday, 15 May.

and Dar es Salaam. It will also assist economically disadvantaged, hard-to-reach and out-of-school youth transition into employment and entrepreneurship opportunities in the agrifood system.

sees the AgYouth Lab project as a rescue operation for the beneficiaries within the target age range. He added that the project will harness employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.

The project which is sponsored by MasterCard Foundation will help 15,000 young people access employment and entrepreneurship opportunities in the fast-growing horticulture, aquaculture, poultry, cassava and oilseed sectors in Tanzania and Nigeria.

Speaking at the launch of the program, Alemayehu Konde Koira, the Senior Program Manager, Youth Livelihood, MasterCard Foundation said the program is one of the ways in which MasterCard Foundation wants to adopt in engaging the private sector to develop business opportunities for young people. The AgriFood Youth Opportunity Lab project according to him will contribute to the organization’s effort in addressing

The Ag Youth Lab project will respond directly to opportunities and constraints identified in the 2016 MSU and The MasterCard Foundation-Agrifood Youth Employment and Engagement Study (AgYees). Dr Soji Adelaja of the Michigan State University stated that the survey conducted as part of the study revealed that young people who are usually hit by the adversity of the economy can be productively engaged in agriculture.

... continue on page 8



Group photograph of partners during the launching of the program

He added that the project will train the youth on the vast opportunities available in the agricultural sector. The partners according to him will also work with the private sector to ensure that the youth are better opportunities of getting decent employment in the sector.

“MSU is poised to address one of the most critical problems facing the Continent—youth unemployment with our partners in Nigeria and Tanzania. We see great potential to expand youth agrifood employment both on and off the farm” he added. Dr Adelaja revealed that with 20 percent of Africa’s population, Tanzania and Nigeria together represent an

important opportunity for intervention in skills acquisition, job creation and employment for youths.

The program will have a special focus on gender equity, aiming for equal representation of young men and women across its programs and addressing policy, training, mentoring and other constraints that affect the ability of young women to start enterprises or obtain employment. Dr Kenton Dashiell, IITA’s Deputy Director General, Partnership for Delivery said the long-term impact and experience of building the capacity of unemployed graduates to become employers of

labour along the value chains in the agricultural sector will be adopted by the organization in ensuring that the Ag Youth Lab tap the dynamism of Africa’s youth. He added that this will help transform Africa’s agrifood systems and build a brighter future for Africa.

He assured the partners of IITA’s commitment in the implementation of the project through its youth-to-youth platform. IYA will be playing a major role in assisting with the implementation of the program.

Selected Agripreneurs also shared their experiences and relayed their thoughts on how agribusiness can be adopted and sustained by youths as a means of creating employment.

Other partners in the project include the Venture Garden Group, Tanzania’s Sokoine University Graduate Entrepreneurs Cooperative (SUGECO); and Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology (OYSCATECH). Some other dignitaries who attended the launching include the Ogun State Commissioner for Agriculture Mrs Adepeju Adebajo, the Special Adviser to the Minister of Agriculture on Youth in Nigeria, Ms Mosun Amodu, the Special Adviser to the Minister of Agriculture on new media Aisha Augie-Kuta, representatives of Oyo and Osun state governments and other stakeholders in the sector.

Photo gallery



Representatiives of Agripreneurs, Noel Mulinganya and Evelyn Ohanwusi (far right) sharing their experiences during the AfDB annual meeting in India

Writers/Contributors: Adesanya Omotomiwa, Adefioye Adedayo, Funmi Lamidi, Adenmosun Adetola, Arsene Kashemwa, Afolabi Segun

Layout/design: Adefioye Adedayo and Adenmosun Adetola

This newsletter is produced by IITA Youth Agripreneurs in Ibadan

Editors: Godwin Atser (g.atser@cgiar.org); and Osunde Timilehin (t.osunde@cgiar.com)