

Tanzania farmers winning against climate change

“Climate change has been affecting us greatly. For example, in the past, we knew when the growing seasons were. Now the rains sometimes come early and sometimes they are late. Sometimes we get a big harvest, and sometimes we get very little,” says Hassan Haji Fumu, a farmer from Mahonda village in Kaskazini B district, Zanzibar.

While Zanzibar is a well-known tourist paradise with its pristine beaches and rich history, over 80% of the inhabitants are farmers who depend on subsistence farming for food and income, like Hassan.



IITA's Project officer Bakari (left) visits Hassan's farm to see progress in testing CSA practices and technologies.

Climate change is one of the greatest threats to their income, food, and very survival. That is if nothing is done to support them to adapt to the changes.

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NYSC partners with IITA to create opportunities for Nigerian youth

The [National Youth Service Corps \(NYSC\)](#) and [IITA](#) are partnering to open up opportunities to youth in Nigeria. The two organizations signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to that effect during a recent visit of the NYSC Director General, [Brigadier General Shuaibu Ibrahim](#), to IITA Headquarters, Ibadan.

IITA Deputy Director General, Partnerships for Delivery, [Kenton Dashiell](#), welcomed the NYSC delegation at the Akin Adesina building. He gave an overview of IITA's history, and [Kwesi Atta-Krah](#), IITA Director of Advocacy and Country Alignment Function, explained about the Institute's



NYSC Director General, Brig. Gen. Shuaibu Ibrahim, and Kenton Dashiell, IITA DDG Partnerships for Delivery, signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU).

activities. The visitors saw more of these as they embarked on a tour of IITA research facilities and innovations.

After the tour, Dashiell said that youth have great potential, but they can only realize this when organizations like NYSC and IITA open the doors of opportunities they need. "While we value our partnership with NYSC, we would like the youth to see and experience greater opportunities in agriculture and develop the skills they need to succeed in this sector. I believe that if IITA works with NYSC on this, it will be a gamechanger," Dashiell said.

Dashiell appreciated the NYSC team for their service to the nation and their interest in collaborating with IITA.

Gen. Ibrahim encouraged the corps members in IITA who are interested to tap into this opportunity and grow this partnership to the next level.



NYSC DG and team in a group photograph with IITA corps members and staff.

As he signed the MoU, the NYSC DG expressed his appreciation to IITA, especially Director General [Nteranya Sanginga](#), for his immense contribution

to the youths' success and assured taking the collaboration between IITA and NYSC to greater heights.

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"My crop yields were very low," Hassan continued. "This was because I was not growing good varieties and not preparing my farm well. The plants were also being greatly affected by pests and diseases," he added.

Learning climate-smart agriculture

Haji is among the beneficiaries of a USAID-Tanzania supported project that is building the capacity of agricultural extension officers to select and demonstrate appropriate climate-smart agriculture (CSA) technologies and practices suitable for different agroclimatic zones to farmers for eventual adoption, to cope with climate change.

One of the demonstration plots is at Hassan's village in Mahonda, where he has been learning about CSA practices and technologies working alongside other farmers as part of a Farmer Field School. After seeing the good results, he became interested and eager to try the CSA technologies and practices on his farm.

"Through the training organized by the project, I have learned how to choose the best banana suckers (the baby plantlets that grow next to the

main banana plant and which are the planting material), correct plant spacing, and how to prepare planting holes," he said.

"I have also learned how to apply manure; how to stop the spread of pests and diseases by treating the suckers with hot water before planting and mulching to conserve moisture and to keep the fields clean by removing dry leaves, reducing the suckers and weeding on time. Now I am enjoying high yields from my farm," says a smiling Hassan.

The project gave him some banana suckers, which he planted in a portion of his field following the new farming practices and technologies. After observing promising outcomes, he expanded the banana plot following the practices he had learned.

"Although I do not have a weighing balance to measure the yield, I personally see a big difference compared to the past when I used to cultivate without considering CSA practices and technologies. Then, I could carry a bunch of bananas with one hand. But now I have to carry a bunch with both hands, and sometimes on my head due to its heavy weight," he narrated.

Use of weather information

The project is also providing farmers with down-scaled seasonal weather forecasts accompanied by advice and recommendations on what farmers can do based on the predictions.

"Now I rely on forecasting information via radio and TV. This is very important because it helps me to make the right decisions. For example, if I know that a lot of rainfall is expected in the season, then I can decide not to plant at that time and wait until the rains are moderate and suitable for planting bananas and also cassava on open ridges to avoid the effect of waterlogging," he says.

"Also, if we get information that the rain will be below normal, we can decide not to grow crops like vegetables, which need sufficient moisture."

The project has trained over 1,500 farmers on improved technologies and practices throughout Tanzania. In addition, the project districts have embraced and are budgeting for CSA, thus laying a good foundation for scaling up CSA technologies and practices to help farmers in Tanzania to cope with climate change and secure income and food for smallholders.

FAO to collaborate with IITA in reducing world hunger and malnutrition

The new representative of the [Food and Agriculture Organization](#) (FAO) in Nigeria and his team recently visited [IITA](#) headquarters to strengthen the partnership between FAO and IITA by exploring IITA technologies and discover more areas of collaboration.

Smallholder farmers are faced continually with the impacts of climate change. FAO seeks to collaborate with other institutes that share the vision to address this issue and reduce hunger and malnutrition globally.

[Kenton Dashiell](#), IITA DDG-Partnerships for Delivery, [Alfred Dixon](#), IITA Director of Development for Delivery, and [Kwesi Atta-Krah](#), IITA Director of Advocacy and Country Alignment Function, welcomed the delegation and introduced IITA's activities to the team. [Frederick Schreurs](#), CEO of the IITA Business Incubation Platform (BIP), also highlighted its activities. [IITA-BIP is](#) an independent arm of IITA where science meets business. For a broader view, the team went on a tour of the Institute, visiting the IITA Youth Agripreneurs (IYA), Aflasafe and Nodumax facilities, and the Genetic Resources Center.

Following the IYA presentation, Abubakar Suleiman, FAO Assistant Representative in Nigeria, said that he sees the IYA platform as a source of inspiration to youth because it can create massive job opportunities. "The model should be easy to replicate in every state in Nigeria since youth are more receptive to technology and digitization in agriculture, and other emerging trends that would transform the food system in the future," he added.

After the tour, Fred Kafeero, FAO Representative, mentioned their interest in partnering with IITA in two key areas: IYA and BIP, including Aflasafe. He explained that this would enable more youth to engage in agricultural production and processing for commercial purposes.

Dashiell appreciated the FAO team for their keen interest in collaborating with IITA and stated that IITA is willing and open to partnership.



Top: The FAO team and IITA representatives. Bottom: A group photograph of FAO representatives with the IYA team.



The team on a tour of the Genetic Resources Center (GRC) with Michael Abberton, Head of GRC.

IITA trains extension agents and agro-input dealers on Integrated Pest Management for cowpea production

Through the Feed the Future Nigeria Integrated Agriculture Activity, [IITA](#) recently trained extension agents and agro-input dealers in Adamawa and Borno States on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) techniques for cowpea production.

The training exposed participants to a pest control system that does not depend on the automatic application of pesticides; instead, IPM regulates pests using various control measures, including mechanical, cultural, and biological. IPM focuses on pest management that integrates all suitable techniques with the natural regulating systems barring environmental and health injury.

The training, which lasted for two days in each state, had in attendance a total of 102 participants (59 in Adamawa: 32 extension agents and 27 input dealers—36 male and 23 female; and 43 in Borno: 23 extension agents and 20 input dealers—38 male and five female).

The training recipients are expected to transfer the knowledge to cowpea farmers, aggregators, and off-takers in the two states. This will, among other things, reduce or eliminate the health hazards on consumers of cowpea due to the unhealthy practices of storing cowpea with dangerous chemicals to prevent insect infestation.



IITA Senior Systems Agronomist Nkeki Kamai facilitating the IPM training in Yola, Adamawa State.



IPM spray demonstration at the training in Biu, Borno State.

Take responsibility! Stop the spread of COVID-19!

Always clean your hands; practice physical and social distancing; wear face masks properly; avoid crowds and public places; keep a 2-meter distance from the next person; and practice general sanitation and hygiene.

Got a story to share?

Please send your story with photos and captions every Tuesday to iita-news@cgiar.org or Katherine Lopez (k.lopez@cgiar.org) and Uzoma Agha (u.agha@cgiar.org) for headquarters and Western Africa, Catherine Njuguna (c.njuguna@cgiar.org) for Eastern and Southern Africa, and David Ngome (d.ngome@cgiar.org) for Central Africa.

