

## World Food Day: TAAT wins top international award for digital campaign

The [Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation \(TAAT\)](#) program has won the 2021 Stevie Award for a [5-minute documentary](#) showcasing its achievements. The video, produced for the 2021 High-level Dialogue on Feeding Africa, won the best “video documentary” category in the competition. The 2021 International Business Awards, the world’s only all-encompassing business awards competition, drew more than 3,700 nominations from 65 countries.

More than a dozen Heads of State, global leaders, and thousands of high-level online participants watched the video, which showcased farmers’ experiences.

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## SWEAN project trains women entrepreneurs in Zaria and Ibadan

Support Women Entrepreneurship in the Agrifood sector in Nigeria (SWEAN) has concluded the training of 293 women in Ibadan, Oyo State and Zaria, Kaduna State, to help address the gender imbalance in the agro-food processing sector in Nigeria.



The training aimed to develop the skills of women agribpreneurs and increase their access to local and international markets. The expertise of personnel from the Federal Institute of Industrial Research Oshodi (FIIRO), National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Nigeria Export Promotion Council (NEPC), Nigerian Stored Product Research Institute (NSPRI), Small and Medium Enterprise Development (SMEDAN), Standard Organisation of Nigeria (SON), and [IITA](#) was leveraged to train the women entrepreneurs.

The training took place at two different venues in each state to adhere to COVID-19 safety measures: the Akinwunmi Adesina building at IITA and Ibadan/Ibarapa Zonal Office of Oyo State Agribusiness Development Agency (OYSADA), Apata, Oyo State; and National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Service (NEARLS) and Ahmadu Bello University (Abu), Kaduna State.

Participants were divided into six cohorts of 25 women each, who attended eight training sessions. The topics included food processing and fortification, branding and packaging of products, NAFDAC regulatory requirements and procedures for registration of food products, food standards, financials and accounting principles, record keeping, marketing,

and leadership and management of successful agribusiness.

[Sougrynoma Zainatou Soré](#), the Project Coordinator, emphasized the importance of the training. "Women often have the least access to information, services, and training to improve their agricultural activities. The SWEAN project has chosen to focus particularly on women, including marginalized groups, to enhance their skills in critical areas that would boost their businesses and increase their revenues."

Halima Adediran, one of the participants, said the training was a much-needed educative process where she has learned the rudiments of a successful business. She also appreciated the organizers for making the process of learning so easy and enjoyable.

Effective training was achieved through presentations and lectures and, in some cases, using samples of materials as teaching aids. Each session of the training captured shared experiences, questions, answers, and comments.



*SWEAN project trains women entrepreneurs to address gender imbalance in the agro-food processing sector in Nigeria.*

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One of the judges who recognized the challenges of documentary film production during the COVID-19 lockdowns wrote, "The 17 Heads of State and others who watched would have been impressed with the quality of the film and, more importantly, the program itself. Excellent initiative."

"These programs are just so necessary to bring positive change, and this documentary shows it excellently," said another awards panel member.

"I emotionally connected with each video provided...the documentary captured wonderful, intimate, and sensitive interviews with people. It became personal and heartfelt," another judge remarked.

[African Development Bank \(AfDB\)](#) Vice President for Agriculture, Human and Social Development Dr Beth Dunford

highlighted the collaborative work involved in sharing these stories. She dedicated the Gold Stevie award to AfDB's staff, implementing partners, including IITA and other CGIAR centers, and the program beneficiaries.

"Through the experiences of women and men participating in the TAAT program, these videos tell the story of how the Bank-funded agricultural technologies are helping 11 million farmers across 29 African countries produce more food and adapt to climate change," Dunford added.

This year's 18th annual International Business Awards recognize outstanding organizations and highlight their positive contributions globally. Other award winners include DHL Express Worldwide, Dubai Municipality, Google, IBM, Tata Consultancy Services, and Yapi Kredi.

Prizes will be awarded to all winners at a virtual ceremony on 8 December 2021.

The AfDB-funded TAAT is the flagship program translating the Bank's Feed Africa objectives of eliminating extreme poverty, ending hunger and malnutrition, achieving food self-sufficiency, and turning Africa into a net food exporter. The program accomplishes this by improving agricultural productivity using the power of science, technologies and innovation, and a knowledge-based agricultural approach. TAAT achieves these through an innovative partnership with 29 African countries, nine CGIAR Centers led by IITA, three specialized technical institutions, and subregional and national agricultural research systems and organizations.

Watch the TAAT documentary here: <https://youtu.be/kN92vUsc9sQ>.



# ENABLE-TAAT launches demo fields at 12 NYSC orientation camps

To provide agribusiness support to youth, ENABLE-TAAT has established agribusiness demonstration farms at 12 orientation camps of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in Nigeria. This initiative was in response to a clamor from the youth who were inspired after benefiting from the compact's agribusiness sensitization sessions in March, May, August, and September.

The agribusiness sensitization effort has reached more than 30,000 youth in Delta, Ekiti, Imo, Kwara, Lagos, Nasarawa, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo, and Rivers states, and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Many youths showed interest in participating in free training sessions conducted by the youth compact.

In August, the compact presented cassava stems and maize seeds to each camp to facilitate the establishment of demonstration farms. Currently, 12 demo fields have been established as ENABLE-TAAT/NYSC demonstration farms in Nigeria.

This activity hinges on building an "agribusiness park" where youth get practical experience and access to modern technologies that will be deployed in the fields.

To support this initiative, the NYSC Director General Brig. Gen. Shuaibu Ibrahim has called for a symposium to train assigned agribusiness staff and interested youth on best management practices and monthly progress reports from respective NYSC State Coordinators on the activities at each park.

Nigeria's NYSC scheme is a one-year mandatory program for new graduates that primarily inculcates the spirit of selfless service, oneness, and brotherhood among the youth, beyond their cultural or social background. The scheme is often the youth's first call to professional service upon graduation.

ENABLE-TAAT compact is implemented by the Youth in Agribusiness unit of [IITA](#). The compact is mandated to equip the youth with modern agricultural technologies in nine commodity value chains while offering them the opportunity to become self-employed and employers of labor.



*Top: ENABLE-TAAT NYSC demonstration site at NYSC Oyo camp. Center: Presenting cassava stems and maize seeds to Osun orientation camp. Bottom: Representatives of NYSC Corps members and ET staff on the farm at Nassarawa State orientation camp.*



# IITA partners with VOWDA to ensure agricultural transformation among women

The Voice of Women in the Development of Agriculture (VOWDA), in collaboration with [IITA](#), organized a two-day virtual symposium on 14 and 15 October to commemorate World Food Day and the International Day of Rural Women. The event brought stakeholders together to discuss challenges facing women in rural areas, agriculture, and value chains; and proffered possible sustainable policy solutions to policymakers.



*Dr Yemisi Jeff-Agboola, VOWDA's President, welcoming participants.*

The event, “Capacity building for women-in-agriculture and smallholder farmers,” had key players in attendance discussing how to bridge gaps existing along the agricultural scientists-rural farmers link with a particular focus on women.

In her welcome address, [Dr. Yemisi Jeff-Agboola](#), Founder and President of VOWDA, said one of the challenges affecting food security in Africa is the low number of women scientists involved in agricultural research. “We will need the best and brightest minds coming up with food security solutions, including promoting the important contributions of women agricultural scientists, as women and girls are a vital force for rural economies,” she said.

The Special Assistant to the Ooni of Ife on Agriculture, Engr Olusegun Oloro, presented a goodwill message on behalf of His Royal Majesty [Oba Enitan Adeyeye](#). He noted that women in agriculture, especially in Nigeria, face many challenges such as funding, access to land, and machinery. He said the Ooni is very passionate about empowering women in Nigeria and is working to provide gender-friendly machines that can compete globally, access to more land, and funding opportunities.

Representing IITA Deputy Director General, Partnerships for Delivery (P4D), [Kenton Dashiell](#), Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT) Program Management Unit Coordinator [Chrysantus Akem](#) said

women make up the majority of the labor force in agriculture. Hence, building their capacity is crucial due to their contribution to agriculture. Their roles also need to be strengthened. He highlighted some of the strategies IITA has used to encourage women in agriculture and other professional fields, such as the [Start Them Early Program \(STEP\)](#), Youth Agripreneurs, and the recruitment process. “IITA is pleased to collaborate with VOWDA, and we will put in our best to support the effort of this collaboration and ensure that set goals are achieved,” he stated.

Director, Pan African University, Life and Earth Sciences Institute (PAULESI), Ibadan, Prof. Esther Akinlabi, highlighted some of the challenges



*The VOWDA team with some IITA local organizing committee members and speakers in Board Room 2, IITA, Ibadan. Ranjana Bhattacharjee served as speaker explaining some of the untapped opportunities resulting in gender gaps, and Zaina Sore acted as moderator.*

facing smallholder farmers such as role modeling and mentoring, overcoming stereotypes and biases. She added that there is a need for more awareness on the importance of women in agriculture while urging young women to increase participation in agriculture as part of ways to proffer solutions to food insecurity in Africa.

IITA Molecular Geneticist [Ranjana Bhattacharjee](#) highlighted some untapped opportunities resulting in gender gaps, higher levels of poverty, and food insecurity. She added that closing this gender gap could help increase food security and improve rural livelihoods for Africa's growing population. Moreover, she suggested the way forward, which included

closing the gap in access to land, rural labor market, and social capital through women's groups.

ECOWAS Head of Agriculture Division Mr Ernest Aubee spoke on creating visibility in the field of agriculture for women. He listed solutions to create awareness and change stereotypes for women, including showcasing and documenting the achievements of women at all levels of the value chain and upscaling their capacity through workshops at all levels.

Drs Taofeeq Adegboyega and Kehinde Kareem launched the VOWDA journal, which provides an avenue for academics, researchers, professionals, and students to promote their research.

Wrapping up the event, Head of IITA Communication [Katherine Lopez](#) appreciated the participants and sponsors for their dynamic participation and support. She encouraged the participants and organizations to support one another and push others to recognize the role of women in transforming agriculture.

VOWDA is bridging the gap between scientists and smallholder farmers, especially women, by disseminating research results to ensure food security, and achieve Sustainable Development Goal 2 on ending hunger. VOWDA also ensures that policymakers and key stakeholders in society hear the voices of female researchers and farmers.



VOWDA meeting participants on Zoom.

## Got a story to share?

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



## 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.